





## CANADIAN ACHIEVEMENT - KENT COUNTY

by

Reverend Hugh Cowan

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The Algonquin Historical Society of Canada was organized in 1921 as an Ontario association but on October 25th, 1921, a new Charter was taken out and registered making its scope to include the whole of Canada.

The Society has been organized with a definite aim in view. Beginning with the province of Ontario, and taking up section by section, it is undertaking to compile and record the Story of Canada under the general title of "THE GALLERY OF CANADIAN ACHIEVEMENT".

The resources of our country—our forests and farm lands, our rivers and our lakes, our rocks and the variety of our minerals—are the source of our wealth. But this heritage of Nature donated to us must be discovered and developed before it can be accounted wealth. There are men and women in every field of Canadian endeavor whose names are associated with achievements of discovery and progress. It will be the province of this Society to discover those who have made a worthy contribution to the progress and development of our country and to compile the story of their achievements in a trust-worthy record.

The population of our country has been drawn from many nations, and the web of our destiny is being woven by the representatives of many peoples. Who these are, and the contribution which they have made to our national achievement will be made the subject of careful analysis.

Our nation is one of the members of the Great British Empire, yet with our own form of municipal, provincial and national governments. Many names of those who have been associated in the establishment and maintenance of these governments, must find a place in the Gallery.

As our population increased centres of commerce were established, roads and railways built, and so we have the names of the founders of villages, towns and cities, the promoters of railways and shipping interests, the captains of commerce and industry, without whom no list of the Makers of Canada would be complete.

A higher standard of living has been attained for the Canadian people, not only in respect to material comforts, but also in the spiritual, moral, intellectual and social spheres of life. With this attainment has been associated the names of clergymen, teachers, physicians, social workers, etc., whose worthy contributions towards raising this standard merit them a place among those whose names will find a place in the Gallery because of their successful undertakings.

Our wars, too, not excepting the Great War, 1914—1918, have given to us stories of courage, sacrifice and military achievement, which lift up many Canadian citizens to a place in the National Gallery such as we are now undertaking to establish.

The aim of this volume is to record the contribution which the pioneers of Kent county and the generations since have made to this Achievement.



## A MONUMENT TO CAADIAN ACHIEVEMENT



AN we erect a monument to the memory of those who were the founders of our country; those, who gave to it, its first impetus towards that progress and achievement unto which it has already attained; those, who not only wove, but supplied the warp and woof for the weaving of the first measure of the web of its future destiny? Goldwin Smith affirms that we can not.

"To the memory of conquerors who devastate the earth, and of politicians who vex the life of its denizens with their struggle for power and place, we raise sumptuous monuments: to the memory of those who by their toil and endurance have made it fruitful we can raise none. But civilization, while it enters into the heritage which the pioneers prepared for it, may at least look with gratitude on their lowly graves."

Notwithstanding so great an authority to the contrary, we think a monument can and ought to be erected to their memory. When Doctor Smith penned these lines he was doubtless thinking of marble statues, those works of sculpture and art which occupied so great a place in the culture of ancient Greeks in Athens, forgetting that the truest and best memorial to any people is the record of their achievements. Their achievements themselves, and not the record of them, is this monument, the sages of the schools will remind us, and these will continue imperishable as long as they or their beneficial results abide. Admitting this to be true, yet we must know what these were, and whose industry it was which brought them into existence before we can admire their works or revere their memory. To detach the works from the persons associated with them is but to produce a spirit that is cold and loveless, whilst to think of these in the light of the persons associated with them, the hardships and privations which they endured in the pioneer stages of our country's history, and the wisdom they displayed in the solving of their many problems, is to create in our mind a spirit of admiration and appreciation, without which loyalty to our country and a truly patriotic sentiment must soon cease to exist amongst us. To write the story of our people and their achievements becomes by reason of this import, a national and patriotic duty.



Furthermore, the statues which we erect for monuments would be meaningless blocks of marble and nothing more except for that which is written on them, giving the reasons why we have erected them. We erect statues to the memory of heroes who fell in the Great World War, and to those also who enlisted and took their part in that great struggle. Every locality which contributed its share to that army of half a million which Canada sent to the front has erected each one its own statue. But these convey no meaning other than that the number of names on any one of them represents the sum total of man power contributed by that locality to the struggle. The men themselves receive no memorial if the contribution which they individually made to the overthrow of the tyranny of an ambitious monarchy is not recorded. But if the story of that contribution is recorded, then in this we have established for them a true memorial.

Unfortunately there is a sense in which the affirmation that we cannot build a monument to those unto whom a monument is rightly due, is but too true. We have allowed the story to remain unrecorded until the persons from whom alone we could get the information have passed over and become the occupants of those humble graves of which he so reverently writes. By reason of this, many monuments will not be erected which ought to have been and which could have been if undertaken early enough. That much of the story which ought to have been written is lost makes it the more imperative that we put on record that which remaineth to us before there is any further wastage from the same cause.

There are many angles from which the record of Canadian Achievement might be written. But as the story of the whole cannot be written except by gleaning the contribution which each part makes to the general achievement, the aim of this and all subsequent volumes will be to make each county the unit of its survey, and it is hoped by this method not only to supply a record of the first events in the history of our country, but also, at the same time, erect a monument to the achievement of some of those of whom it hath been said, no monument can be raised.



## COLONEL JOHN GRAVES SIMCOE

HIS VISIT TO KENT IN THE WINTER MONTHS OF  
FEBRUARY AND MARCH, 1793.

WE may well begin the story of Kent and the achievements of its people since, with the visitation to the county of His Excellency, Colonel John Graves Simcoe, first Governor of the province, in the winter months of February and March, 1793. Accompanied by a staff of six officers—Major Littlehales, Captain Fitzgerald, Lieutenants Smith, Talbot, Gray and Givens—and twenty additional soldiers he undertook an overland journey from Niagara to Detroit and return, while, as yet, the country was an unsettled forest wilderness. Two years before this, the British Government had passed a law dividing the country east and west of the Ottawa river into two provinces, naming them respectively, Lower and Upper Canada. In Lower Canada, freedom was to be given to the French to govern themselves in accord with French laws and customs. In Upper Canada, however, British institutions were to be established, British inhabitants induced to settle within its bounds, and a nation, loyal to the core to British connections and the king, established in the place of the one lost through the independence granted to the American States by the treaty of 1783.

Colonel Simcoe was a distinguished British soldier in the American Revolutionary War.

His appointment as Governor was made immediately after the passing of this Act. He merited this honor because of the distinguished service he rendered as a soldier and commander of the Queen's Rangers during the American Revolutionary War, a period in prison being part of the experience he suffered during that campaign. On an ill-fated attempt on the part of his unit to attack the American forces near Morristown in 1779, his horse was shot under him, and in the fall, he was knocked senseless. As he lay on the ground unconscious, a boy rushed up and was about to bayonet him, when someone checked him, remarking, "Let him alone. He's dead enough." The mistake preserved his life and saved to the province a pre-eminently able man for its first governor.

With him, attached to his staff, were comrades of his former Regiment, the Queen's Rangers.

The Queen's Rangers was a detachment of mounted infantry, organised at first from Loyalist Volunteers, Americans all of them, recruited from Connecticut and the neighbor-



hood of New York. The soldiers of this unit were employed in scouting and outpost duty, a strenuous work, in the performance of which they secured for themselves, under Simcoe, a well-earned reputation for alacrity, vigilance, endurance and undaunted courage. When he became Governor, he found some of those old comrades, who had shared with him the fatigues of many campaigns in that war, now associated with him in his work, of establishing a government for the newly-created province of Upper Canada, one of whom, Lieutenant Talbot, later became the most distinguished of pioneer settlers in Western Ontario.

**T**he Governor-elect spent his first winter in Canada at Quebec.

The winter immediately following his appointment as Governor, he spent in Quebec, informing himself as to his new duties and preparing plans for carrying on the work with which he was entrusted. Here he met and companioned with Prince Edward, fourth son of George III, whom we know better as the father of our late and beloved Queen Victoria, whom promotion to the honored title, Duke of Kent, seven years later gives him a link of interest with the name of this county. Here also he organised a body of Militia to safeguard his own and the interests of his subjects. This was done by the re-organisation of the Queen's Rangers which took place in New Brunswick, after which they came overland on snowshoes from the province and joined him at Quebec. On their arrival, he took them under his own command, a relation to them which continued during his stay as Governor of the Province.

**C**hoice of a capital for the new province comprised his first task.

As soon as he took the oath of office at Kingston in the spring of 1792, he was brought face to face with the problem of choosing the place where would be the seat of his government. Lord Dorchester, the Governor-General, favored Kingston, but Colonel Simcoe had a more westerly place in

his mind, and, without doubt, one of the reasons he had for taking the trip to Detroit the following winter, was to discover a suitable site. In the meantime, while the settlement of the question was pending, Niagara was used as his temporary abode, and the place where his first Parliament was convened the following September.

**H**is second task was an effort to induce British emigrants to settle in Canada.

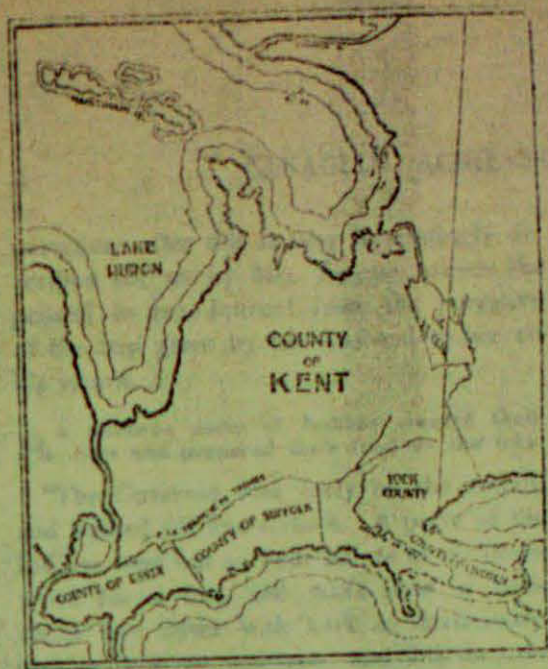
As soon as his government was established, Colonel Simcoe addressed himself to the greatest of all his problems, the settlement of the country with Britishers concerning whose loyalty there could be no question. His first endeavor here was the establishment of settlements made up of refugee Loyalists and disbanded soldiers. A soldier and Loyalist himself, his treatment of these was naturally kind and generous. Large acreages of land, farming equipment, and provisions for at least one year, he readily granted them. There was also another class of settlers whom he hoped to induce to come to Canada, that great stream of migrants made up of evicted Highland Scotch farmers and others, pouring at that time out of the British Isles into the United States. Efforts were put forth to persuade these to continue loyal to the British flag by settling in this province, and, as an inducement, the same treatment in respect to land grants was promised them as was accorded the U. E. Loyalists and the disbanded British soldiers.

**R**easons for his taking an overland trip to Detroit.

The journey to Detroit and return, enabled him to obtain first hand knowledge of the resources and possibilities of the Western peninsula and to discover what parts would be suitable for immediate settlement.

It also afforded him an opportunity to cultivate friendly relations with the Indians. There were four tribes who claimed ownership of this territory—the Chippewas, the Ottawas, the Wyandots and the Pottowatomies. In addition there were the Mohawks





THE WESTERN DISTRICT, 1792.

IN 1788, Lord Dorchester divided the province into four districts, naming them Lunenburg, Mecklenburgh, Nassau and Hesse. They were re-named by the First Parliament, October 15, 1792, Eastern, Midland, Home, and Western. The Western (Hesse) comprised all the territory west of the meridian indicated on the map, and included Detroit, Mackinac, and the country south to the Ohio and west to the Mississippi. Detroit was the capital of the District and continued as such until handed over to the United States in 1796.

By proclamation from Kingston, July 16, 1792, Governor Simcoe divided the province into nineteen counties, of which the Western District included six,—Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk (this county though the name is not marked on the map lay east of Suffolk and west of the Grand river), Lincoln, York and Kent.

Kent was made to comprehend "all the country not being territories of the Indians nor already included in the several counties hereinbefore described, extending northward to the boundary line of Hudson Bay, including all the territory to the westward and southward of the said line to the utmost extent of the country commonly known by the name of Canada."

on the Grand river, the pagan Delawares on the Upper Thames, and the Christian Delawares on the Lower Thames, the original homes of all of whom were in American territory, but who migrated here because of their more friendly relationships with the British. It was expedient, while the country was new, to continue this friendship.

But the chief reason, in the Governor's mind, for making the journey, was a military one. These were strenuous, and between the Americans and Indians, killing times. The massacre of Whites by Indians, and of Indians by the Americans, was still a matter of current history. Moreover, rumor had it, that the Americans were contemplating an attack on Niagara, then upon Detroit, which, if successful would mean the subsequent addition of Canada to their already conquered domains. In the event of such contingencies arising, it would be advisable to have an overland route of communication between these two posts, and so the royal party of forty started out with a view of establishing such a route.

A mild winter compelled the Governor's party to make the journey on foot instead of with sleighs.

On the first Monday of the month, with their provisions and equipment, they got into sleighs and commenced their journey, but the winter being mild and along their road many fallen trees, they soon found themselves compelled to abandon this method of travel, and adopt the slower but surer mode of walking. Each officer carried his own blankets and other personal effects, the soldiers and Indians, the remaining part of their equipment and provisions. Skirting the shore of lake Erie for a time, they then turned north-westward, following a path untrodden before except by fur-traders and Indians, making the Mohawk village on the Grand river as their first place of visitation. On their arrival there a most cordial reception was tendered them and on their departure, a contingent of twelve of these Indians was added to their number to act as their guides. Captain Brant, their Chief, also accompanied them for a part of the way. Their mode of



procedure after this is very interestingly described for us by Mrs. Simcoe, which she penned in her Journal from the narrative of the trip given by her husband to her on his return.

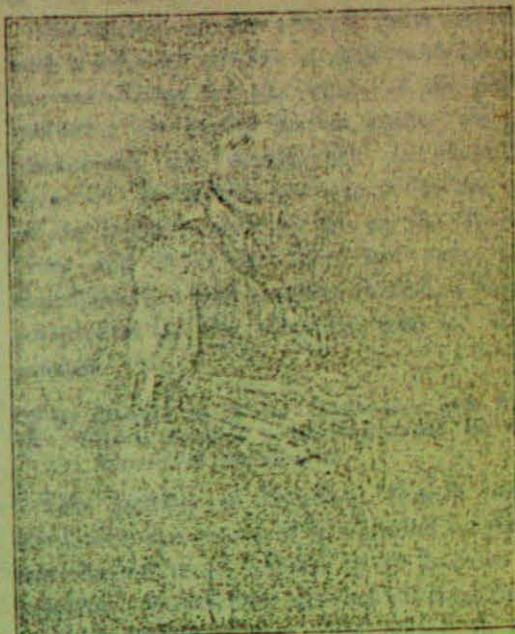
**A**n advance party of Indians erected their huts and prepared their food on the way.

"The Governor rose early on the march, and walked till five o'clock. A party of the Indians went out an hour before to cut down wood for a fire, and make huts of trees which they cover with bark so dexterously that no rain can penetrate, and this they do very expeditiously. When the Governor came to the spot, which the Indians had fixed upon to lodge for the night, the provisions were cooked; after supper the officers sung 'God save the King', and went to sleep with their feet close to an immense fire, which was kept up all night."

In another paragraph of her journal, Mrs. Simcoe informs us that these Indian guides were instrumental also in adding as a supplement to their provisions the meat of racoons and porcupines which they hunted and killed along the way, a delicacy which the Governor and his suite esteemed like unto that of the flesh of young swine in taste. This addition to their supply proved timely, as their store of venison was not sufficient to last out to the end of their journey.

**M**ajor Littlehale's journal tells of the discovery of petroleum and other incidents of their journey.

Further and more complete information concerning the journey and the incidents connected with it is supplied us from the Diary kept by Major Littlehales, one of the Governor's official staff. From it we learn that Kent county, although it had not yet received its name, had already made considerable progress in the way of settlement. When they came to the district now within its present bounds, they discovered a Moravian Mission village and a new road built from this by the Indians to connect them with the Sally Hand settlement, the first road no



**CAPTAIN JOSEPH BRANT.**

*Mohawk Indian Chief.*

A warm friend and ally of the British during the American Revolutionary War, chief of the Mohawk tribe who settled under the British flag on the Grand river, who entertained Governor Simcoe and gave him a dozen of his men as guides for his first overland trip to Detroit in 1793.

doubt built in the county; a settler's new house near the present site of Chatham; a grist-mill in process of construction on McGregor's creek; and farther down the river a score of log houses with their clearances about them, the first inland settlement established within the bounds of the province. Theirs also was the first discovery of petroleum in the province. That discovery is best told in the Major's own words:

"We breakfasted (Date, Feb. 15, 1793) at the Delaware Indian village, having walked on the ice of the La Tranche (Thames) five or six miles; here we were cordially received by the Chiefs of that nation, and regaled with eggs and venison. Captain Brant being obliged to return to a Council of the Six Nations, we stayed the whole day. The Delaware Castle is pleasantly situated on the banks of the Thames, the meadows at the bottom are cleared to some extent, and in



summer planted with Indian corn. After walking twelve or fourteen miles this day (16th), part of the way through plains of White Oak and Ash, and passing several Chippewa Indians upon their hunting parties and in their encampments, we arrived at a Canadian Trader's; and a little beyond in proceeding down the river, the Indians discovered a spring of oily nature, which upon examination, proved to be a kind of petroleum. We passed another wigwam of Chippewas making maple sugar, the mildness of the winter having compelled them in a measure to abandon their annual hunting. We soon arrived at an old hut, where we passed the night."

"We passed the Moravian village this day (17th). This infantine settlement is under the superintendence of four Missionaries, Messrs. Zeisberger, Senseman, Edwards and Young; and principally inhabited by Delaware Indians, who seem to be under the control, and in many particulars, under the command of these persons. They are in a progressive state of civilisation, being instructed in different branches of agriculture, and having already cornfields. At this place every respect was paid the Governor, and we procured a seasonable refreshment of eggs, milk and butter. Pursuing our journey eight or nine miles, we stopped for the night at the extremity of a new road cut by the Indians and close to a creek."

"Crossing the Thames (18th), and leaving behind us a new log-house built by a man by the name of Carpenter, we passed a thick swamp wood of black walnut, where His Excellency's servant was lost three or four hours. We then came to a bend of the La Tranche, and were agreeably surprised to meet twelve or fourteen carioles coming to meet and conduct the Governor, with his suite. We got into them, and at about four o'clock, arrived at Dolsen's, having previously reconnoitred a fork of the River and examined a mill of curious construction erected upon it. The settlement where

Dolsen resides is very promising, the land is well adapted for farmers, and there are some respectable inhabitants on both sides of the river; behind it, to the south, is a range of spacious meadows—Elk are continually seen upon them, and the pools and ponds are full of cray fish."

The arrival of the officials from Detroit, with a sufficient number of carioles to furnish accommodation for the whole of the party, including the twelve Indian guides, though unexpected, was nevertheless an agreeable surprise. It enabled them to make the rest of the journey over the ice on the Thames river and St. Clair lake, not only with expedition but with comfort as well, a fitting completion of the westward part of their journey.

**T**he Diaries of Major Littlehales and Mrs. Simcoe furnish a starting point for the history of the county.

This journey of Governor Simcoe westward, with the record of it supplied by these two diaries, is of interest to us because it supplies a trustworthy account of conditions as they existed at this early period in the history of the county. From these two accounts supplemented by the diary of the Rev. David Zeisberger, of the Moravian Mission and the official reports of surveyor McNiff, we ascertain that two important settlements had already been established in the county—the Dolsen settlement commencing eight miles from the mouth of the river and extending intermittently eastward to the junction of McGregor's creek with the Thames river; and the Moravian Mission, a village of forty houses built on the north bank of the Thames at the eastern extremity of the present county's bounds. Between these two, a new settler had also located, the fore-runner of others soon to follow.

**A** probable location for the provincial capital was chosen and named London.

But their return trip is even of more interest to us than the westward one. It was made more leisurely and marked by the



adoption of some of the Governor's plans for the future of the country, not all of which, however, were carried out to completion. It was on the return trip that he made his choice of a site for the future capital of the province. Examining as he went along every place which might prove suitable, he made selection of "The Fork," the place where the two branches of the La Tranche met together, as the spot which most commended itself to him. This place he named London, and the name of the river he changed to Thames, both in honor of the capital and river of his native England.

"We walked over a rich meadow," wrote Major Littlehales in his Journal, "and at its extremity came to the forks of the river. The Governor wished to examine this situation and its environs; and we therefore remained here all the day. He judged it to be a situation eminently calculated for the metropolis of Canada."

Mrs. Simcoe also indicates this site as his

choice. "The Governor found his expectations perfectly realised as to the goodness of the country on the banks of the La Tranche, and is confirmed in his opinion that the fork of the river is the most proper site for the capital of the country."

**C**hatham was selected for a military post and ship-building station.

The lower forks, where now stands the city of Chatham, he selected as a site for a military post and ship-building station. But these provisions for the future of the country were never carried out. A dry dock was established at Chatham and several boats built, though none of them were ever launched, and "Muddy York," instead of London, became the future metropolis of Ontario. Apparently, the Fates have decreed that it is as an agricultural district, and not as the centre of a ship-building industry, whereby Kent County shall make its contribution to the sum total of Canadian progress and achievement.

**NOTE.**—If we refer to the records of the Land Board at Detroit, it is evident that there were many requests for land along the Thames River before any surveys were made, in fact the surveys were the result of the numerous requests for land.

In 1789, there were nineteen petitions for allotments along the Thames, the names being Charles McCormic, David England and consort, Arthur McCormic, John Wheaton, John Scheifflein, Schofield and consort, Matthew Dolsen, Thos. McCrea, Peter Shoule, Daniel Field, Edward Watson, James Rice, Isaac Dolsen, Coleman Roe, Wm. Duggan, Thos. Smith, Robert Dowler, Hezekiah Wilcox and Sara Montour.

In 1790, we find sixty-six applicants whose names are as follows: Thomas Clarke, David Lind, William Scott, Thos. Williams, Samuel Newkirk, Richard Earle, Thos. Parsons, Robert McPherson, James McPherson, John McPherson, Peter McPherson, Jonas Fox, Philip Fox, Frederick Arnold, Frederick Arnold, Jr., Arnold Spinsters, Lewis Arnold, Steffe Arnold, John Arnold, William Cissney, Children of John Cissney, John Cissney, James Cissney, Joseph Cissney, Jasper Brown, Hugh Holmes, David McKirgan, Richard Merry, George Fields, Robert Williams, John Welsh, Jacob Guont, John Flin, Jos. Springfield, John Barbeous, William Searl, Joseph Elain, Peter Malor, Richard Connor, Jordan Ivory, James Ronph, Simon Girty, James and Geo. Girty, Jacob Harsen, Etienne Tremblay, Wm. Montforton, Adhemor St. Martin, Simon Schorlcroft, Patrick McGulphin, Chas. Gouin, Marie Josh. Gouin, John Loughton, Ens. Hrn. Hoy, Alex. Cox, Capn. Lamottre, Mat. Gibson, Thos. Kelly, Andrew Hamilton, Peter Faucher, John Williams, Jacob Marnele, Robert Gill, Patrick O'Flaherty, P. L. J. de Charbert, Wm. Chambers.

In 1791, there were thirty-six applications, the names being: Wm. Boyle, A. Grant, R. Understone, J. Reynolds, E. McCarthy, A. Woolche, John Hembrow, Reny Campeau, James Hobbs, John Carrel, John Reynolds, Robert Surphlit, Marianne L'Esperance, Wm. Crawford, Samuel Edge, John Pike, Morris Wilcox, Peter Barril, Charles Beaubieu, Jno. Dodomead, Henry Motsford, Charles Boulange, Wyndal Wagaly, Robert Bedford, Fred. Harboth, Coleman Roe, Julius Raboli, Frederick Raboli, Valentine Oiler, Jacob Oiler, John Lawler, Thos. Jones, Louis Arnold, George Lyon, John Sparksman, John Killen.—*Historical Society Reports.*

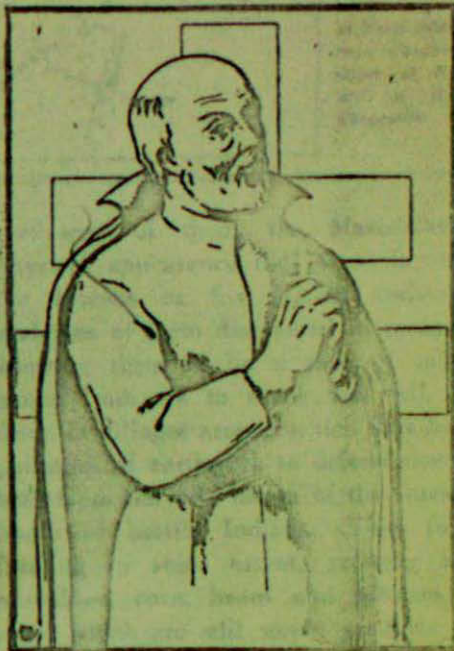


# THE PRE-HISTORIC INDIAN

THE WESTERN DISTRICT, NORTH OF LAKE ERIE,  
BETWEEN THE GRAND AND DETROIT RIVERS  
WAS THE LAND OF THE NEUTRAL INDIANS  
WHEN FIRST DISCOVERED BY THE  
WHITEMAN.

TWO and a half centuries before the first visit of Governor Simcoe to Kent, the whole district was an unknown region except to the Indians who inhabited it and claimed it as their hunting ground. About this time it began to be visited by French traders, explorers and missionaries. These found all the country west of the Grand river north of lake Erie to the Detroit claimed by the Neutrals, a name given to this tribe by the French because they maintained a neutral attitude in respect to the wars going on constantly between the Hurons and Iroquois, two of the most important of the Indian tribes peopling the country at that time. The Hurons occupied the district lying between the Georgian Bay and lake Simcoe, the Iroquois the country of northern New York. They kept up their hostilities until the middle of the Seventeenth Century, when the Iroquois, armed with European guns, succeeded in practically annihilating the whole Huron tribe.

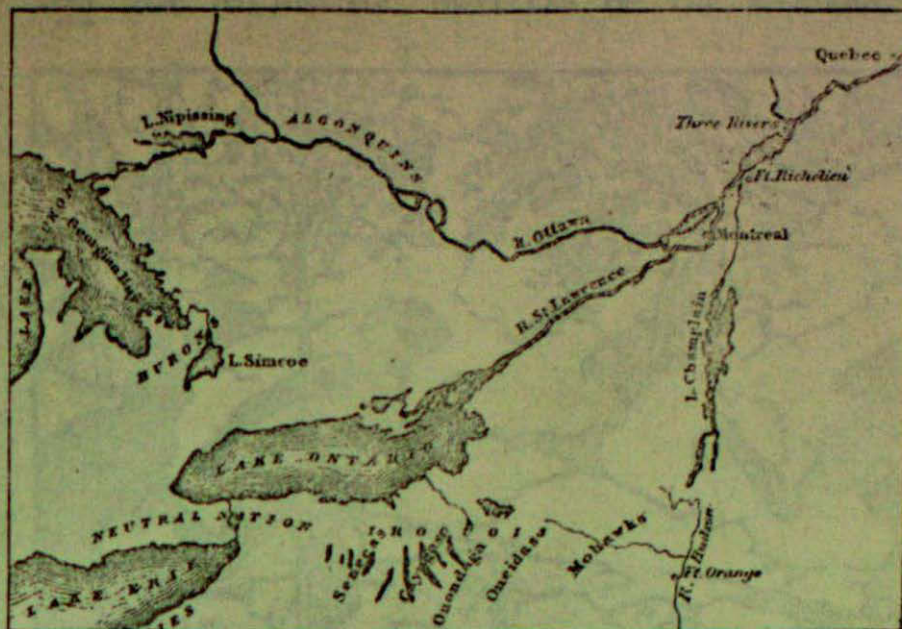
The Neutrals spoke a language kindred to the Hurons, both of them being branches of the Algonquin nation, the largest of all the Indian tribes of North America. They might, therefore, be reasonably expected to line



REV. JEAN DE BREBEUF, S.J.

One of the three French missionaries who visited the Neutral country in the middle of the Seventeenth century. He was a descendant of a noble French family who entered into the priesthood and came to North America to devote himself to Indian missions. He was a man of powerful physique, enterprising and courageous as a missionary; faced danger fearlessly, and eventually suffered martyrdom at the hands of the Iroquois, March, 1649, while at work among the Hurons.





The Attiandaron, called by the French, Neutrals, were, physically, the finest class of Indians on the North American continent. The first explorers estimated about forty villages of this tribe occupying the region north of Lake Erie, thirty-six of these in what is now Canadian territory, and four or five in the United States. Three villages, at least, were located in Kent county, one near Chatham, another at Rondeau, and a third at Clearville.

themselves up on the side of their kindred in their warring operations against the Iroquois, but they had a commercial reason for taking neither side. In their territory were the flint beds found on the lake shore near Point Albino, and from which they manufactured arrow tips and lance points, implements so essential to hunting and warfare. The Iroquois, equally with the Hurons, needed these and bartered with the Neutrals for them, while the Neutrals, in turn, could only retain their market by continuing in a relationship of friendliness to both.

**T**he Indians of the district were visited by very early French missionaries.

In 1626-7, this district was visited by Daillon, a Recollet father, and in 1639-40 and 1640-41, by the Jesuit missionaries, Brebeuf and Chaumonot. These describe the Neutrals as naked, superstitious, easily influenced by other nations, fierce and cruel. Hence, notwithstanding their peaceful attitude as towards the Hurons and Iroquois, they kept up constant warfare and hostilities against the fire-using nation to the west and

north-west of them, the Mascoutans. In physical appearance they were larger than the Hurons or Six Nation Indians, the skeletons of them discovered in recent years showing them to be a race of miniature giants from six to seven feet tall. They dwelt in villages around which they built up palisades of earthwork to defend themselves both from the wild beasts of the forests and bands of hostile Indians. They followed farming to some extent, growing besides pumpkins, corn, beans and tobacco, three crops which are still staple products of the County. Their lot was cast in a land of plenty. The surrounding woods supplied them with an abundance of fruit, game was plentiful, the lakes and streams teemed with fish, and they were thrifty enough to lay up in store sufficient of all these for their winter's use. They enjoyed conditions of comfort, if not of luxury.

**S**ix Nation Indians destroyed the Neutrals and took possession of their lands.

In course of time, however, their possession of this district came to an end. Shortly after the extermination of the Hurons, the





The Dwellers of the Forests of Canada in pre-historic times.

Confederacy of Six Nations—Mohawks, Oneidas, Tuscororas, Onondagos, Cayugas and Senecas—broke the neutrality that existed between them, and unexpectedly coming down upon them, attacked village after village, meting out to them the same fate as befell the Hurons. With merciless cruelty, they massacred men, women and children; some they carried away as captives; very few of them escaped. Those who were fortunate enough to get out of their hands fled westward and northward and joined themselves to the Chippewas and Ottawas, kindred tribes dwelling on the islands of lake Huron and surrounding districts northward. The land now became the possession of the Six Nation Confederacy.

**I**n turn, the Iroquois were defeated and driven out by the Ottawas and Ojibways.

Their occupation of this district was short-lived. They were considered by the other nations as trespassers, not as owners, of the

territory conquered. The Chippewas, Wyandots, Ottawas and Pottowatomies, since the establishment of a military and fur-trading post at Detroit, were accustomed to assemble together there at every fur-trading season. These resolved to join hands and to treat the trespassing Iroquois as they had the Neutrals. The British Government, after the Cession of Canada to them by the French in 1763, sent out the celebrated Indian agent and trader, George Croghan, to explore the country adjacent to the Ohio and to conciliate the Indian nations who had hitherto acted with the French. The strength of these four tribes he estimated as composed of twenty seven hundred fighting men. The same authority estimated the fighting strength of the Six Nations as that of two thousand six hundred and eighty warriors. If the full strength of the Iroquois were mustered it would make both of the warring parties of equal strength, but in this case, the attacking party had the



advantage as only the number in each village of the Iroquois could be mustered in defence. The result was that the Iroquois suffered a complete rout.

The decisive battle was fought at the mouth of the Thames. The battleground was visited by Governor Simcoe and his suite on the occasion of their first trip through the country in 1793. Their examination of the place elicited from Major Littlehales the following observation in his diary,—

"From Dolsen's we went to the mouth of the Thames in carioles, about twelve miles, and saw the remains of a considerable town of the Chippewas, where it was reported a decisive battle was fought between them and the Senecas, and upon which occasion, the latter being totally vanquished, abandoned their dominions to the conquerors."

peaceable surrender of the territory to the British from the Indians was obtained by various treaties.

When the British wished to open up the land for white settlement, they found these four tribes laying claim to the territory, but the Government adopted a conciliatory attitude, and undertook to obtain peaceable possession of the land by purchase, rather than by force. Hence, although the claim of these tribes to this tract of territory might well be disputed, Colonel McKee, the Indian Agent at Detroit, took this easier and less costly method, and obtained a surrender of Kent with the exception of the lands afterwards surveyed into Zone township and the Gores of Chatham and Camden. The price paid was twelve hundred pounds sterling. This treaty is dated, May 19, 1790, and bears the signatures of representatives of each of the four tribes. Sombra township and the Gore of Chatham was surrendered six years later, September 7, 1796. A provisional surrender of Zone township and the Gore of Camden was made in 1819 which received its final confirmation on July the 8th, 1822.



IROQUOIS INDIAN CHIEF.

Delaware Indians from the United States were given a Reserve in Orford township.

There is no reservation of lands set apart by the Government for the use of any of these four tribes now, but there is one for the Delawares, a people not native to our country but a refugee tribe from the United States, who, like the Negroes, came to Canada to find here an asylum of safety from persecution and death. When the white man came to America, this nation inhabited the region of Pennsylvania and the district between the Hudson and the Potomac river. Driven from there by the encroachments of the white settlers, they migrated further westward, establishing their villages in the valley of the Susquehanna and the regions between the Ohio valley and lake Erie. At the close of the Revolutionary war, their strength was reckoned as that of seven hundred and fifty warriors, including both pagan and Christian Indians.

Unlike other Indians, this nation was not



subjected to tribal warfare through an understanding among the tribes initiated by the Iroquois, under whom they were said to be tributary. They were called the Squaw nation, dressed as women, the reason alleged being that they should remain out of war in order that through them the Indian people should be preserved from extinction through war. In war-time they suffered greatly at the hands of the American militia, and in order to save them from threatened extinction, a Christian colony of about one hundred and fifty of them were brought by Moravian missionaries to Canada. After a year spent on the Detroit river, they came up and settled on the Thames river enjoying the protection of the British government, and where a considerable settlement of their descendants is still to be found.

Several well-marked sites of former Indian villages have been located in the county.

Within the bounds of the County, there have been three apparently favorable locations which these Indians preferred to occupy and where they built their villages. There was one on the banks of the Thames, or

rather on McGregor's creek, on the site where is now Chatham cemetery and adjacent farms. The second was south on Lake Erie, especially in the neighborhood of the Rondeau Park. There was a third at the eastern end of the county in the neighborhood of Clearville. On the low land between the Thames river and the Ridge, and where hunting would be difficult except when frozen over in winter, there are found no traces of village sites. They chose the higher lands on the banks of rivers and lakes for the two conveniences of building and travel. The trails which they used as they went from one village to another became the first highways of the white settlers, and their burial places, or pits, supplied skeletons for the use of medical students up to and including recent times. But a minute study of these vanished races of the past would take us too far afield from the aim of our work. The heritage which was once theirs has become ours, and it is for us to see what progress has been made and what achievements accomplished in the century and a half since we have taken possession of it.



Map showing Battle between Iroquois and Hurons, drawn by Samuel De Champlain.



**T**HE Ottawa Indians are of peculiar interest to Canadians since our Dominion capital bears their name. They were called by Champlain, who first saw them in 1615 on the French river, "The Indians of the Standing Hair," because of their peculiar custom of wearing their hair standing up as is shown in the accompanying illustration. They were a part of the great Algonquin nation and kindred to the Hurons and Ojibways. Associated with these latter, in the early part of the Eighteenth century, they drove out the warlike Six Nations from south-western Ontario, practically exterminating a village of them at the mouth of the Thames river.

Little Knife was a brave and capable warrior of the Lake Huron region, who won the admiration of the British Commandant at Fort Mackinac, (1812-1815), for his kindly treatment of a wounded American soldier. For this act of chivalry he donated him a silver-mounted sword, accompanied by a letter, which gave the reasons for awarding this honor to him:

"I perform this duty with the more pleasure from the noble act of mercy and generosity shown to the said prisoner, by not only sparing his life, but by bringing him with kindness and attention to this fort . . .

In testimony of my approbation of his conduct upon this occasion, which will be gratifying to the King, his Great Father, and to encourage similar acts of mercy in future to the vanquished and unresisting, I, in his name, present him with a silver-mounted sword in token of his merit."

The wresting of Fort Mackinac from the Americans and the retention of it during the whole period of the war in the face of repeated attempts on the part of their army and navy to recapture it, was due to the support given to British leadership by their Indian allies. In

one of these attempts, a reconnoitering party was sent out by Colonel Croghan to Round Island, but they were discovered by the British and a party of Indians was sent out who dispersed them and brought back one of them a prisoner. Concerning this event, the Reverend J. A. VanFleet writes,

"As they neared the island, the Indians that remained came down to meet them and the prisoner would have been killed and feasted upon by his inhuman captors, had not the British commander sent a strong guard of soldiers and rescued him the moment the canoes touched the beach."

The above paragraph might pass for history, and probably does in some quarters, but the possession of the sword, the letter and the pen-portrait of the Chief, by our Historical Society is fortunately in evidence to correct unwarranted assertions and to inform a too credulous public that the inhumanity claimed of, had reality only in the constructive imagination of the writer. In the matter of ungallant and uncivilized practises, in some respects the pre-historic Indian could set a goodly example of abstention which might well be copied by the white-man who dispossessed him of his country and lands.

The service rendered to the British cause by the Ottawas, stands out very conspicuously during the whole period of this war. They were expert canoeists, tenacious fighters, and unwavering in their loyalty to the British in Canada as they had been be-

fore to the French. Dwelling on, at the time of the outbreak of the war, the islands of Lake Huron and adjacent mainlands, they were soon mobilized and through their assistance Fort Mackinac was wrested from the Americans and held by the British through the whole period of hostilities between the two countries, an incident in their history well worth remembering.



**LITTLE KNIFE**

An Ottawa Indian Chief

The illustration shows him decorated with the silver-mounted sword which was presented to him by the Commandant of Fort Mackinaw (1812-1815) for his rescue of and kindness to a wounded American soldier.



## CHAPTER III

# THAMES RIVER SETTLEMENT

THE FRENCH, ENGLISH AND GERMANS WHO  
COMPRISED THE FIRST SETTLERS OF THE  
COUNTY OF KENT

### I

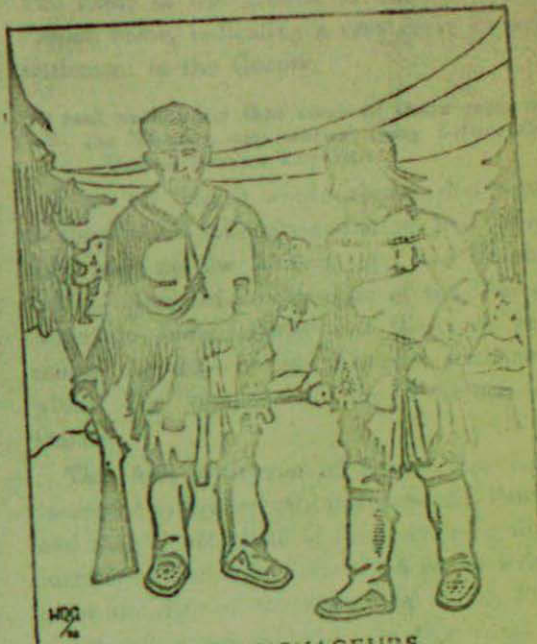
## THE FRENCH

THE nationality of the first settlers of any community is not without interest, as the character of the people, more than anything else, is that which determines its future history. In the County of Kent are to be found representatives of all the nationalities which have become a part of the now mixed population of the Province of Ontario. The first of these to arrive in the Western district were the French.

French fur-traders at Detroit before Cadillac founded the colony in 1701.

The coming of the first French settlers takes us back to 1701, the year in which Cadillac founded Detroit. Even before this, Frenchmen were found occupying the land, not as settlers and colonists, but as traders, trappers and hunters. The score of men who accompanied Cadillac to the Strait of Detroit and became with him the first French settlement in Western Ontario found ahead of them two of their own fellow-countrymen, runners of the woods, as we now call them. These men were the first pioneers of the district.

Daring canoe-men, intrepid explorers, adventurous traders or trappers, sometimes



FRENCH VOYAGEURS.

The Vanguard of the Detroit Colony, 1701.

alone, and sometimes in company with one other of their own race, they traversed every stream or lake which would bring them to an Indian lodge or village, in order that a trade with them in furs might be established. Oftentimes they would undertake to hunt and trap on their own account, either as pals or as rivals of the Indians, and covering with



them the same territory as their hunting ground. Many of them entered the woods never to come out again, the victims of accident, disease, or the treachery of an unfriendly Indian.

### Runners of the woods marry Indian women.

With ready alacrity this class of men took to themselves Indian women for their wives, since to move into her wigwam, or she into his, was all the marriage ceremony required. With equal readiness, at the end of the hunting season, some of these deserted their new homes and their families, and started off to other fur-producing fields. Others of them again, however, continued loyal and introduced the log hut instead of the Indian wigwam as their place of abode. Here they reared their family of half-breeds some of whom in after years became a part of the Indian tribe to which their mother belonged, while others of their children, marrying some descendant of their father's folk, became French and were eventually accounted a part of the French population of Canada.

### Three hundred French colonists on the Canadian side of the Detroit river in 1763.

The two French wood-runners, who occupied the Detroit site when Cadillac and his little band arrived there in 1701, gladly welcomed this addition of their fellow-countrymen to their numbers, the earnest of the many others to follow them. Sixty years afterwards, when the Cession of Canada to Great Britain took place, the Detroit colony numbered one thousand, three hundred of whom were on the east, the now Canadian side of the river. When it was that the first of these French colonists went up the Thames and built the first log-cabin on its banks, of this, there is no record. Like the inventor who hollowed out the first boat, or the Indian who shaped the first birch-bark canoe, his name does not appear on the scroll of history, nor has there been left any record of his achievements. There is abundant evidence that the French were, if not the first,

then a part, at least, of the first settlers in the County. When Governor Simcoe made his winter trip from Niagara to Detroit in the beginning months of 1793, he records a settlement of French eight miles up from the mouth of the Thames river. The records of the first settlers of Dover and Chatham townships contain names of persons who were either French or of French origin. There is on record the grant from the Crown, of a block of land, 1632 acres, in Dover township, the first township north of the river, which is dated September 19, 1780. The name of the grantee is Sally Ainse, a French name, indicating a very early French settlement in the County.

### Great probability that some of these came up the Thames and settled there before the United Empire Loyalists.

From all this, it would appear that some of the French colonists at Detroit had found their way up the Thames and had become settlers there before the close of the War of American Independence and therefore preceding the date of any Loyalist settlement within the bounds of the Province of Ontario.

This first settlement of French has since increased to become two parishes—St. Peter's and Pain Court—both of them retaining their identity as distinctly French. A recent writer gives the date of the beginning of the Pain Court settlement as 1815. In this year, he says, Baby and Paquetts settled on lots six and seven on the north side of the river, and five others, in the same year, on the Pain Court creek. He traces the origin of fifty two parishioners of the settlement to the provinces in France from which they came direct to Canada. All of these are represented as having first settled in Quebec and from there coming direct to the Pain Court or Thames settlement.

"In the year 1815" he says, "the population of the Tranche was about twenty while in the year 1871, the population had increased to nearly two thousand." This rapid



increase of population was due in part to migration of families here from other sections of French Canada, but chiefly to natural increase. The French people were here, as in Quebec, noted for their large families. In the first visit of the Bishop of London to the parish, in 1856, he confirmed two hundred and fifty children. In the second visit, 1871, he confirmed four hundred and fifty.

Mrs. Jamieson describes the French Settlement as she saw it in 1836.

Mrs. Jameson, an English traveller and writer, describing a trip she made in 1836 from Port Talbot to Detroit by way of Chatham, has an interesting reference to this French settlement. "The banks of the Thames," she wrote, "is studded with a succession of farms, cultivated by the descendants of the early French settlers, precisely the same class of people as the *Habitants* of Quebec." The greatest part of her journey before this was through a wilderness of unpeopled woods, but on the banks of the river down which she sailed, she discovered half way down to its mouth, homes surrounded

by flower gardens, and farms enriched by extensive orchards.

"At the window of a farmhouse sat a well-dressed female engaged in needle work. The lady invited me into her house, an invitation I most gladly accepted. Everything within it and around it spoke riches and substantial plenty. She showed me her garden, abounding in roses and an extensive orchard."

The pleasing picture that Mrs. Jameson seeks here to paint is that of leisurely peace in the midst of contented prosperity.

Such was the French settlement on the Thames ninety years ago, after it had, at least, fifty years of history behind it. The descendants of these early pioneers are still there, wedded to the fertile lands which their ancestors tilled, from the earliest days in the history of the Province. Some of their children, as they grow up, leave the land and join the procession on their way to Chatham, Detroit and other urban centres. Some of them move to farms in other parts of the country but the settlement continues, going steadily on, increasing in numbers and prosperity.

## II

### THE UNITED EMPIRE LOYALISTS

IF the claim of the Detroit French Colonists to be the first permanent settlers of Kent County be barred out, then the honor must fall to the lot of those United Empire Loyalists who arrived here prior to 1796. The War of American Independence, brought to its final conclusion by the Treaty of Versailles in 1783, was in reality a civil war between two branches of the British race, the one party demanding Independence, and the other supporting the continuance of the British connection. In addition to settlers of British origin in America at that time, there were also Dutch and Germans, but who, notwithstanding, were not in sympathy with the war which had been made against the mother country by her sons in her American

possessions. Some of these took up arms on the side of Great Britain but many more of them remained neutral, though secretly in sympathy with the policy of the Loyalists.

Persons and property of Loyalists not protected as treaty of peace required.

The unexpected success of the Independents left the Loyalists a prey to the inhumanity of Continentalist mobs, and although it was thought that the treaty of Versailles would protect their persons and their property no such safeguard was granted. Loyalists were hanged on their own doorposts, some were tarred and feathered and others driven from their homes. The Loyalists endured these indignities as patiently as possible hoping that the promise



of protection by Congress would be carried out. But some of the States disputed the authority of Congress to make such promises, and passed laws confiscating their property, reducing them to poverty and want. There was no course now open to them other than emigration. Thousands went back to England; some went to the West Indies, and a few to the Spanish colony of Florida. It is estimated that a hundred thousand of them, taking only what they could carry with them, trekked north to the wilds of Canada, then, outside of Quebec, an unsettled wilderness, the home only of wild animals and Indians. While most of these settled in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Eastern Ontario, a few also found their way into the County of Kent. The Government, on their arrival began to make provision for them. Tents, clothing and provisions were supplied, also tools, especially those required in erecting houses and clearing the land.

**L**ord Dorchester ordered a list of those who had a right to the title of United Empire Loyalists to be made out.

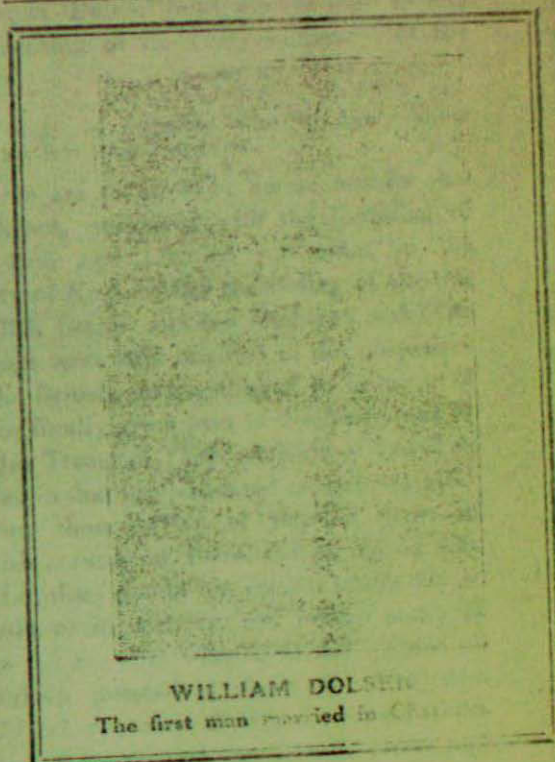
A list of the Loyalists was ordered to be made by the government of Lord Dorchester in 1789, "to the end," it was said, "that their posterity may be discriminated from future settlers in the Parish Registers and Rolls of Militia in their respective districts." They were given the right to affix the letters 'U.E.L.' to their names, and also to their sons and daughters, there was given the right to receive a grant of 200 acres of land when they became of age. This list was accordingly prepared and the names of all those to whom was given the right to the title may be found there.

Those of them who settled in Kent came up the Thames river by way of Detroit, and formed on the river what was known as the Dolsen settlement, the first interior settlement to be founded in Ontario.

**J**ohn Dolsen and his two sons the most prominent of the Dutch Tories to settle on the Thames.

The man who gave his name to the settle-

ment, John Von Dolsen, (or John Dolsen as the name is now spelled) came from the valley of the Susquehanna, Pennsylvania, with his two sons, Matthew and Isaac, both of whom had already reached the prime of manhood and had families of their own. Isaac with his father located on the south side of the river, and Matthew on the north side, at any rate, previous to 1791, as the records of the Moravian Mission on the Detroit River intimate that a Mr. Dolsen of the Thames brought his two sons to the Mission to be educated that winter at their school. But the



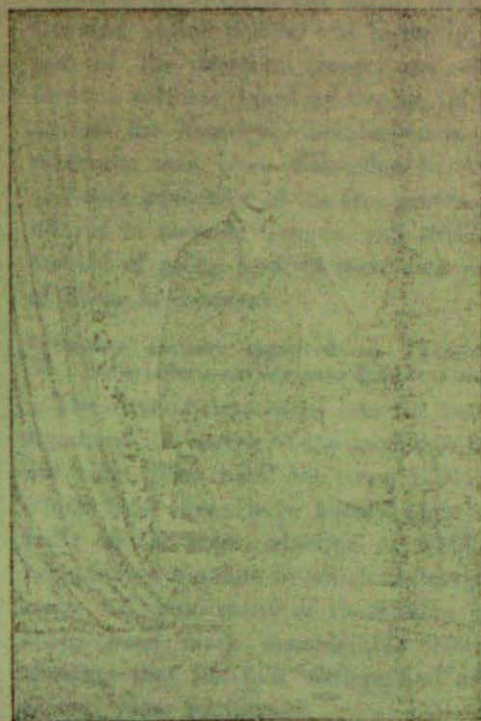
WILLIAM DOLSEN  
The first man married in Chatham.

The Dolsen family became the most prominent of all the first families of the Thames river settlement. William Dolsen, an early descendant, took up later his residence at Chatham and conducted for years the Royal Exchange hotel, a noted resort, not only as a place of entertainment of travellers but a community house, where political meetings and social gatherings of all kinds were held. He married Miss Nancy Evans, a daughter of Israel Evans, Chatham's first manufacturer, an event which honored the couple with the distinction of being the first to be married at Chatham.

He also is said to have built with D. Forsyth the first frame house in Chatham.



To this enterprise must be credited the establishment of the first trading mart in the county, by Matthew Dolsen, the store being supplied with goods brought up from Detroit



THOMAS McCRAE.

A second prominent family of Loyalist stock among the very first to settle on the Thames river, was that of Thomas McCrae, the father of a large family, among whom were three sons—William, Alexander and Thomas, all of whom with their father exerted a wide influence on the community. He was the first resident of Kent to be elected a member of parliament, an honor which was conferred on him in 1806, when he successfully contested for a seat in the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Upper Canada, an honor which his son William also attained in 1834, and held until the union of the provinces in 1840. This family added store-keeping to their farming operations, where also was kept the first post-office of the community, and continued to be until moved to "Chatham Mills" (McGregor's) in 1828. The honor of erecting the first brick house in the county belongs, it is alleged, to this family, and in other ways, also, they led the settlement in advancing the progress of the community.

struction, which some claim was the first vessel to ply on the Thames. Later he established a distillery and a grist mill, the power for their operation supplied by eight horses. His own tavern and the North West Trading Company supplied the market for the products of the distillery. And later still, he added to these two industries a tannery, a blacksmith shop, and a cooperage, all of which required the employment of a considerable body of men. But the hum of industry has long since ceased with this place for a centre. The mart of commerce, established by the enterprise of this settler came to an end with the passing out of the man who called it into existence, but time, however, cannot blot out the prior place which the name 'Dolsen' must always hold in any true account of the early settlement of the county.

**D**ifficulty in knowing who of these early settlers were Loyalists.

There are many other names besides that of Dolsen, associated with the founding of this first and Loyalist settlement in the county of Kent. After the ending of the war in 1783, Detroit and the Michigan and Ohio districts were still retained in the possession of the British, and continued to be so until it was finally given over to the Americans by the Jay Treaty of 1796. A body of Loyalists settled in that neighborhood as early as 1784. During those twelve or thirteen years of British occupation, there was no reason why the Loyalists should not remain in the city of Detroit or its vicinity, and indeed many of them did so. But when it finally became an American possession, those of them who could not overcome their preference for the British flag, crossed the Detroit river, and took up their residences in British territory. The Dolsen settlement received on that date a considerable increase to its numbers. But, in the absence of authentic records, it is difficult to ascertain with certainty, who of these later settlers were Loyalists, and who, dis-



banded soldiers, or American citizens, induced to come to the country by the promise of free grants of land. For instance, a George Sicklesteale, who settled in Chatham township in 1794, could hardly be called a Loyalist, seeing that he was formerly a member of the Hessian troop, one of those German soldiers, hired by George III to fight against the American Revolutionists. These after the war, were disbanded in America, and took advantage of the free grants of land offered to them in Canada, and settled there instead of going back to their own province of Hesse in Germany.

**T**wenty settlers squatted on Thames river land before survey into lots was made.

The first settlers came into the county as squatters. A survey of the land into lots did not take place until the year 1791 before which time there were twenty eight houses built on the river, nineteen of which were occupied on the date in which the survey was made. Around many of these there had already been made considerable clearances, showing that the first settlers had come in several years previously.

The names of these settlers are given by the surveyor in the following order,—Going up the river on the south side, Richard Surplex, Richard Merry, John Peck Jr., St. Carty, Robert Peck, Eliza Peck, John Peck, Sr. A Canadian, Daniel Fields, Samuel Newkirk, Thomas Williams, Charles McCormick and Isaac Dolsen. On the north side, Thomas Holmes, Meldrum Park, Arthur McCormick, Sarah Wilson, a Negro, Matthew Dolsen, and finally Clark, a millwright.

**A** list of the Loyalists settled as early as 1791.

In the same year, there is given a list of Loyalists, on the Thames river, to whom monthly food allowances were made,—Hezekiah Wilcox, Josiah Wileox, Hugh Holmes, John Pike, Robert Pike, Robert Simplex, Garr Brown, Thomas Clark, John Hazard, Jacob Hill and John Gordon.

As none of these men excepting Hugh

Holmes are included in the former list, it would seem to indicate that they must have become settlers on the Thames subsequent to May 1791, but in the same year, as the surveyor's list of settlers was made out in the spring months of that year.

Later records add to these the names of,—Peter Traxler and his three sons, Peter, Michael, and John; John Shepley; Fredrick Arnold and his four grown up sons, Louis, John, Christopher and Fredrick; William A. Everitt and his sons, William, Adam, David and John; John Blackburn and his sons—Anthony, Joseph, Robert, Leonard, Isaac and William; Peter French, son-in-law to Blackburn, and Lemuel Sherman, the first settler at Thamesville. These families, although leaving Pennsylvania at the same time as the earlier settlers, yet did not arrive at the Thames until 1796, or later, as they first settled in the neighborhood of Detroit and continued there as long as it remained under British occupation. They were of the same Dutch or German stock as Dolsen and his associates. Their religious faith, that of the United Brethren, or the Dunkard Church, was the same. They also were compelled to leave Pennsylvania for the same reason, their sympathetic, if not active, support of the Loyalist party in the war.

**A**n Association to perpetuate the memory of the Loyalists organized in 1896.

A Society was organized in 1896, known as the United Empire Loyalist Association of Ontario, the aim being, it was said, "to rescue from oblivion the history and traditions of the Loyalist families of the Province. Membership was granted only to those whose ancestors came to Canada prior to 1796. In accordance with the judgment of those who organized this Society, none who came to Ontario subsequent to that date, would be accounted as true Loyalists, no matter what part they took in the war, or what sufferings they endured later because of it. On this ground some of these later arrivals to the Thames settlement would be shut out from



the use of the title. But whether or not they have the right to be entitled, United Empire Loyalists, they have a right to be accounted

with the others as a part of the first pioneer settlement in the County, and as such we will reckon them.

### III

## THE DISBANDED BRITISH SOLDIER OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY WAR

**A**MONG the settlers comprising the first strata of our mixed population, we must not overlook the disbanded British soldier. Rev. David Zeisberger, the first Protestant Missionary in the County, describes the settlement when he first came to the country, as composed of English, Germans and French. Some of those whom he designates English may have been Loyalists, but the greater likelihood is that they were disbanded British soldiers.

**B**ritish regulars cannot be designated United Empire Loyalists.

In the Loyalist army, during the Revolutionary War in America, there were two distinct classes of soldiers. The first, were the soldiers of the Regular British Army, and the second, the citizens of the British American colonies who took up arms to support the continuance of organic connection between them and the mother country. These latter, denied citizenship in the United States after the war and their properties confiscated, are the only ones who have a right to the title of United Empire Loyalists. Yet we use the term indiscriminately in respect to both the professional and citizen soldier in the war.

**G**enerous grants of lands to soldiers to induce them to settle in Canada.

At the close of the Struggle, the Regular soldiers were disbanded in America, but in order to induce them to migrate to Canada instead of returning home to the motherland, generous offers of land grants were made to them by the British Government or their representatives in Canada. One year's provisions and a grant of land according to their rank was promised them. To each priv-



THOMAS LETSON  
PARDO, M.P.P.

Thomas Letson Pardo was a son of Thomas Pardo and Rachael Hughson and grandson of John Pardo, the pioneer settler of lot 111, Talbot road, township of Raleigh. He was a successful farmer, and established on a large block of land in the Lake Erie section of the township what was known as the 'Model Farm.' He also carried on a successful lumber business at Pardoville. In 1893, he was married to Ellen Jane Price, their sons and daughters being still influential families of that district. He was elected a member of the Provincial Legislature at the general election in 1891, for West Kent, defeating the former member,

James Clancy, by a majority of 515. He continued a representative for this riding for three successive Parliaments, when increasing years induced him to decline a fourth nomination. He was succeeded by A. B. McCoig, who was elected in 1903, by a majority of 167 over the same rival candidate, James Clancy.

Mr. Pardo took an active part in municipal affairs also and was a member of the township and county councils for over twenty years.

ate soldier there was given a grant of two hundred acres; to a sergeant, four hundred; one thousand to a subaltern and two thousand to a captain. In respect to the higher officials, the grants of land to them ran up to thousands of acres. Although to us to-day this may seem to be generous treatment yet we must remember that at that time land was valued cheaply, more especially by those to whom were given these grants. If the disbanded soldiers had but the thrift to retain these lands in their possession, their children would have later received a worthy inheritance, but very few of them attempted settlement. Instead, they sold their grants, on the first opportunity, to land speculators, receiving for them trifling prices. In this way, very many of these grants got into the hands of capitalists, who held them until the improvements of actual settlers on neighbouring lands enhanced their value, enabling them to obtain for themselves, princely, though unearned, fortunes.



Some soldiers, though not the rule, became successful settlers.

That they did not all so readily part with their land grants, of this we have more than one instance of which the Pardo family of Raleigh may be taken as an illustrative example. The founder of this family was John Pardo, who first settled in the township of Colchester, Essex county. As a soldier in the British Regulars, he rendered distinguished service, for which he received special mention, in the battle of Bunker Hill. His son was one of the early settlers of Raleigh to whom was donated a grant of land through Colonel Talbot of Lot 141 in that township. A grandson, Thomas L. Pardo, became a well-known politician, representing the County of Kent in the Legislature of the Provincial Parliament for several terms. The family still continue to hold a considerable acreage in this section of the County. Daniel Fields, who drew a claim of two hundred acres in Harwich, and Patterson who drew a claim of six hundred acres at Kent Centre, and built the first and only hotel at Bridge End on the Communication Road, may be cited as other examples of those who became permanent settlers. The great majority of them, however, drifted cityward, as they could not set themselves to abide too far away from the social centres with the hotel or tavern as the chief source of attraction.

**H**elplessness of the soldier-settler from lack of experience.

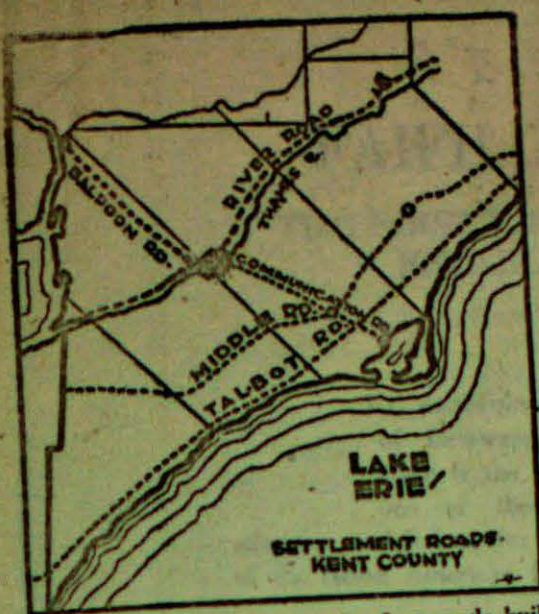
But in addition to the American, two other wars after this supplied Canada with a large quota of soldier-settlers, the War of 1812-1814, and the Napoleonic war which was brought to a close in 1819. At the close of this latter war and for some years after, a long season of unemployment and famine times followed. This affected, not only those who were combatant soldiers, but also the host of those associated with war work during the long years in which the nations of Europe fought one another, the tinkers, tailors, artisans and mechanics, who were employed to

supply the army with its necessary munitions and equipment. To relieve the growing distress in the British Isles, the Imperial Government made a concentrated effort to have its unemployed migrate to Canada, especially to Ontario, a province at that time, having an abundance of unoccupied lands and few settlers. But a more helpless contingent, facing the problems and conditions of Canadian pioneer life, cannot be conceived than that exhibited by the people of this migration. They, who had never before seen an axe, were sent out to hew down forests; who had never before seen a cant-hook, sent out to build houses; who had never before seen a hoe, sent out to grow corn.

Many are the pathetic letters which these sent back 'home' to their remaining friends in the Old Country as they depicted the realities which they were so little qualified to face, wails of self-pity wrung from truly suffering hearts. Perhaps the best expression of this helplessness and inaptitude for pioneer life is found in the writings of Susanna Moodie, the wife of a disbanded soldier-officer, in her book, "Roughing it in the Bush."

"The few weeks that I had sojourned in the country had by no means prepossessed me in its favour. The homesickness was sore upon me, and all my solitary hours were spent in tears. My whole soul yielded itself up to a strong and overpowering grief. One simple word dwelt forever in my heart, and swelled it to bursting—"Home!" I repeated it waking a thousand times a day, and my last prayer before I sank to sleep was still "Home! Oh, that I could return, if only to die at home!" And nightly I did return; my feet again trod the daisied meadows of England; the song of her birds was in my ears; I wept with delight to find myself once more wandering beneath the fragrant shade of her green hedge-rows; and I awoke to weep in earnest when I found it but a dream."





The above map indicates the first roads built in the county of Kent. The first road was built by the Delaware Indians of the Fairbanks village under the superintendence of Moravian missionaries. It was built on the north side of the river and was meant to connect their village with the Sally Hand or Thames river settlement. This and the survey of the Communication road, to connect Chatham with Lake Erie, was all the extent of road-building undertaken in the Eighteenth century era.

ther wars besides the American supplied soldier settlers for Canada.

Attempts have been made to magnify the hardships faced by the first and subsequent contingents of Loyalists to Canada by writers who might have better expended their efforts upon the disbanded British soldier. Loyalists were, in the main, men of experience, who had seen the works and ways of pioneer life in the years they had spent as colonists in America. The soldier-settler, if he had money, paid dearly for his experience and helplessness. If he had none, then he was saved, as many of them were saved, by the hospitality and generosity of the experienced settlers who had preceded them in the occupancy of the lands surrounding them. Their houses were built by their neighbours, their lands cleared by them, and sometimes, their crops sown and harvested by them, and that without price. A neighbour was never too busy in those days, but there was still time to help his neighbour. If the efforts of writers, devoted to depicting hardships, were spent in detailing the thousands of generous deeds of Samaritan kindness, the warp and woof of neighbouring pioneer social life, they might help perpetuate human qualities, without which the achievements of the first settlers were utterly impossible. The days and conditions of the first and pioneer settlers are gone never to come back again, but the best of human qualities and heart which they exhibited in their mutual efforts to build new homes and a new nation on a higher plane of privilege for their children than their fathers enjoyed, this, we trust, will remain for Canada, an abiding inheritance.



RE  
FAIFIELD AND ITS HISTORY

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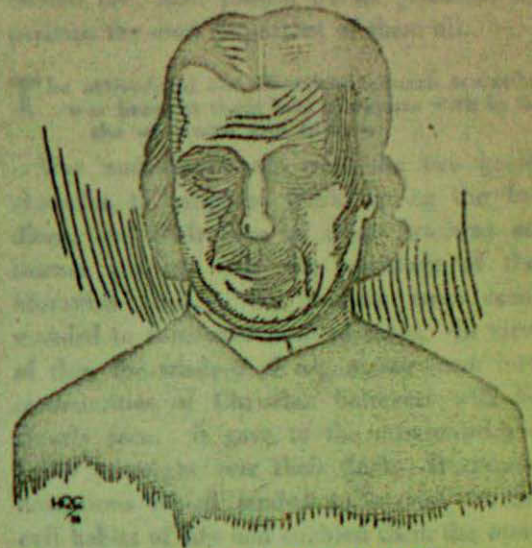
THE FIRST VILLAGE, AND THE SECOND SETTLEMENT  
ESTABLISHED IN THE COUNTY OF KENT

THE establishment of the colony of Delawares on the Thames river is the closing chapter of one of the most interesting attempts undertaken for the Christianising of the North American Indian.

he Mission was noted for its Community work as well as Missionary zeal.

The founder of this Mission was the Rev. David Zeisberger, the senior among a group of four Moravian Missionaries of whom Senseman, Edwards and Jung were the other three. The senior of this group, and the leader amongst them, was seventy years of age when he migrated, a refugee from the United States, to Canada. No more faithful missionary effort was wrought amongst Indians than that with which this man is credited.

He was born in Bohemia in 1721, his parents being members of that ancient Protestant church, the United Brethren of Moravia, a church which looks back to Huss as its founder, Count Zinzendorf of Saxony as its chief patron, and John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, as one of its noted converts. He was educated in Holland, but, at fifteen years of age, fled from the Moravian school at Utrecht, where he was being taught, and went to England. After remaining there a short time he took ship to



REV. DAVID ZEISBERGER

The founder of the Indian Mission on the Thames, 1792, was a member of the church of the United Brethren of Moravia, and a missionary among the Indians for more than fifty years before coming to Canada.

Georgia, to which State his parents had emigrated some time previously. While still a young man, he was appointed by his bishop "A perpetual missionary to the Aborigines of America." His life-work of sixty years, was devoted mainly to the Delaware Indians. After he died at Goshen, Ohio, in 1803, it was said of him that "No White man ever preached among the Indians for so long a time, or under trials and discouragements so great." Estimating a missionary," said an-



other, by the courage, skill, devotedness and perseverance which he shows, and by the privations which he endures, David Zeisberger's name deserves a place among those who head the roll of evangelical worthies."

In personal appearance, he has been described by one of his fellow missionaries as a man of small stature but well proportioned. His face bore the marks of constant exposure and of a hardy life. It was furrowed with deep lines, yet, always cheerful and pleasing. His dress was very plain but scrupulously neat and clean.

His method of work was thorough-going. He made the conversion of the individual his first aim, the starting point in his work, and in this he was pre-eminently successful. Although, during the sixty long years in which he labored among his fickle people, he saw many backsliders and experienced the humiliation of seeing some of his most promising converts fore swear their faith, yet, on the whole, there were many and permanent conversions among them, a matter of wonderment and surprise to the traders and white men among the Indians who saw the lasting transformation of character obtained.

Although satisfied with nothing less than the genuine conversion of the individual, he did not permit his work to stop there. He

immediately followed it up with community work. It was his custom, as of all Moravian missionaries, to establish a colony of believers as soon as they had secured a sufficient number of converts. Thirteen such communities had been established by Zeisberger—of which the one in Canada was his second last, and, judged by its permanence, perhaps the most important of them all.

**T**he attitude of the Moravian church towards war brought them into disrepute with both the whitemen and Indians.

War and intoxicants were the two great obstacles to religious work among the Indians, and their love of these two was an intense passion. By the teachings of the Moravian church, the Indians were commanded to fore swear both of them. In view of this, the wisdom of organising them into communities of Christian believers will be clearly seen. It gave to the missionaries a better oversight over their flock. It created conditions which tended to correct former evil habits of life and enabled them the more easily to follow the Christian way of living.

But, in addition to their moral and spiritual life, the Moravians had the betterment of their social and physical life in mind as well. Hence they set for themselves the task of a complete transformation in their outward mode of living. Villages were laid

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NOTE.—\*The Moravian Church, or the Church of the United Brethren, was founded in 1457, by pious followers of John Huss the Bohemian Reformer and martyr. They were subjected from the first to frequent persecutions, but notwithstanding flourished greatly. About the time that Martin Luther began the Reformation of the 16th Century, they had more than 400 churches in Bohemia and Moravia, together with a membership of at least 200,000, among whom were some of the oldest and noblest families in the land. This Church was almost destroyed in the first quarter of the 17th Century by the anti-Reformation activities of Ferdinand of Tyrol. In Moravia, however, many families escaped and secretly maintained the faith and practise of their fathers. In 1722, an awakening took place among the descendants of the Brethren, through the instrumentality of Christian David. Again persecuted, they fled from Moravia to Saxony, and found an asylum on the estate and under protection of Count Zinzendorf. This pious nobleman sold his estates, and gave himself up for the rest of his life to promoting the interests of the Brethren, and was their virtual head until his death in 1760. From him, Zeisberger received his appointment as Missionary to the Indians of North America. The work of Foreign missions is the principal field in which this church engages. A colony of them, among whom were the parents of Zeisberger, emigrated in the beginning of the 18th Century to Georgia, and established there the first Missions in North America. At the present time they have about 120 churches in America with a membership of something less than 20,000.

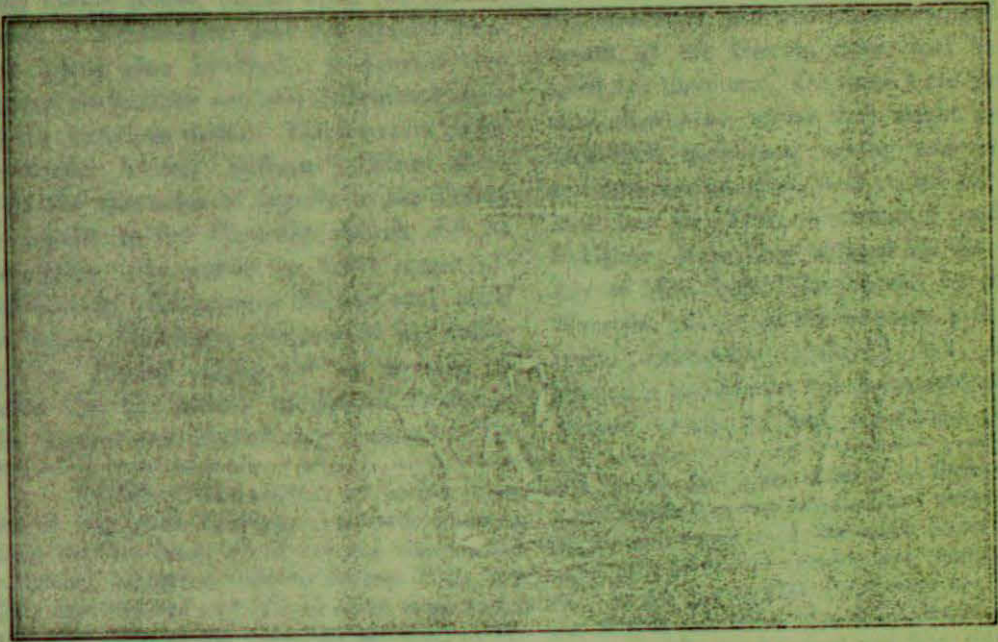


out with regularity and neatness for them, comfortable houses were provided, chapels and schools built, lands were cleared and farmed, cattle, swine and poultry were raised, and although hunting was not wholly abandoned, the products of the soil were made the source upon which they were chiefly to depend to make a living.

**T**he Delawares were brought to Canada to escape the exterminating war determined against them by the American Militia.

The occasion which gave rise to the establishment of the Fairfield Mission was

with the Revolutionists, and, by the Revolutionists as being in secret league with the Canadian French and British. When they were not harassed by bands of Pagan Indians, they were in constant danger of being attacked by irresponsible units of Loyalists or Revolutionists who suspected them disloyal to their side in the struggle. Finally their extinction seems to have been determined upon by the Americans. A community of ninety six were treacherously attacked by a party of American Militia in a manner, which, for heartless cruelty and



Rev. David Zeisberger preaching at night to the Indians.

the persecutions and massacres which the Delaware Christian Indians suffered at the hands of hostile Pagan Indians, and the American Militia. The Moravians were, as we have seen, pacifists, and took an uncompromising attitude to war, forbidding their members to take part in it or support any who did. This attitude was misinterpreted by both parties to the war in the time of the Revolutionary struggle. By the Loyalists, they were looked upon as in secret sympathy

with the Revolutionists, and, by the Revolutionists as being in secret league with the Canadian French and British. When they were not harassed by bands of Pagan Indians, they were in constant danger of being attacked by irresponsible units of Loyalists or Revolutionists who suspected them disloyal to their side in the struggle. Finally their extinction seems to have been determined upon by the Americans. A community of ninety six were treacherously attacked by a party of American Militia in a manner, which, for heartless cruelty and



**W**ar between the Americans and Indians of the Ohio waged with intensity on both sides threatens the extermination of the Delaware Christians.

In the beginning of the last decade of the Eighteenth century, an attempt was made by all the surrounding nations of Indians to join hands, and keep the American white-folk from coming into and settling in the valley of the Ohio. The Christian Indians under David Zeisberger were invoked to join with them in saving their country from further encroachments by the Whites. Messages were sent to them from the Grand Council threatening their massacre if they did not accede. Feeling against the Whites was intensified among the Indians by the massacre of their people and the burning of their village by an expedition sent out under instructions from the President. Passionate with feelings of revenge, anger and hate, some bands of fleeing Indians came out from their hiding places, turned upon two detachments of Kentuckians sent out against them and killed nine hundred. A general war against the Indians was now determined upon by the American nation. The warriors under Zeisberger became restless. Before them were the alternates of loyalty to the Indian or loyalty to the Moravian church and its principles. To choose the latter meant extermination. To prevent the one and avoid the other, Zeisberger sent two of his assistants to Detroit asking for an asylum of safety for his colony in British territory. His request was immediately granted. "In

God's name break up from here. The Lord is with you," counselled the missionary Edwards, one of the delegates, on his return. But fifty of the adult Indians, candidates for baptism, refused to move to Canada and joined the war-party now being assembled to fight the Americans\*\*.

**T**he Christian Delawares arrive in British territory, May, 1791, in time for corn planting.

It was early springtime when the message promising protection on British soil was brought to them. In order that they might arrive at their new place of abode in time for corn-planting, they began at once to make preparations for their departure. A sloop, the Saginaw, was chartered from the North West Company to take their effects, together with the aged and infirm of their company. The rest proceeded in two bodies; the one by land taking with them the cattle, and the other, in canoes. Two estates, which belonged to British officers, and which were situated at the mouth of the Detroit river, had been set apart for their use. On these were considerable clearances, where they might begin at once their springtime sowing and planting, and two houses, also, well suited for dwellings for the four missionaries and their families. Here they arrived on the fourth day of May, 1791. As the sun set over the Wyandot village on the opposite side of the river, Zeisberger gathered his converts around a big fire on the shore, and choosing hymns which he had translated into the

**NOTE.—\*\***The number of Indian inhabitants at the Moravian Mission at Salem at the end of 1790 when Zeisberger resolved to remove it to Canada was two hundred and twelve, thirty eight families made up of seventy six married people, nine single men, six single women, seven widowers, seventeen widows, thirteen large boys, nine large girls and seventy five small children. Only one hundred and fifty of these came to Canada. At the end of 1791, there were one hundred and fifty eight at the Canadian Mission; at the end of 1792, one hundred and fifty one; 1793, one hundred and fifty nine; 1794, one hundred and sixty five; 1795, one hundred and fifty eight; 1796, one hundred and sixty nine; 1797, one hundred and seventy two. In the year 1892, the centennial of their settlement on the Thames, the population of the Reserve is given as containing 304 persons, a growth of two to one in the first hundred years of their history. The census of 1921 gives the population on the Indian Reserve in the county as consisting of one thousand persons, five hundred and twenty five males, and four hundred and seventy females, all Canadian-born, besides eleven others either of British or foreign birth, but this must include those also on Walpole Island as there are not that many on the Moravian Reserve.



Delaware language they sang in thanksgiving worship their praises for this refuge of safety provided for them by the generosity of the British Government.

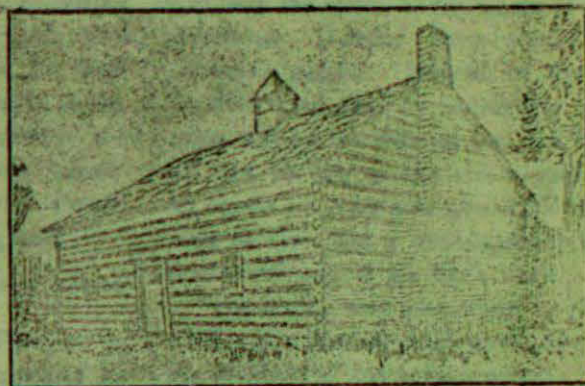
**R**etreat further inland and establish a permanent Mission on the Thames river, in the Spring of 1792.

Here they remained for a year. In the interval, attempts continued to be made to get his people to join the war now being waged in very earnest by the Americans against the Indians in the valley of the Ohio. To get farther away from these enticements, Zeisberger determined to move further inland and asked for a grant of land on the Thames, a permanent site for the establishment of his

French settlers. Towards the end of the month the whole congregation followed and in the beginning of May pitched upon a site admirably suited to their wants. It lay on the west side of the river, about eighty five miles from the mouth and consisted of a sandy bluff seventy feet high. On the east bank were three large bottoms of the richest soil, and not hard to clear, while numerous springs gushed into the river. A town was laid out which received the name of Fairfield and grew rapidly."

A detailed and accurate description of this village, the first to be established in the county of Kent has been preserved for us. "Upwards of forty houses were built, form-

This drawing, representing the first house for Christian worship erected in the County of Kent, was made from a description given of it in Rev. David Zeisberger's diary. The edifice was made of hewn logs, erected the first year of their arrival at the Reserve by the Indians under instruction of their missionaries and on the site selected by them for a Mission on the north bank of the Thames, a few miles west from the eastern limits of the County. Every Sabbath and every day for twenty one years, religious meetings were held in this chapel until burnt down with their village by the Americans in 1813.



KENT COUNTY'S FIRST CHAPEL

Mission. The application for this grant was duly forwarded to Sir William Johnson, but as the organisation of separate governments for Upper and Lower Canada was taking place at the time, an immediate answer could not be given. The Indian Agent at Detroit, Colonel McKee, on his own authority permitted them to go up and make a selection with the expectation that their choice would be later ratified by the Government. The chronicler of this second migration informs us that "after severe experiences because of storms, Zeisberger's party landed at the mouth of the Thames on the 16th of April, 1792, and came the next day to Sally Hand, a colony composed of English, German and

ing one street which began at the road to Detroit and ran south-east to north-east. On the north side, near the upper end, stood the church; beside it, Zeisberger's house; and immediately opposite a dwelling occupied by Edwards and Jung in common. Next to theirs was Senseman's comfortable house and close by the school-house. North of the lower end of the town lay the burial ground. The church was a log structure, boarded, with windows framed and glazed and a small steeple with a bell. It was one of the most commodious chapels in the west. The plantation embraced several hundred acres and the entire tract was surrounded by white settlers."



**G**overnor Simcoe visited them on his return trip from Detroit and expressed himself as well pleased with their work.

This Mission was not yet one year in existence when it was visited by Governor Simcoe. On his first trip to Detroit, 1793, as well as on his second in 1794, he expressed himself as well-pleased with it, both in respect to the loyalty of the missionaries to the British Government and their religious activities in behalf of the Indians. On his first visit he had the opportunity of seeing the town in course of erection. "A fine snow having fallen (Feb. 22), and though the weather was very cold yesterday and to-day, the brothers and sisters brought in timbers for the meeting-house on sledges, getting done to-day." So well pleased was he with the buildings that were being erected and the training they were giving the Indians in the science and practise of farming that he promised them a grant of a whole township for the use of their Mission. The following January (1794) Surveyor McNiff came there under his instructions, and laid off for them a tract twelve miles long and six miles broad, which was donated to them forthwith, the Deed being assigned in trust to the "Brethren's Society for propagating the Gospel among the Heathen," London, England.

**Z**eisberger relinquishes the work and returns to the United States.

After seven years' service at Fairfield in the performance of work distinguished by perseverance, faithfulness, zeal and courage, Rev. David Zeisberger, taking with him thirty three of his followers from Fairfield, returned to the valley of the Tuscarawas, and with them sought to establish one more community of Christian Indians before he finished his earthly career. Of the thirteen communities which he established, one alone stands to-day, a monument to his life of sacrifice and Christian endeavor, and that, not in the land of his adoption and in which he was buried, but in Canada, the country to which he turned in the hour of danger seeking an asylum of safety and freedom for his people, and

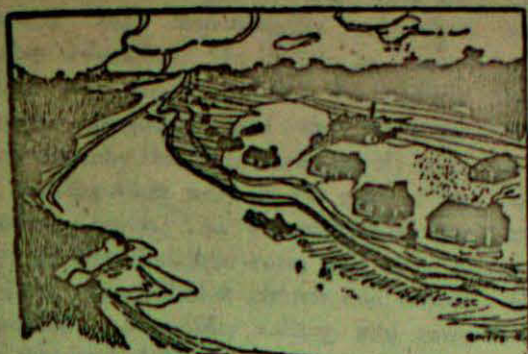
which this country generously granted. To this man must be given the credit of establishing the first religious house of worship, the first school and the first town or village in the County. He came here, not out of loyalty to the king, but of loyalty to the King of kings, for his aim in coming to Canada was wholly religious. He sought to establish on the soil of this County a people who would exhibit habits of industry and who would live lives true to the principles of Christ and Christianity. That he succeeded, and that with a people who were before noted for instincts of laziness and pagan savagery, is a credit not only to his own missionary zeal, but an evidence also of the saving power of the Gospel.

**H**is life's work reviewed.

When he was dying, he bewailed the little that he had accomplished in his life, for his had been the vision of the whole of the North American Indians transformed into a Christian people. Instead of that a mere handful, and they in immediate danger of extinction by the vices of war and drink were all that he saw of the vision realised when he closed his eyes and turned his face to the wall to die. But a contemporary has a different estimate of his life's work.

"The Indian was constrained to give up his wild habits and his cruel ways; to quench all the instincts of his savage nature; to change most of the customs of his race; to acknowledge woman as his equal; to perform the labor himself which for generations had been put upon her; to lay aside his plumes, paints and traditional ornaments of every kind; to assume the dress which white men wore; to plow and plant and reap like any other farmer; to rove no longer through the wilderness at pleasure, building lodges here and there, but to remain with his family in one town; and above all, to submit to municipal enactments, which were of necessity so stringent that nothing could be more galling to the native pride of American Aborigines."





FAIRFIELD

A village of forty houses on the Thames erected by Delaware Indians under direction of Moravian Missionaries who established a Canadian Christian colony here in 1792.

Not less than this spiritual state of prosperity was the growth of the Mission in material resources and importance. When Zeisberger left it in 1798 they had three hundred acres cleared and under cultivation; two thousand bushels of corn were annually furnished to the North West Trading Company; an extensive trade in cattle, canoes, baskets and mats was carried on and five thousand pounds of maple sugar made and sold every winter.

**T**his Christian Indian Mission destroyed by their old foes, the American soldiers, in 1813.

After twenty years of encouraging prosperity, the Delawares found again their old foes on their doorsteps with rifles and bayonets in their hands and through them their homes reduced to ashes. The war made against us in 1812 by the United States gave a severe blow to the work of this Mission. The battle of the Thames (October 5, 1813) took place near the village and after the laurels of victory had gone over to the Americans under Harrison, it was over-run by his soldiers, plundered and burnt to the ground. Not a vestige of its past improvements, obtained at so great a cost, was left standing. Of the two missionaries then in charge one fled to the protection of his Church at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, but the other remained to care for his converts who

had fled, on the approach of the soldiers, into the woods. He succeeded in bringing them from their hiding places and with them, towards the end of the year, built a village of bark-huts on lake Ontario. After the close of the war they returned to Fairfield and lived in huts on its site until they built a new village about a mile and a half from the former one, on the opposite side but somewhat back from the bank of the river. This village they named New Fairfield.

**T**he Moravian Church continued this Mission for a period of one hundred and ten years.

The subsequent history of this Mission is not without interest to us. It was continued under Moravian auspices for a period of exactly one hundred and ten years. During this period there had been, of necessity, many changes effected among the Indians, both in regards to the tribes represented on the Reserve and the character of the educational work done amongst them. When that portion of the Reserve on the north bank of the Thames was purchased back by the Government there were many of the Delawares displeased with the arrangements, and in umbrage they left the Reserve and emigrated back to the United States.

Besides, from the very first year of the Mission an occasional family would settle on the Reserve from other tribes, eventually becoming a permanent part of the Mission, Chippewas, Munceys and Mohawks even, being of the number. There seems to have been a larger accretion from the Muncey tribe than from any other, and indeed it would create no surprise if a careful analysis would reveal a larger strain of Muncey blood on the Reserve than of any other tribe, as the language now used, when it is not English, has a decidedly Muncey element in it.

In regard to their education, both religious and secular, that has now been abandoned by the Moravians since 1902. As the surrounding country became populated, and Indian families of Methodist and Anglican persua-

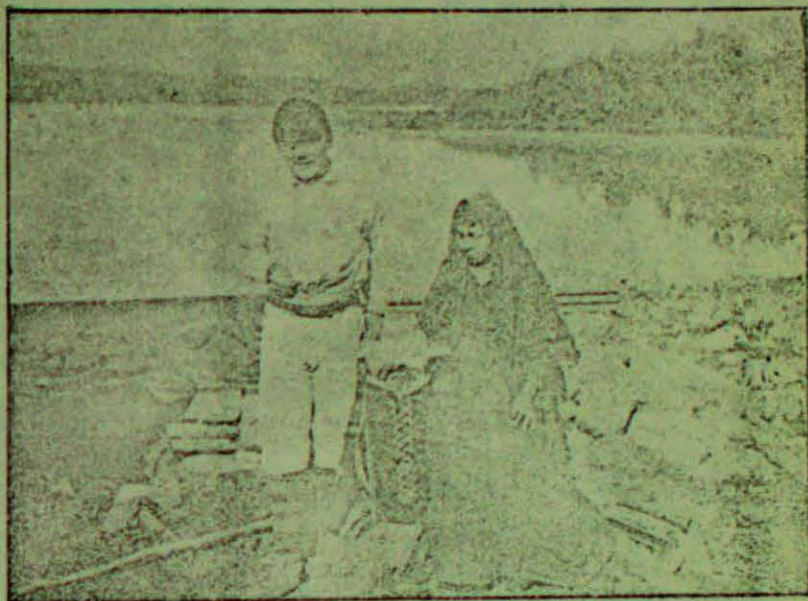


sion became residents on the Reserve these two denominations began to share with the Moravians the responsibility of their Christian education. In 1902, an understanding was arrived at by the resident Moravian missionary and the Methodist Church whereby the Moravians entirely withdrew, leaving their work in the care of the Methodist Church. As a consequence the history of New Fairfield came to a close at that date. The Mission church and school are unused and rapidly falling into ruin, while the work hitherto done there is now being done in the United Church of Canada edifices and the English Church Chapel occupying other sites on this Reserve.

### Centennial celebrated, 1892.

The Centennial of the founding of the Mission was celebrated by appropriate services on Sunday, May the 8th, 1892. Although several Centennials took place that year, being the hundredth anniversary of the establishment of Ontario as a separate province in Canada, the one celebrated at New Fairfield, is credited with being held prior to any of the others, and therefore the first held by any denomination in Ontario. The baptismal records of the Mission have been carefully preserved, and these indicate a very fruitful evangelical ministry in the first years of its history, there being on record a baptism of between 1300 and 1400 persons up to and including the year 1909, an average of more than seventy each year.

A roving impulse took possession of the Delawares in 1837 and two-thirds of them left the Reserve, the land area of which had been reduced by one-half through the repurchase of what has since become Zone township by the Government. They migrated to Westfield in Kansas accompanied by two of their missionaries. Here they lived a nomadic life, depreciating steadily in numbers resulting eventually in their complete extinction. A better fate has befallen those who remained on the Reserve or who have joined them since. They have become prosperous farmers, equal in ability to their white neighbours, and enjoying equally with them also the exalted influences and benefits of



AN INDIAN FAMILY

In this family, there runs in their veins the blood of at least four tribes,—Delaware, Muncey, Chippewa and Mohawk.

modern civilization. Throughout the years of their history the population has stood in the neighbourhood of three hundred and varies very little from year to year, yet, notwithstanding this, it must be admitted that the saving of this remnant from extinction by the venture of faith of these Moravian missionaries in 1792, has fully justified its undertaking.

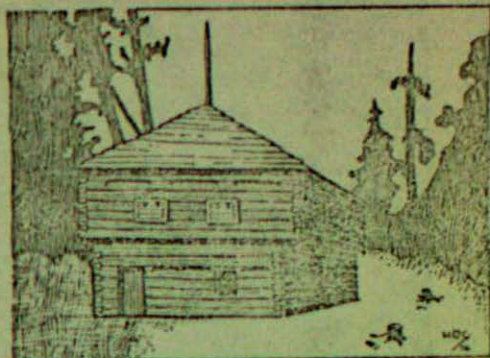


## CHATHAM

AS A MILITARY AND SHIP-BUILDING POST

SELECTED BY GOVERNOR SIMCOE FOR A TOWN-SITE IN 1793

At this point of time the history of the city of Chatham has passed the century mark by thirty odd years. It was selected as a site for a naval station and ship-building plant by Governor Simcoe on the occasion of his first visit to the district in 1793. The choice of sites for the future towns of our country followed in many instances the places previously chosen by the Indians for their villages. On the bank of a river, or on the shore of some lake where was a spot of high ground and open woods, there the Indian erected his temporary wigwam or built a lodge for a more permanent abode. Before the coming of the white man to the district, the present site of Chatham was a favorite rendezvous of the Indians and at his advent their cornfields and villages still existed in the near neighborhood. Although it might be said to be a level plain, devoid of the high spot so favorite to the Indian, yet in comparison with the swamp lands and plains lower down the river, it afforded a certain altitude which gave promise of providing sufficient drainage for an urban centre. The Thames was navigable from here to its mouth and so might reasonably be expected to become an important shipping point. Upon McGregor's creek, a short distance up, there were, according to the surveyor's report, facilities for water-milling purposes.



A BLOCK HOUSE was the first building erected in Chatham. After it had done duty for William Baker and his men, it was removed to Sandwich for a jail. The following account of it is contained in one of the Essex Historical Society's Reports:

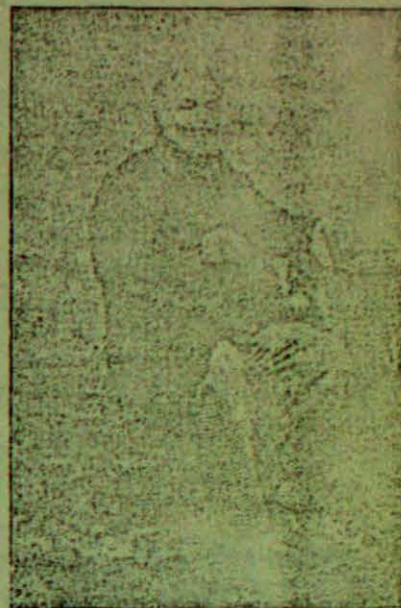
"On account of deserters from the American army, and the bad behavior of quarrelsome Indians, one of the first things the villagers were obliged to consider was the erection of a gaol and court-house. The need was so pressing that the authorities in the Western District allowed the Sandwich men to bring an old block house all the way from Chatham and convert it into their first gaol. This building was, however, destroyed by fire, and the chairman of the board of justices at once applied to the Government for assistance to rebuild it."

These gave added motives for selecting it for a town site. Colonel Simcoe made selection of it, therefore, not for the future capital of the province as some have so erroneously concluded, but for the above mentioned purpose, and during his regime as Governor he had made a commendable start towards the consummation of the project.



**T**homas Clark erected the first grist-mill in the county of Kent in the immediate neighborhood of which the townsite of Chatham was later chosen.

Even before this date, Chatham had begun its career as a future urban centre. Upon the mill-site, reported by Surveyor McNiff on McGregor's creek, a "mill of curious construction" had been erected by a Loyalist settler, Thomas Clark, reputed to be the first white settler in the township of Harwich, although only in a partially finished condition when Governor Simcoe and his suite made their winter excursion from Niagara to Detroit in 1793. To this Loyalist was given a grant of several hundreds of acres on the creek in addition to four hundred he had previously received on the Dover river front, this on condition that he would build a mill on the site indicated. He was a mill-wright, and this would seem to predict the possibility of his fulfilling the required conditions. Lacking capital, he borrowed a few pounds from a merchant of Sandwich, John McGregor, an incident which led to fatal consequences in regard to his venture. Not being able to pay at the time agreed upon, Mr. McGregor, taking advantage of the laws and customs of the time, had him put into jail. Here he was kept until he purchased his liberty by giving over to McGregor all his possessions, the mill-site with its adjacent lands and the four hundred acre farm in the township of Dover. The first mill erected was carried away by a spring freshet, the second by fire, but a third mill was built by McGregor some time before the war of 1812. This mill was burned down too, but by the Indians, to prevent it getting into the hands of the Americans during their invasion of the county in 1813. In 1818, he had another built, which came into control of his son, Duncan, in 1825, and it continued to be controlled by some of the family for many years after. The stream on which the mill was built has been since called McGregor's creek, and thus is the name of this astute



DUNCAN MCGREGOR

That the family of John McGregor became important factors in the early development of the trade and industry of the county, of this we have abundant testimony. The following sketch by a writer travelling by stage in the early days of the County's history, illustrates conditions as they existed then and incidentally bears testimony to the eminent place occupied by this family in establishing the early settlements on a permanent basis.

"We proceeded along the bank of the Thames until we came to McGregor's mill, ten miles from Howard's Bridge. There is a store and post-office kept here. The mill is large and does a good deal of business. The owner is wealthy and had a number of hired house servants. Among the rest I observed an aged French Creole. I learn that there are many French and Creole inhabitants in these parts."

merchant perpetuated and doubtless will be for many years to come.

**G**overnor Simcoe's ship-building plans suffer an early miscarriage.

The ship building enterprise initiated by Governor Simcoe was undertaken the year following his first visit to the district. It was put under charge of a William Baker of Detroit, a government employee of the shipyards in that place, and one who had held an important position in the British



# THE PRE-RAILWAY ERA OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

CHATHAM FOUNDED BY GOVERNOR SIMCOE

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Navy Yard at Brooklyn during the Revolutionary struggle. Twenty three men were employed under him. The residences of these, no doubt very primitive in their character, a block-house made of logs, and a trading house belonging to two fur-merchants of Sandwich, comprised this first naval ship-building station of British Canada within the bounds of the present province of Ontario. Forests, in which white-oak abounded, surrounded the yard. These supplied material ready at hand for the major part of the work, the remaining requirements brought easily by boat from Detroit. The oak was chopped down and split into planks by the woodsmen, hewn with broadaxe into the shape and size required by the ship-carpenters and erected into boats which constituted our first attempt towards the establishment of a Canadian navy. But the continuance of the enterprise was of short duration. Five gun-boats were built; two were launched; the others remained in the yards until they rotted or were carried away in parts by the settlers. The twenty three workmen scattered; Mr. Baker returned to Detroit and left his land grant of several hundred acres in the immediate neighborhood of the town-site, in the possession of his son-in-law. This was a Joseph Eberts, a merchant of Moy, who married his daughter Anne. They became permanent residents on this property, now since known as the Eberts farm, where they reared a re-

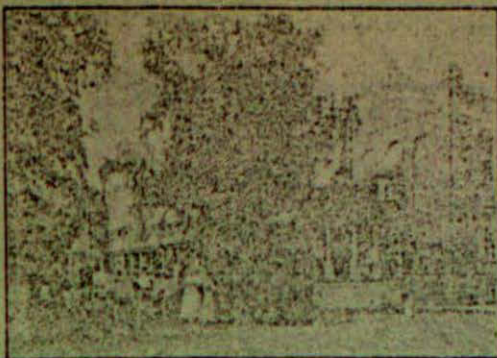
## KENT SOLDIERS' MONUMENT ENTRANCE TO TECUMSEH PARK

spected family, the numerous branches of which have since been associated with the history and progress of Chatham and district.

**B**ut the town-site selected, nevertheless, becomes an important centre of trade, industry and commerce.

While the military project of Governor Simcoe suffered miscarriage, not so his expectation of making Chatham, which he named after the elder Pitt, an important urban centre. After the ship-building operations of the Government were somewhat under way, he gave instructions to have a portion of the surrounding lands surveyed into lots for town building purposes. Lots one and two in the township of Harwich, and twenty seven in Raleigh were set apart for this purpose, comprising altogether six hundred acres. A reservation was made of the triangular plateau between the creek and river, at their junction, for government purposes. This is now known as Tecumseh park, an open spot in the centre of the city, comprising one of its most attractive features. A foot-bridge connects it with the central part of the city's most important business





VOCATIONAL SCHOOL, CHATHAM

street, the entrance to which is ornamented with an attractive monument erected to the memory of Chatham's fallen in the Great World War, 1914-1918. Beautiful residences and the Vocational school looks over it from the opposite side. While its name perpetuates the memory of the last of the great Indian chiefs, whose death at the battle of Moraviantown was the sounding of the long knell to the North American Indian's hope of ever recovering his lost lands from the white-man's aggressions, the reservation itself is a monument to the aspirations of a noble Englishman, who sought to build a British nation north of the boundary line of the United States, with British ideals and a British outlook, and on this site one of its defensive supports.

**T**he survey of the Six Hundred acres selected as a townsite commenced in 1795.

In the summer of 1795, the survey of the site into lots was commenced, the work being undertaken by surveyor Abraham Iredell, who laid out one hundred and thirteen lots of one acre each in double tiers along the river and creek fronts. It was he who erected the first building which might be rightly dignified with the name of house, and it was he, also, who set out the first orchard five years later, 1800, the first year of the Nineteenth century. After the abandonment of the ship-building industry by the Government, progress was halted and the site left deserted for many years. Apart from the

granting of a few patents for the lots surveyed in 1802, and the building of Iredell's house, there were no undertakings, either in the way of erecting further houses or of granting patents for the lots surveyed to intending purchasers until after the early years of the Nineteenth century. It was, indeed, well past a quarter of a century afterwards before there was any movement towards building a centre of trade on the site chosen. The Sally Hand, or Thames settlement, had its own stores for trade, that of Dolsen and of a man the name of Scott in Harwich, a little to the east of Chatham on the river, and around which there had grown up a considerable hamlet. Men were everywhere busy clearing the land in order to transform the soil into a food instead of a forest producer. Their family requirements were few and simple and every home was the manufacturing centre for its own needs. The age of specialising and of superfluous plenty was yet many decades distant in the future, and until farming, the first and most important industry of the country, would be well away to a good start, town building must take a secondary place in the country's enterprises and activities. Yet trade marts and industrial centres had to be established and in the supply of these for the incoming settlers Governor Simcoe's vision of a city at the junction of the Thames river and Clarke's creek became eventually realized.



ARMOURIES—TECUMSEH PARK





JOHN GRAVES SIMCOE

First Governor of Ontario, 1792-1796.  
Founder of the Cities of Chatham, London  
and Toronto.

Visited the County of Kent in the months  
of February and March, 1793.

THE ERA OF THE  
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY



~~X~~

THE MERGENCE OF CHATHAM FROM  
THE LOG CABIN ERA.

*Holy*  
*8/1*

**T**HE first frame house was built in Chatham in 1831; before this it was a village of log cabins. As the population at that time was something over one hundred, at least thirty of these dwellings would be required to house its inhabitants. Although thirty-five years had by this time passed, since the place was surveyed into a town plot, the village of 1831 represented only a ten year's growth. After the cessation of the Government ship-building industry and the scattering of Captain Baker and his men to Sandwich and other places, the town plot became deserted; no settlers were added to its permanent growth, until 1820. The distinction of starting out the future city on this second stage of its career belongs to William Chrysler and his son Henry. The son provided the first influence of attraction to the place as a centre of trade and commerce. As early as 1823 he erected a blacksmith shop and served industriously for many years at this trade, a great convenience to incoming settlers on the farms of the surrounding district. The elder Chrysler seems to have devoted a part of his time to farming on his town lot, as it is recorded that he raised a ton of tobacco on an acre of it in 1822. It is also claimed that a James Chrysler was the first school teacher of Chatham. At any rate the family occupied a prominent place in its subsequent history.

*Edg.*  
But the family most prominently associated with Chatham, in these early years of its history, and the only family to form a connecting link, between the first and second

stages of its growth, was that of the <sup>*before*</sup> ~~(above)~~ mentioned Eberts family.

The history of this family takes us back to the War of American Independence and the employment by George III of Hessian troops to fight the Revolutionary Army in his American Colonies. The original of the Chatham family—Dr. Herman Von Eberts, the prefix 'Von' is now dropped by all the families of that name—was of Austrian descent and became attached to the Hessian regiment as a surgeon. After the close of the war, this unit was disbanded in America, and many of the troop remained in the new land, and became settlers of Canada. Dr. Eberts settled after the war in Montreal where he remained for two years when he was appointed in 1784 to be governor of Michigan, that territory being still under British occupation. When it passed into the hands of the Americans in 1796, he moved to Sandwich.

His son, Joseph, was born at Boucherville, Lower Canada, March 15th, 1785. In 1810, he married Anne, the eldest daughter of Captain Baker. He served for some years as an officer of the North-west Fur Company, under the late Alexander McIntosh of Moy (now Windsor, Ont.) and subsequently became a trader and manufacturer there. He served throughout the war of 1812 as a captain in the Essex Regiment of Militia, and participated in all the chief events of that war on the western frontier; on one occasion during his absence on service, his house was destroyed by the Americans, his



wife and two children being turned out on the road. After the removal of Mr. Baker from Chatham, Joseph Eberts took possession of his father-in-law's farm on the outskirts of the town plot, on which he lived continuously afterwards, and reared a family of three sons and four daughters, two of whom, Walter and William became prominent merchants and boat-builders in Chatham. Joseph Eberts, as did Dolsen, opened a store on his farm, where he did an extensive business. Before bridges were built, a considerable business was done in ferrying, and he controlled this business which he carried on in conjunction with his farming and merchant trading.

His two sons, William and Walter moved the store from their father's farm in 1836 and opened out business on the Corner of King and Fifth streets, in a frame building which has since been replaced by the brick block bearing their name. In addition to their store, they had a boat built, which they named "The Brothers," in 1839 and commenced sailing the following year, one of the brothers being himself captain of it. This vessel did a considerable carrying trade on the Thames and many of the early settlers came in on it. They also had a share in the building of the first dock in Chatham, and in many other ways became prominently identified with undertakings leading to the advancement and progress of the city.

Another prominent man to arrive in this period of the city's history was one Israel Evans whose family was long identified with its subsequent history and whose son was License Inspector for many years. He arrived about the year, 1825, was a miller by trade, and, for about five years followed that calling in McGregor's mills. In 1830 he purchased the property now occupied by the Garner House and three years later erected a carding and grist mill on the north end of the property. This may properly be called the pioneer industry of the city as the McGregor mills were outside the city limits. This was of necessity a rather primitive undertaking, the motor

power being supplied by horses, but it supplied a much needed convenience for the incoming settlers and served to add to the attractions inducing others to come and settle on the town plot.

No school had been established in this period of the city's history, but a church was erected in 1820 under Anglican auspices. The incumbent was the Rev. Mr. Morley, who continued his residence here for a number of years.

The appearance of the village at this time was said to be not very attractive. The streets were but trails through the woods, full of holes and stumps, twisting along the bends of the river; and barely passable for wheeled vehicles. There was very little clearing done within the town plot. The Barrack ground was under crop as it had been cleared during the time of its occupation by the Government as a military post. A sugar bush, a beautiful grove of maples stood in the middle of the town which was long used afterwards for a gathering place of politicians and picnickers and served as a polling booth where the first and open elections were held. Even the portion of the town plot set apart for school purposes was a dense bush up to 1840, while a large swamp occupied that space of the grounds along Wellington Street where now are built the principal churches of the city.

The period when settlers began to come more numerous dates from the year 1830 until the coming of the first railway into the district. It was at this time also when Chatham began to move forward rapidly towards that progress and achievement to which it has since attained.

It was in 1836 that Mrs. Jameson paid her first visit to Chatham. "I can hardly imagine a more beautiful or more fortunate position for a new city than this of Chatham," she wrote of it, describing it later. "It is sufficiently inland to be safe, or easily secured against the attacks of a foreign enemy; the river Thames is navigable from the mouth up to the town, a distance of sixteen miles, for all kinds of lake craft, including steamers

no - 1819

no - The Rev.  
Richard Pollard

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and schooners of the largest class. Lake St. Clair, into which the Thames discharges itself, is between Lake Erie and Lake Huron; the banks are formed of extensive prairies of exhaustless fertility, where thousands of cattle might roam at will. As a port and depot for commerce, its position and capabilities can hardly be surpassed, while as an agricultural country it may be said literally to flow with milk and honey. A rich soil, no rent, no taxes—what here is wanting but more intelligence and a better employment of capital to prevent the people from sinking into brutified laziness, and stimulate to something like mental activity and improvement! The profuse gifts of nature are here running to waste, while hundreds and thousands in the old country are trampling over each other in the eager, hungry conflict for daily food."

By this time the budding village had added a school house to the church, it could boast of at least two taverns, and a population of three hundred people. One of these taverns had a reputation of being one of the best in the district. The other did not bear so good a reputation. "The first view of the beautiful little town," continued Mrs. Jameson, "made my sinking spirits bound like the sight of a friend. There was, besides, the hope of a good inn; for my driver had cheered me on during the last few miles by a description of "Freeman's Hotel," which he said was one of the best in the whole district. Judge then of my disappointment to learn that Mr. Freeman, in consequence of the "high price of wheat," could no longer afford to take in hungry travellers, and had "no accommodation." I was driven to take refuge in a miserable little place, where I fared as ill as possible. I was shown to a bedroom without chair or table; but I was too utterly beaten down by fatigue and dejection, too sore in body and spirit, to remonstrate, or even to stir hand or foot. Wrapping my cloak around me, I flung myself on the bed, and was soon in a state of forgetfulness of all discomforts and miseries. Next morning I rose refreshed and able to bestir myself; and

by dint of bribing and bawling and scolding and cajoling, I at length procured plenty of hot and cold water, and then a good breakfast of eggs, tea and corn cakes;—and then I set forth to reconnoitre."

The village which thus roused the ecstasies of Mrs. Jameson was, as we have observed, not much better than a scattering cluster of log cabins, with here and there a frame building giving promise of the progress which had now begun for Chatham. Many fresh arrivals marked the years between 1825 and 1835. Beginning with P. P. Lacroix, there were added such names as: Joseph Northwood, Henry Van Allen, James Reed, Henry Verall, several of the Baxters, Joseph and Robert S. Woods. The coming of these families of enterprise gave a new impetus to the life of the village. Its growth for a few years afterwards was remarkably rapid. From three hundred of a population, it rose to seven hundred and fifty-nine in 1840, eight hundred and twelve a year later until it reached no less than one thousand and eighty-two in 1843. The future of the village was now certain. The coming of the railway in the middle of the century and the boom in the lumbering industry following it kept up the pace of progress set for it in the five years preceding 1840.



## CHATHAM CITY

Its Emergence from a Cluster of Log Cabins  
to a City. A Review of One Hundred Year's Growth and  
Development.

### I.

#### The Chatham of To-day

The Chatham of To-day represents a hundred year's growth. "Notwithstanding that grants of lots had been so early made,\*\* no real settlement of Chatham commenced until about 1826, nor was there anything approaching the character of a village for a few years offer."\* This sentence penned by a local historian half a cantury ago, is, without doubt, a reliable stat<sup>e</sup>ment of fact, and a significant commentary on the slowness of growth in the early settlement of this western district.

The town-site and county received their name from Governor Simcoe.

The place was named Chatham by Colonel Simcoe, its founder, who named it after the elder Pitt, an esteemed friend of the Governor's. The name of the County was given by the same distinguished personage. By some it is thought to have been called after the Duke of Kent, the fourth son of George the Third, whom we know best as the father of our late and beloved Quean Victoria.



With him Governor Simcoe spent his first winter in Canada, at Quebec, where he was stationed that year, 1792, as commanding officer of the sixtieth Regiment. But as the title, Duke of Kent, was not granted to him until a later period, 1799, this could not well be. Doubtless, Governor Simcoe, in naming the nineteen countries into which he divided the province in 1792, did for Kent what was done in the case of other counties, gave to it the name of an important county in his own native England, a new Kent in a new country and Province.

A blank page in the history of Chatham

The history of Chatham for the first twenty years of the nineteenth century was a blank as far as its future growth and progress were concerned. A quarter of a century had rolled by since the day when Governor Simcoe stood at the 'Lower Forks' of the Thames, and said, with the authority of one who had the government of the country at his back, "Here we shall plant a city," yet when his term as governor expired, and he left the country, the enterprise of a ship-building plant, which he had established under Baker, was dropped. Had it been continued, for Governor Simcoe was a man of vision, the Lake Erie disaster in the war of 1812-1815, would never have been recorded. To the loss, both of the country and the embryonic city, Chatham's first industry had a short and fruitless career.



Other trading centres grew up in the neighborhood of the projected townsite.

The absence of progress in these first two decades of the century was due not only to the miscarriage of Simcoe's plans, but also to the retarded settlement of the surrounding district, and rival attempts at the building up of trade and industrial centres at other places, in its immediate neighborhood. McGregor's grist-mill, with Scott's store by its side, was at this time a busy place, but up the creek, and outside of the town plot's survey, Arnold's mill, in Howard Township, near Kentbridge, served the requirements of the eastern settlers, and a considerable hamlet was established there. Dolsen's, down the river, with its grist-mill, saw-mill and distillery, the motive power for its industries supplied by oxen and horses, was a greater place than either of these two, because longer established. A fourth place, Ebert's farm, with its store, ferry, and boat-traffic, a strong rival of Dolsen's in this enterprise, supported these others in preventing during these twenty years the aim and idea of Governor Simcoe from being carried out.

Immigration to Canada during Napoleon's war had practically ceased. All the man power of Great Britain was required to maintain a successful defence against him in that struggle. When it ceased, thousands were out



of employment, and as the country was slow to make recovery they were forced to turn their eyes towards America as the only place where they might hope to find a way out of their difficulties. To this end certain well-disposed persons assisted by the Government, undertook to aid immigration. Many valued additions were made to the settlements of this district at that time, and soon the beginning of a city, yet to be, was established on Simcoe's town-side.



Factors accounting for its Growth and Development

There has been nothing of the spectacular in the past history of Chatham, yet it has had a hundred years of steady progress. This is due to the nature of the influences at work, producing for it a continued though slow advance in growth and development.

Situated in a rich and Extensive Agricultural District

The first of these which naturally would appeal to Governor Simcoe as the founder, was the fact that the site was in the centre of a rich and extensive agricultural district. When men came to this country to exchange, as one has said, 'want, servitude, and hopeless toil at home for plenty and independence' it was by the possession of good land and the occupation of husbandry they expected to make the exchange. It was the first occupation and enterprise to be undertaken in this country.

When Mrs Jameson, in 1837, declared that she could not think of a more fortunate position for a new city than that chosen for Chatham, upon what enterprise was she grounding her expectations that the cluster of log cabins upon which she was then looking would be replaced in future days <sup>by</sup> substantial residences and the commercial houses of a



proud city? Surely, upon that industry which would transform its surrounding wilderness of trees into fertile harvest fields.

"It is reasonably safe to declare," wrote an earlier traveller of Kent county, "that husbandry is going to continue its important enterprise. Yet this occupation must be considered in its widest aspect--grain, fruits, vegetables, dairy products, live stock, must all be included."

He might have added--all the variety of manufactures directly and indirectly connected with farming. Had he done so, then he would have given us a more adequate description of that factor, which, more than any other, has accounted for the growth and prosperity of Chatham during the past hundred years of its history. It was situated in the centre of a well-timbered district of good agricultural land, a valuable asset, on the possession of which any industrious and thrifty people could assuredly build up hopes of a prosperous future. An extensive belt of fertile soil! What that meant towards the attainment of prosperity and progress gave doubtless to Governor Simcoe his chief reason for selecting it as the site of a future city, and to Mrs. Jameson, her vision of a great multitude of people inhabiting it and living in the enjoyment of plenty and independence obtained from the



harvests supplied by these farm lands.

#### Chatham's Growth compared with London

1 In comparison with that other site selected on the Thames at the same time by Simcoe, London, how is it that its growth has been more rapid than that of Chatham? This is accounted for, in part at least, by the character of their respective agricultural areas, but this is not to predicate any inferiority on the part of the lands in the Chatham area. The land in the area of the Lower Forks of the Thames was rich, just as rich as that in the area of the Upper Forks, but also, low, wet, and heavily timbered. Settlers naturally chose the higher and lighter-timbered lands to the lower and heavily timbered, because they were more easily cleared. Hence, the London area received a larger share of the incoming settlers and its agricultural possibilities were therefore developed sooner than were those of the low-lying plains further down the river. The clearance of the land in the Chatham district, not only took a longer time to perform, but even then drainage had to be undertaken before the land was made effective for crop-growing. To this day, all the possibilities of this district are not fully developed and will not be until drainage receives its final and complete achievement.

New Industries of Chatham are looking to the farm for their raw products.

The dependence of Chatham on the surrounding district



for its progress and prosperity is clearly illustrated by a review of the new industries which have been established there in the last twenty five years. Five important ones have been established in this period all directly dependant upon the agricultural industry as the basis of their operations and success, the Dominion Sugar Company, the Libby-McNeil Canning Company, the Canadian Fertilizer Company, and two tobacco concerns. The raw material for four of these must be supplied from the farm lands in the neighborhood of the city. The fifth, having to do with the manufacture of a product to increase the fertility of the soil, must look to the farmers for its market, and no market can be better than the home market. Prosperity will attend these industries, other things being equal, in the measure in which the surrounding district adopts intensive farming as their method of cultivation. The soil is suited, so also the climat, for the growing of the products necessary to supply the raw material for these industries. Much capital is invested on the expectation that there will be a harmonious co-operation with their aim, on the part of those tilling the neighboring farm lands. If this is denied them, then these manufacturing plants must cease operations for want of the necessary products to carry on their industries. But as in the past, the surrounding country has supplied Chatham with its chief source of trade, and the needs and products of the surrounding farm lands has made possible its main industries, so,



doubtless, in the future, this will continue to be an important source from which will come the impetus to a further advance in the growth and prosperity.



The Thames river an important factor in the growth of Chatham in the pre-railway era.

A second factor accounting for the city's growth was one, the influence of which was <sup>most</sup> felt in the twenty five years immediately preceding the coming in of the railway, its situation at the head of navigation on the Thames river. The Thames was the first highway, and for a long time the only highway, which gave the settlements access to the outside world and its products. The goods required by the first settlers came from Detroit. This was their first market,



as it was the first Government seat of  
the district. The craft, which plied  
on the lake and streams that connected  
Chatham with Detroit, must have been  
very crude, and before steam-power was  
used, whether the boats were propelled  
by oars or sails, the journey between  
these two places must have been very  
slow and tedious. Nevertheless, this  
was the only method of travel and trans-  
portation until superseded by the  
railway in 1855. There was early es-  
tablished regular lines of boats carrying  
passengers and freight by the Dolsons  
and Everts as the pioneers in the trade.



Many of the first settlers and their effects came into the county by that route. The building of the first boats increased the importance and the traffic on this water-highway. Built to connect settlement with settlement, they were made to converge at Chatham, the place which gave them access to <sup>the boats,</sup> ~~to,~~ and thus made of Chatham the port of entry into this district, as Port Stanley was for the Gallop settlement and the London district. The Baldoon road joined Chatham with St Clair lake and the settlement at the mouth of the Sydenham river; the communication road with Lake Erie;



and the Thames river road, cut out by  
the Fairfield Indians in the autumn of  
1792, gave to the eastern settlements  
access to Detroit by way of Chatham's  
freight and passenger vessel route. Later,  
when the Talbot road was connected by  
a road cut out along the townline be-  
tween Howard and Harwich, and then  
swinging westward along the north  
bank of McGregor's creek to Chatham,  
then the way of travel between Detroit  
and Niagara was made from Detroit  
eastward to Chatham by the route on  
the Thames, but from that point over-  
land by the Talbot road.



Immigrants making their way westward from New York state to Ohio and Indiana also took this route. With the increase of this traffic and trade there was a commensurate growth in the size and importance of Chatham, and gave to it a point of advantage from which it did not afterwards recede.

McGregor's creek also took a part in aiding Chatham's growth. Added to the part played by the Thames in fostering growth was that also of McGregor's creek. Viewing that stream on a midsummer day of the present era, it would seem like irony to write of it as being anything of a factor in influencing favorably the



growth and prosperity of the city  
now situated at its place of junction  
with the Thames. At such a season  
it sinks into insignificance as a  
stream, being in some places, nothing  
more than pools of dirty water. But  
before the forests had been removed  
off the land, and the present scheme  
of drainage of the country ~~had been~~  
realized, McGregor's creek was <sup>a stream of</sup> some  
considerable <sup>size</sup> ~~stream~~. ~~But~~ It derived  
its importance, <sup>however,</sup> not from its size, but  
because it provided a site for a  
grist-mill, an indispensable requisite



for the sustenance of incoming settlers.

Before steam-power was discovered and put into practical use, water power was the substitute, and McGregor's creek was capable of providing that power. Spanning its depths in the near neighborhood of the surveyed townsite, the first grist mill was erected in 1792 by Thomas Clarke, a United Empire Loyalist and mill-wright, which later became the possession of John McGregor, a Sandwich merchant. This mill, and its successors on the same site, served the needs of the district for grinding purposes during the whole



of the pre-railway period, and became an important factor in drawing trade and traffic towards the junction point of creek and river during this period of its history and growth.

In another way, also, Malsregor's creek became a factor influencing the growth of first the village and then the town, in providing a medium by which the timber of the district, flanking its both sides, was brought to Chatham to be manufactured into lumber or mill-staves. The amount of timber which came to Chatham in this way was immense,



sufficient to keep two of the largest  
mills in the county in constant  
operation. These two streams con-  
stituted important factors in influencing  
the growth of Chatham during the  
period when the boat-trade of the  
Savannah and the lumber industry  
of the county flourished.

Chatham became the county town  
in 1850 and this added <sup>to it</sup> prestige as  
well as growth.

Hdq  
8 pt. Blk



There was needed now only the coming  
of the railway to insure for Chatham a  
certain future. But before this another  
event occurred which greatly helped  
to hasten the progress of its growth -  
the selection of it as the seat for the  
municipal government of the County.

Before 1850, the province was divided  
into districts, and the Western was  
created with Essex, Kent and Lambton  
composing its territorial area. Sandwich  
was made the seat of its government.  
The Municipal Act of 1849, which es-  
tablished our present system of Municipal



institutions, made townships and  
counties the units of local government.  
Kent accordingly became an independent  
unit, and Chatham was made the  
county town. Centrally situated within  
the area comprising the county, and at  
that time, the largest urban centre,  
there were no rival claimants. The  
propriety of the selection received the  
unanimous consent of all the county  
electorate. This necessitated the erection  
of a court-house and gaol, and the  
coming in to the city, as permanent  
residents of it, of all the officials



attached to the municipal machinery,  
now being set up for the first time  
in the county, in common with the  
establishment of alike privileges for  
other counties throughout the whole  
province. This was not so much a  
gain in population as a gain in prestige  
an added assurance that on the site  
chosen by Governor Simcoe, there was to  
arise the greatest urban centre within  
the bounds of the county, and ~~this~~ im-  
pression <sup>which</sup> had the natural effect of  
stimulating progress in other lines of  
activity.



449  
Railway facilities, <sup>by</sup> ~~under~~ the construction  
of the Great Western, brought rapid progress to Chatham.

Shortly after this event, the first  
railway transversing the western pen-  
insula was built, which made a complete  
change in the mode and facilities  
for transportation and travel, not only  
for Kent but for the whole district.  
This was the Great Western, the chief  
promoter of which was the Hon. Alban  
McNab of Hamilton. When this railway  
was mooted in 1850, there was not one  
mile of railway in the province of Ontario,  
though in Quebec, twenty miles had been  
constructed. Although at this time the  
Great Western had been chartered and



the line in part surveyed, an effort was made to have the line run from Niagara instead of Hamilton as the eastern terminus, through Brantford, Woodstock, London and Chatham to Windsor, and there make connection with the Michigan Central of Detroit. This would avoid the mountain route, and the great expense connected therewith, which the making of Hamilton as the terminus, would involve. R. S. Woods, a young barrister of Sandwich, who had that year transferred his place of residence and business to Chatham, devoted much time, backed by the Michigan Central



to bring this change about. The matter  
was brought before the Parliament, sitting  
that year for the first time at Toronto,  
but defeated by one vote. The Great Western  
people, who had hitherto been delaying the  
construction of their line, were ordered to  
proceed at once with the work or the  
charter would be granted for the alternate  
route. This had the desired effect,  
and within three years afterwards, in  
the Fall of 1853, it was built as far  
as Chatham and opened for traffic the  
following January. Twenty years later,  
this line was sold out to the Grand



Trunk company and became a part of their system.

The agitation for a line of railway - from Niagara to Detroit, in order to form a link of connection between the Michigan and New York railways, was, <sup>however,</sup> continued.

Twenty years later it was realized under the name of the Canada Southern. Hitherto, the plan of getting municipalities to aid in the construction of the railways had been adopted, and the aid of Kent was solicited on the assumption of its passing through Chatham, but its defeat was brought about as related in another chapter, under not too commendable conditions. A southern



route was followed leaving Chatham  
six miles north of this important  
line of railway. But other railways  
followed, the Erie and Huron in 1883, and  
the Canadian Pacific in 1889, and the  
disadvantage which followed the loss of  
the Canada Southern was made up by  
these two. Chatham has now railway  
facilities sufficient for its need, and  
if there is not in the future, a growth  
commensurate with its possibilities, that  
cannot ~~now~~ be attributed, at any rate,  
to a lack of railway facilities.  
→ The <sup>springing up of the lumber industry following the</sup> ~~benefit~~ <sup>most appreciated by the</sup>  
~~construction of the~~ <sup>benefit</sup> ~~most appreciated by the~~  
arrival of the railway was the effect it  
had on the lumber industry. Before



this a market had been found for  
oak staves and square timber, but all  
export had to be made by water routes.  
Henceforth, lumber could be moved readily  
and to any part east or west. The  
cutting of the timber into cordwood was  
the chiefest of the branches in this industry,  
and this product of the forests of Kent  
was in great and increasing demand.  
It was used not only for domestic  
purposes, as fuel for cooking and heating  
dwelling houses, but it was <sup>in demand</sup> ~~used~~ also for  
generation of power in factories and for  
railways. There was a plentiful supply  
of it, and the mining of coal had not  
yet become an active and commercial in-



industry. Detroit was Kent's greatest market

and the railway made its transportation

to that market, <sup>not</sup> an easy matter, <sup>but</sup> ~~the~~  
it provided an all-year round source of employment  
~~industry~~ did not ~~mean~~ ~~to~~ ~~prevent~~ ~~the~~  
instead of confining it, as hitherto, to the navigation  
~~opening of navigation to find its market.~~  
season

This industry did not add anything, <sup>though it did to its growth</sup>  
however, to the appearance of the city, for  
like all other railway depots, access  
to Chatham's <sup>station</sup> was through lanes flanked  
on either side by piles of cordwood.

It is ~~not~~ related that as many as a thousand  
— and taking into account the number employed in the lumber  
business, this would be a conservative estimate —  
yoke of oxen, ~~were~~ <sup>were</sup> put in requisition

every ~~on~~ favorable winter's day, making their

slow way along the County's highways

tugging their load of cordwood to the railway  
depot at Chatham or other appointed



cordwood yards. The cities of the United States required wood and lumber and the settlers of Kent were gladly anxious to supply their need. The number of men which this industry employed was enormous. The families of many of these dwelt in Chatham, so that this industry became one of the greatest factors to increase the population of the town in the middle period of the nineteenth century. It was the chiefest industry of the county, during this period even husbandry having to take a second place to it, and it continued such as long as the timber lasted. But the supply was



limited, and when it became exhausted,  
the settlers had to direct their un-  
divided efforts to the development of the  
land, now denuded of even cordwood  
timber, for crop-producing purposes,  
and Chatham, in turn, had to seek  
other industries to supply employment  
to its increasing population.

Along  
with  
the  
Bills

Businesses from smaller centres attracted to Chatham.

Next to the stimulating of the lumber  
industry, the railway had the effect of  
attracting business men from other centres  
in the county to Chatham. Among these  
were two who became very prominent  
citizens and wielded a great influence  
in the subsequent development of the town.



Daniel Ross Van Allen from Dresden and Thomas H. Taylor from Dawn Mills — the enterprises built up by them still continuing as important parts in the industrial life of the city.

D. R. Van Allen was born in Burford, Ontario, in 1823, and came to Chatham with his uncle, Henry Van Allen, when he was ten years of age. He began his future career as a clerk in his uncle's store, but at nineteen years of age embarked in a mercantile business of his own at Dresden. After founding the town of Dresden, he ~~renewed~~ <sup>came back</sup> to Chatham, and in 1858 embarked in ~~a~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~lumber~~ <sup>timber</sup> business, erected a mill for the manufacture of lumber for the local market, and became a potent force for the building up of an export trade in square timber and lumber for the British market. In 1882 he founded the Chatham Manufacturing Company.



later known as the Chatham Wagon Works,  
but now, owned and operated by an American  
corporation, <sup>under the firm name of</sup> ~~known as~~ The International Har-  
vester Company.

Thomas H. Taylor was the son of William  
Taylor, a pioneer of means who settled on  
the banks of the Sydenham in 1830, and es-  
tablished a considerable village there by the  
erection of a grist-mill, and a store, this  
latter being conducted by his son Thomas H.  
Taylor, and his son-in-law, A. B. Baxter.  
Subsequently there was added a woolen mill  
and a saw-mill, and Dawn Mills gave promise  
of becoming an important centre of trade.

But the coming of the railway to Chatham, and  
the <sup>brighter</sup> ~~future~~ prospects for the future which this  
created induced ~~the~~ Mr Taylor, <sup>in 1858,</sup> to transfer  
these industries which now had come  
under his control, to this larger centre.



Accordingly, in 1858, there was founded by  
him in Chatham an industry for the manu-  
facture of woollen goods and flour under  
the firm name of J. H. Taylor & Company.  
This industry expanded with the growth  
of the town and country necessitating the  
erection of its present-day elevator and  
grist-mill in 1872. For thirty-three years  
he continued as head of this enterprise, which,  
at his death in 1891, came under the man-  
agement of his ~~son~~ family with J. K. Holmes,  
M. D., as President of the newly-organized  
company.



## CHAPTER VI.

37

# The BALDOON

### THE WELL-MEANT BUT DISASTROUS VENTURE OF LORD SELKIRK TO ASSIST HIS TENANTS—TO FOUND FOR THEMSELVES NEW HOMES IN CANADA

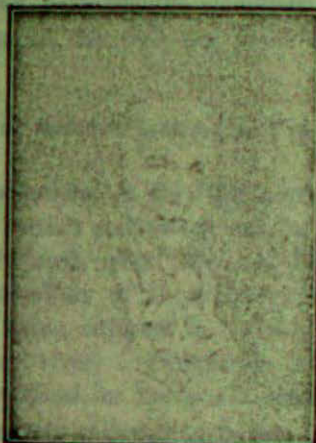


WITH the opening up of the Nineteenth century, the Thames settlement had made considerable progress and now numbered more than a hundred families. As the

flotilla of canoes, which carried back Zeisberger and his thirty Indians to the United States in 1798, floated down the Thames, wonder and surprise was expressed by the departing missionary, as he saw the

The founder of the Baldoon settlement was a scion of one of the old and noble families of Scotland, the seventh son of Dunbar, the fourth Earl of Selkirk. He succeeded to the family earldom at twenty-eight years of age, being the only survivor of seven brothers at the time of his father's death. In his personal appearance, he has been described as pleasant in countenance,

tall and spare, fully six feet in height, energetic and resourceful, 'a remarkable man who had the misfortune to live before his time.' He was a contemporary student with Walter Scott at the University of Edinburgh, a man of literary abilities, the author of several books and possessed a kindly and generous disposition which led him after inheritance of the family earldom to devote himself to the assisting of the poor of his own countrymen to better their economic conditions by emigrating to Canada. Although a Southron, he learned the Gaelic language and



THOMAS DOUGLAS

the fifth

Earl of Selkirk,

Born June, 1771, at St.

Mary's Isle, Kircudbrightshire, Scotland

during frequent visits to the north of Scotland he became extremely fond of the Highland people. Moved with compassion by the distress caused by the Napoleonic wars and the landlord 'clearances', at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century era, he laid plans for a systematic emigration policy which he deemed as the best solution for the removal of the economic distress from which the British nation was at the time suffering. In August, 1803, he brought over three shiploads of Highlanders to Prince Edward Island, where they settled and became a prosperous colony. The next year, the Baldoon settlement arrived, and the Prince Rupert and Red River settlements followed soon after.

In addition to the establishment of these colonies, to remove the obstacles to settlement and improvement arising from lack of facilities for communication, he offered to build a road at his own expense from York to Amherstburg at an estimated cost of £40,000 sterling, payment to be made by a grant of wild lands on which he would be able to settle other immigrants. This offer was turned down by the Government. Had it been accepted, we would have had a "Selkirk Road" corresponding to Talbot's, and settlement of Western Ontario would have taken place fifty years in advance of what it did. The Baldoon Road was built between his two properties, at Chatham and Lake St. Clair, but his Canadian undertakings, though highly beneficial to the immigrant poor of his own country, proved unremunerative to the earl himself. He died in early life, April 8th, 1820. "I never knew in my life," Sir Walter Scott wrote of him, "a man of more generous and disinterested disposition, or one whose talents and perseverance were better qualified to bring great and national schemes to conclusion."



progress which had been made in the settlement from what it had been six years before, when he preached to the vanguard of them, an historic, because the first, sermon to the White settlers in the county of Kent. Not only had the original number of families been increased by more than five hundred per cent. but there was also a gratifying increase in the extent of the clearings made on their farms and the number of houses erected on them. "The improvements which everywhere presented themselves filled him with astonishment. Sixteen miles below Fairfield was a flour-mill; near by a saw-mill; and fourteen miles farther down, Dolsen's place, an inn and a farm, the proprietor of which was a warm friend of the Mission." With such progress to its credit, this first settlement in the county could well be considered as having been permanently established before the close of the first ten years of its history.

### **E**migration of Scottish crofters to Canada.

The first movement of the Nineteenth century towards further settlement was the well-meant, but ill-fated, effort of Lord Selkirk to establish a colony of Highlanders on the prairie lands lying adjacent to the mouth of the Sydenham river. Emigration of the crofters of Scotland, as the small land-holders or tenants were called, had in this period become an economic and social necessity. The country was greatly over-populated, and these crofters had to divide and subdivide their holdings as their descendant families increased until the holding became too small to provide sufficient land for a living for their ever increasing numbers. In addition, the landed proprietors had begun to put in force what were called 'clearances'. A new system of farming was being inaugurated. Instead of small holdings and intensive farming, sheep ranches were being established. Larger acreages with increased rentals were put into the hands of a few holders and the rest were



JAMES JOHNSON,  
of the  
Selkirk Settlement,  
1796-1873.

Jas. Johnson was born in Northumberland, England, in 1796, the son of Lionel Johnson, the shepherd whom Lord Selkirk engaged to look after the ship-load of sheep which he brought to the Baldoon settlement in 1804. Jas. Johnson is of special interest to us, since as a boy eight years of age, he accompanied his father and walked with him as his assistant in driving the sheep (1000) through the woods all the way from

Niagara to Baldoon with only Indian trails at best for their guidance. He married Margaret McCallum, also of the Selkirk Settlement, and followed farming on the Baldoon tract as his occupation in life. The illustration shows him dressed in the military uniform which he wore in service as a volunteer in the Kent militia during the war of 1812-14. His son, Lionel, became a prominent merchant in the village of Wallaceburg, was post-master, a Warden in Kent county and held other important public offices. Henry E. Johnson, a grandson, was clerk of the town of Wallaceburg for many years.

ordered off the estate. Some of the proprietors were more heartless than others and the fate which might befall their erstwhile tenants gave them no concern. Others were more humane and sought to assist the evicted tenant to find for himself another home. Of this latter class was the young nobleman, Thomas Douglas, the only son of the fourth Earl of Selkirk who was born in 1771 at St. Mary's Isle, mouth of the Dee, in Kirkcudbrightshire, Scotland. When his father died in 1793, he inherited the estate and became the fifth Earl of Selkirk. Immediately he took possession he began to put into effect his scheme for the amelioration of the hardships of his over-populated tenantry. Patriotic as well as benevolent, emigration to Canada appealed to him as the solution. Instead of being crowded together on one estate in Scotland he would create three estates in the





MARGARET MCCOLLUM,  
wife of James Johnson,  
1797-1891.

Margaret McCollum was born on the Isle of Mull, Scotland, in 1797, daughter of Daniel McCollum and Mary Morrison, who came to Canada in 1804 as a part of the Selkirk settlers. Her father, mother and one sister died within three weeks of each other, the first of the forty seven of the settlers to perish because of the hardships met with in their first year in Canada. She married James Johnson in 1817, and they settled on a farm, a part of the Baldoon

tract, where was born to them a family of ten children, all of whom became prominent citizens in the pioneer days of the Western district.

New World, and on these would find for his tenantry new and more profitable homes. One of these estates he established in Prince Edward Island, a second at Kildonan and the third in this county.

**J**ourney from Tobermory to Kent by sailing vessel and open boats.

In 1803, he began to make preparation to bring out this third colony. They were gathered together at Tobermory, a port of Mull, twenty six families comprising one hundred and eleven persons, some from the isle of Mull, some from Tere, some from the mainland of Argyle and one at least from Glasgow. From Tobermory they set sail for Kirkcaldy but hearing that war had been declared between France and England, and fearing they might be molested by French privateers, under counsel of the young Earl, they remained for the winter at this port. In May, the following year, they set sail in the ship 'Oughton' of Greenock arriving within sight of the banks of Newfoundland within five weeks' time after their departure and at Montreal one week later. The trip might be said to be uneventful save for the death and burial at sea of one of their numbers, a young farmer by the name of Buchanan, an

incident which cast a gloom over the whole company and might be said to presage the many other misfortunes which were to befall them. From Montreal they were conveyed by French carts to Lachine where batteaux awaited them. By means of these they were conveyed safely to Kingston, the men of their party rowing these unwieldy vessels successfully up against the swift stream of the St. Lawrence. Here they were joined by the Earl, who had preceded them to America by way of New York coming overland from thence to Kingston. A small ship was chartered to bring them across lake Ontario to Queenston. After their effects were conveyed a safe distance above Niagara Falls, their men again took batteaux and rowed themselves along the shore of Lake Erie to Amherstburg and from thence by open boats to their destination.

**A**fter four months they arrived at Baldoon, September, 1804.

It was now September, more than four months having been expended in making the journey, when they landed at the farm which had been selected by the Earl for his settlement. It was a triangular piece of land containing about nine hundred and fifty acres between the Chenal Ecarte and the Sydenham river, a part of the low-lying and treeless prairie of thirty thousand acres bordering lake St. Clair. They named it Baldoon after a parish in the Highlands of Scotland. The appearance of the place was from the first a rude disappointment. Ship-carpenters and others had been sent in advance by the Earl to provide dwellings, but notwithstanding none had been erected. Tradition informs us that these, afraid of Indians, had betaken themselves to Sandwich, leaving the future settlers of Baldoon and their children to their unsheltered fate. The days were shortening, rains were frequent, cool nights had already come. Without equipment or material, they had only a short month left to provide for themselves sufficient shelter to meet the requirements of a Canadian winter. They had





LIONEL JOHNSON  
County Warden,  
1863.

of Sombra or Chatham township for over twenty-five years. He was Warden of the county in 1863. In 1837, he joined the militia, and served on the frontier till the restoration of peace. He was postmaster of Wallaceburg from 1840 until his death. His son, H. E. Johnson, was town clerk and librarian of the Public Library, Wallaceburg.

settled where flat creeks, stagnant pools, and abundance of decayed vegetable matter made malarial fever a certainty. Their food was only of the poorest and coarsest kind, and in no case could be overabundant. To the north and east they were surrounded by a dense forest, most of it swamp lands. The Thames settlement, the only other white settlement in the district was seventeen miles away and could only be reached by devious Indian trails through the woods. Little help could be expected from that quarter. But with earnestness and some enthusiasm also, for these hardy Highlanders did not soon allow themselves to become the victims of despair no matter how untoward the circumstances, they set themselves bravely to wrestle with the problems immediately facing them.

**O**wing to their inexperience and unpreparedness, and the ravages of diseases, many of them perished.

The inevitable happened. The lack of dwellings was not their greatest problem. From near copses of elm, walnut or willows on the plains, or from the neighboring forest, they collected small timber and erected for themselves temporary huts. But an epidemic of fever and dysentery visited the colony and before they were there one month, Donald McCallum and his wife and his daughter Emily, aged ten, died from its ravages within five days of each other. A little knoll in that

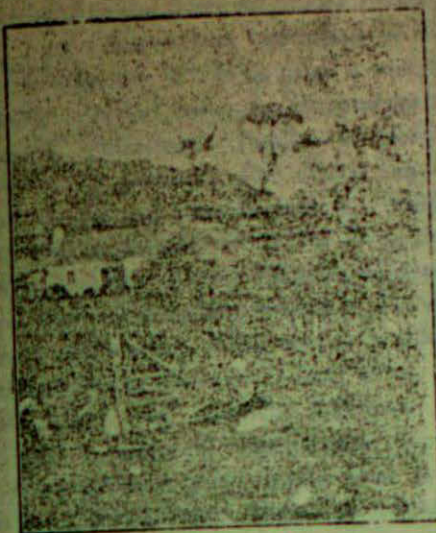
Lionel H. Johnson, of Wallaceburg, was the eldest of a family of eight children of James and Margaret Johnson, born at the 'Baldoon tract' in 1818. He spent his younger days on the farm; was educated at the Upper Canada Academy; moved to Wallaceburg in its primitive days, and entered commercial life. He was married in 1839. During the time that the Chatham Gore belonged to Sombra, he was chosen, first in 1845, as its representative in the District Council of Essex, Kent and Lambton. On the establishment of municipalities in 1859, he was elected its first Reeve and continued to hold the office of Reeve, or Deputy Reeve

monotonously level country was selected and there the three were laid away the first tenants in that pioneer cemetery, now neglected and forgotten, where they were followed by thirty nine others of their number before the year was out. Those who escaped or recovered from the epidemic continued their brave fight against adverse circumstances and succeeded in establishing a fairly prosperous settlement. But they had two other enemies yet to face—the one was the American Nation and the other the moody waters of lake St. Clair.

**H**ardships increased and the settlement robbed of its sheep and cattle by American soldiers in the War of 1812-14.

If this venture of Lord Selkirk failed, it was not from any lack of motive or effort on his part. Among other undertakings for the benefit of the colony, a ship-load of one thousand sheep were brought out by him from Scotland. Lionel Johnson, a native of Northumberland, England, a shepherd of Fenton Farm, Woller, came out to America the previous year, 1803, and settled at Albany, New York state. This man was engaged by Lord Selkirk to take charge of these sheep. With his family, consisting of his wife, one daughter and two sons, he accompanied the Earl to Kingston and joined with him there the other members of the colony. At Hamilton, he and his eldest son, James, a lad of eight years, awaited the arrival of these sheep and drove them from there all the way through the woods to the Baldoon farm. A large pen, or fold, was built for them on the south-easterly part of the farm fronting on the Sydenham, where they were placed every night to protect them from wolves or other wild beasts and a section of the surrounding prairie set apart for their pasturage. In addition to this successful sheep ranch, the Earl had procured a herd of several hundred cattle, which also found plenty of pasturage on the treeless plains in the immediate neighborhood, but on the opposite side of the river, from the colony.





INVERARY,  
ARGYLESHIRE, SCOTLAND,  
the Old Country home of some of the Baldoon,  
and many other Kent county settlers.

When the war of 1812 broke out, several raids were made by detachments of American militia on this little and helpless colony. Their stores of grain were pillaged, their cattle driven off, and their sheep taken off by Captain Forsyth to Detroit under instructions from General McArthur, a blow to the struggling settlement from which it never apparently rallied.

**F**inally they were flooded out by the overflowing waters of the Thames and Sydenham.

But the biggest obstacle to progress was the nature of the site chosen. It was in a section of the county so low as to be scarcely above lake level. Every Spring, as the waters of the Thames and Sydenham and numerous creeks became swollen with the increased volume of water made by the melting snow of the district which they drained, they overflowed their banks and the plains became inundated. A steady rise of the lake level above that which it was in 1804 made these conditions to become permanent. What had been before arable land became a sea of water over which canoes and boats of considerable

draught could be easily floated. These conditions grew worse as the lake level continued to rise which it did to its greatest height in 1825. One by one the settlers became discontented and moved off the Earl's estate leaving at least not one descendant of the original hundred and eleven behind.

**O**ld Country conditions did not find a favorable soil for continuance in Canada.

But had the conditions been favorable, it is doubtful if the venture would have succeeded in the form which it had been attempted by the Earl. It was an effort to reproduce Old Country conditions in this new land and although the motive was benevolent and generous above reproach, it could only succeed by the lands of this country getting into the hands of a monopolistic class as they had in Scotland and other European countries.\* All around the Baldoon section, the country was being opened out and surveyed into 200-acre lots, of one of which a settler might obtain possession on condition of paying only registration of Patent fees after doing needful settlement duties. Gourlay, an historian, writing of the conditions of the settlement in 1817-18, says, "From an original roll of one hundred and eleven souls who had settled in 1804, through death, desertion and war causes, it had dwindled down to about ten families and fifty souls." James Soutar, writing in 1882, says, "This is not quite correct. In spite of the causes named, the settlement—now partly spread over adjoining lands at the date referred to contained all told, perhaps including a very few not original emigrant settlers or their descendants, one hundred and fourteen souls." The Parish Records of Dover township of that year substantiate this latter statement, showing an increase of three over its original number in the population of the settlement at the end of the thirteenth year of its existence.\*\*

\*\*NOTE.—In Scotland, 1700 landlords were represented at that time as holding 17,000,000 acres of land, that is, an average of 10,000 acres each.



The Earl's venture, undertaken at so great a pecuniary cost to himself could be counted a failure only in the form originally planned by him. As a benevolent movement in behalf of his tenantry, it was as great a success as could be expected under the circumstances. Of Donald McCallum's family, so sorely stricken by the epidemic, five of his family survived, a son and four daughters. Hugh, his son, became founder of Wallaceburg and its first postmaster. Lionel Johnson, a grandson, was reeve of Chatham township for several years and warden of the county in 1863. A great-grandson, Norman Gurd, is a respected citizen and eminent barrister of Sarnia and a writer of considerable merit. If the story of each other family were written, it would doubtless show an equally creditable record.

To Lord Selkirk himself, the venture brought no gain. The patent to the Baldoon

farm was granted to him in 1806. He also owned, besides several other lots in Dover township, Lots 1 and 2, Chatham township, comprising 389 acres, this land now forming a part of the city of Chatham north of the river. Twice only, after his initial trip to Baldoon, did the Earl pay a visit to his Kent county estates, once in 1816 and again in 1818. On the last trip, he sold his Baldoon farm and other Dover township lands to John McNab a Hudson Bay trader, and his Chatham estate to James Woods of Sandwich, his solicitor, the father of the late Judge R. S. Woods of Chatham, and went back to the Old Country in shattered health, two years afterwards to die. He received for his lands but a trifling sum, not sufficient to pay interest on the money spent, but the country to which he brought his tenants received in these colonists an asset of inestimable value.

**\*\*NOTE.—DOVER PARISH CENSUS, 1817—BALDOON SETTLEMENT.**

	Males	Women	15 Years and Upwards		Children		Hirelings M F		
Alexander McDonald .....	1	1	0	0	2	2	1	0	
Nancy McDonald (Widow) .....	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	
Mary McClain (Widow) .....	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	
Angus McDougall .....	1	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	
Angus McDonald .....	1	1	3	0	2	2	0	0	
John McKenzie .....	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	
Margaret Morrison (Widow) .....	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	
Daniel McDonald .....	1	1	3	1	4	0	0	0	
Catherine Brown (Widow) .....	0	1	4	2	4	0	0	0	
John McDonald .....	1	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	
Laughlin McDougall .....	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	
John Sians or Cenence .....	1	1	0	1	0	4	0	0	
Angus McDonald .....	1	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	
John Brown .....	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	
Lionel Johnson .....	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	
Charles Fisher .....	1	1	0	0	5	1	0	0	
Russel McCary .....	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Archy McDonald .....	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	
Frs. A. Cadotte .....	1	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	
William Jones .....	1	1	0	0	0	1	3	1	
Hector McDougall .....	1	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	
In all	114	17	17	19	6	24	25	5	1

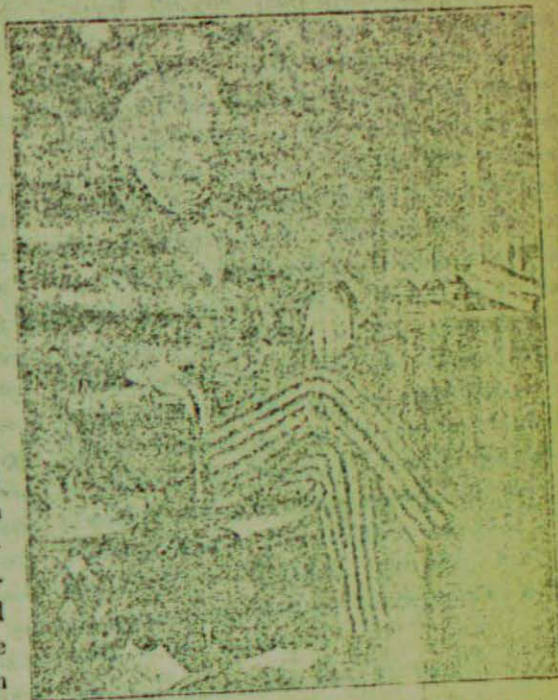


## The LAKE ERIE SETTLEMENT

COLONEL TALBOT EXTENDED HIS ACTIVITIES INTO KENT, INFLUENCING THE SETTLEMENT OF THE SOUTHEAST END OF THE COUNTY, FOLLOWING THE CONSTRUCTION OF HIS ROAD WESTWARD TOWARDS THE DETROIT RIVER

**F**OLLOWING next in order to the Baldoon settlement we have the Lake Erie settlement. Although settlers began to locate on the lands bordering on the lake as early as 1809, it was not until 1816 that settlement in the southern section of the county could be said to have really begun. Even then it was but an extension of the Talbot settlement in the county of Elgin, a part of that colonisation scheme entrusted to Colonel Talbot.

This outstanding pioneer was a scion of nobility, an Irishman by birth, and one to whom settlement in western Ontario owes more than to any other man. He was born in the year 1771, and just attained his majority when he accompanied Governor Simcoe as a part of his suite on his first official trip from Niagara to Detroit in 1793. He began his career as a soldier in the 24th Regiment and had attained to the rank of Lieutenant when he became a member of the Governor's official staff in 1792. During Governor Simcoe's regime he was attached to the Queen's Rangers at Niagara but after the Governor's period in office had expired Lieutenant Talbot returned to the Old Country where he became attached to the 85th Foot Regiment with the rank of Major. In 1796 he was made Lieutenant Colonel enjoying all the prestige that comes from belong-

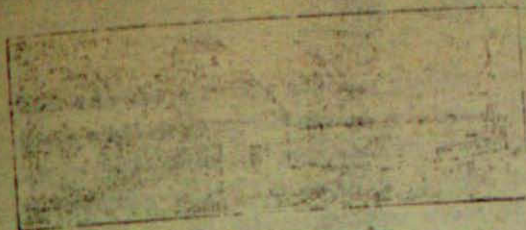


LIEUTENANT-COLONEL THOMAS  
TALBOT

Founder of the Lake Erie Settlement and  
Builder of the Talbot and Middle roads,  
County of Kent.

ing to a great family, a favorite at the Royal court and a popular officer in the Army. In 1800, the first year of the century that saw the organisation of Canada into a nation enjoying perfect freedom as a part of the great





### RONDEAU HARBOR

An important shipping point in the pre-railway period.

British Empire, he turned his back upon the promising career awaiting him in the Army and returned to Canada to become the pioneer settler of Elgin county.

**W**hy did Colonel Talbot devote his life to the settlement of south-west Ontario?

There are many who have tried to analyse his motive for his renunciation of so brilliant a prospect as seemed to be awaiting him in the Old Country for the comparatively obscure life of a pioneer in the forest wildernesses of Upper Canada. Some claim his reasons to have been patriotic, others commercial. Perhaps we would be nearer the truth if we said that they were a combination of both though no man could have chosen the career which he followed unless he had strong likings and other propelling reasons for his choice. Life in the illimitable forest must have had its appeal to him else he would not have sacrificed so much even for a doubtful hope that he might some day be the lord of a large landed estate in Canada. Like Governor Simcoe, with whom he was associated so long, and whose counsel must have had much influence over him, his heart was made sore as he saw the enterprising and thrifty sons of England, Ireland and Scotland emigrating from their own native land to become citizens under the now alien flag of the United States. To turn this tide of desirable settlers towards Canada was his great aim and for its achievement he devoted the remaining years of his life. The country through which he passed on his initial journey to Detroit in 1793 suggested to him the possibilities which awaited all

those who had the courage and industry and perseverance to face the hardships of pioneer life for the few years which would be required to transform the tree-covered fertile soils into grain-producing farms. He had already made a successful experiment of hemp-growing, and he desired to obtain a tract of land on the shore of lake Erie, where he would continue the experiment on a large scale. He had been promised by Governor Simcoe a tract of five thousand acres to which his rank in the army entitled him according to the practise of giving free grants then in vogue, but unfortunately General Simcoe had quit the office of Lieutenant Governor before the grant was made effective. Still, in expectation of receiving it from the new Governor, he returned to Canada and started a clearance on the shore of lake Erie, near to the place where Port Stanley now is, the district which he had selected for his grant. Finding difficulty in obtaining it, he returned to London where he busied himself in giving information to the Government regarding the soil, climate and brilliant prospects of the lake Erie district. In the meantime, through the good offices of General Simcoe, now in London he obtained a grant of five thousand acres in Dunwich township and was given control of the remaining land of this township together with the whole of Alborough township for the purposes of carrying out his scheme of settlement of the country.

**T**albotville founded May 21, 1803.

To this tract of land he came on the 21st of May, 1803, landed with four helpers at the mouth of a little stream, climbed the high embankment and selected an elevation overlooking the lake as his future home, the prettiest spot along the whole of the lake Erie shore. Here, with his own hands, he felled the first tree, and in this way initiated the work of settlement to which he consecrated the rest of his life. Disassociating himself from the royal society to which he



had hitherto been accustomed, and the comforts and elegancies attached to such a life he set himself to the arduous task of settling the country with those whom he deemed well qualified to be the foundation strata of a nation yet to be and loyal to its great mother across the sea.

Talbot encourages his prospective settlers to cultivate self-reliance and self-helpfulness.

His method of procedure was wise and fruitful. Although the greater part of his work was done in the neighboring county, yet his exertions were extended later to Kent, and his methods there followed in a measure here. To divert emigration to Canada, he sent agents out amongst the new-comers in New York and adjacent states, set before them the favorable climate and soil of the lake Erie district, with an offer not only of a free grant to each of fifty acres of land, but to render them also such aid as might enable them to meet successfully the first few and hardest years of pioneer life. It is not unusual, in reading the story of these early settlers of Kent to find that they had spent a year or two in the United States before coming to Canada, the efforts of Talbot accounting for their change of abode. His agents were instructed to make wise selection of the men to whom they offered grants, his preference being the Welsh and Scotch then emigrating so numerous from their own over-populated native hills. In many instances he had these new-comers engaged on his own estate, and after receiving there both test and training, they were set up on lands for themselves, with continued aid until they had attained unto a position of self-dependence. On his own estate, he worked diligently clearing lands to produce the necessities of life, superintended the building of houses, undertaking a full complement of the work himself. He was not above the menial offices and tasks attached to the pioneer's life in the undeveloped forest lands of Canada. If we can rely upon contemporary tradition, he baked his own bread, milk-

#### SOPER HOME,

Talbot St., Harwich Township, in the pre-railway period.

ed his own cows, made his own butter and cheese, washed his own clothes, ironed and dressed his own linen.' His doing of these things was attributed to eccentricity, but when we consider his aim as he adhered to it throughout his whole life, we can easily see a higher influence behind these so-called eccentricities. In the unorganised state of society then existing, and the utter ignorance and inexperience of many, if not of the most, of the immigrants in reference to pioneer tasks and hardships, the tendency would be to discouragement ending in despair. Colonel Talbot well knew that the successful man must cultivate a spirit of self-reliance, leading to self-helpfulness and self-sufficiency, and he looked for these traits of character in the persons whom he sought to aid, and cultivated them by precept and example in favorable soil.

#### Progress halted by the War of 1812.

But notwithstanding his commendable aim and strenuous efforts, progress for the first few years in the history of the settlement was slow, very slow. The war between Great Britain and France had just been resumed, and this gave occupation to all available men either as soldiers, or as mechanics and tradesmen attached to the army, and in the factories providing munitions and other war equipment. In 1809, after six years of effort, there was said to be not more than a dozen families along the whole of Talbot road in the four townships of Dunwich, Southwold, Yarmouth and Malahide. But he continued to persevere and success was beginning to



crown his efforts when the war of the Americans against us in 1812 broke out. In 1814, the settlement was invaded by American soldiers, his mills burned and other injuries done to the struggling pioneers, which retarded but did not stop the progress of the settlement.

By 1820 he had completed the location duties on the lands first allotted to him. After this the whole of south-western Ontario was put under his charge and the construction of the Talbot road from Delhi to Sandwich completed. By 1826 he had placed twenty thousand persons on the lands granted to him without any expense to the Government but at an expense of one hundred thousand dollars, (twenty thousand pounds), to himself. By 1831, in all of the twenty eight townships in south-western Ontario placed at his disposal comprising more than half a million acres, he had influenced forty thousand settlers to locate and perform their settlement duties.

"I was the first person," he wrote to Sir John Colborne in that year, "who exacted the performance of settlement duties, and actual residence on the land located, which at that time was considered most arbitrary on my part, but the consequence now is that the settlers that I forced to comply with my system are most grateful and sensible of the advantage they could not otherwise have, for a length of time derived by the accomplishment of good roads, and I have not any hesitation in stating that there is not another settlement in North America which can, for its age and extent, exhibit so compact and profitably settled a portion of the new world as the Talbot settlement."

For every settler whom he induced to come and make his permanent abode in the country, there was given a free grant of fifty acres to the settler and two hundred to Colonel Talbot for procuring the settler. This land was granted to incoming farmers on condition that they would erect a house on their lot fifteen feet by twenty feet in

dimensions, one story high, and clear a strip of land across the front of their lot one hundred feet in depth, a total of about six acres of cleared land in area. At the end of five years, having completed these settlement duties, they were given a certificate of ownership and the balance of the lot sold to them at a nominal price.

**T**he Talbot road constructed in 1816 opened up the lake Erie section of Kent for settlement.

Road-building was considered by Colonel Talbot as an essential part of the work of settlement and the first task which he undertook after he had established himself on his own five-thousand-acre estate. A road was surveyed four hundred rods from the shore of the lake and running parallel to it on either side of which were laid out farm-lots of two hundred acres each. These lots were made narrow, eighty rods wide, in order that the settlers should be established close to each other and have the benefit of near neighbors. This road was first blazed out in Elgin county in 1804 by a Mr. John Bostwick, a son of a Church of England clergyman, one of its first settlers and later a high constable and sheriff of the London district. After it was constructed in that county, it was extended westward through Kent. The survey of the road in Kent county was made by Colonel Burwell, a native of New Jersey, 'a gentleman who became a conspicuous figure in the life of the settlement for the rest of his life—as Colonel of militia and member of parliament as well as in his capacity of surveyor of many portions of the township lands and of the town of London'. He began his survey of this road in the county of Kent in 1812, with its line of usual sized lots on either side, but his operations were interrupted by the outbreak of war. His stores and surveying instruments were captured and carried off by a detachment of American militia, and he was unable to proceed with the work until after the close of the war in 1815. That year it was resumed and continued as far as the Raleigh townline.



The construction of this road in 1816 was the occasion for the incoming of many settlers into the county. There were, however, a few settlers located prior to this in the lake Erie district. A man by the name of Crawford located at the Eau as early as 1809, and with him two other settlers, Dickson, an American hunter, afterwards murdered by some unidentified and therefore unpunished person, and Ramsay the owner of 1200 acres of what is now very valuable farm lands on the Eau road. Three years later, two brothers, Edward and Joseph Hackney added two more to this first contingent of the Lake Erie settlement. Following these there were none until after the Talbot road was opened up, after which "settlers fied in along its length, and ere the expiration of the year 1820 most of the lots lying thereon, particularly in Howard, had been taken up. John Bury and sons, as early as the spring of 1816, had established themselves on Lot 59 and adjoining lots, part of the site of modern Clearville, and had already felled the historical tree. The same fall Joseph Woods and sons had laid the site and opened the history of Morpeth by a similar act. The year following saw D. S. Baldwin, Samuel Burns, E. Newcomb and John Kitchen located as neighbors to Mr. Bury; and in Howard, pioneer Mr. Woods was already equally well supported. On the several lots directly opposite the latter, or near by, three or four members of the patriot family of Coll, from the Thames River, whose parent head and six sons had taken up arms at the call of country in the eventful war of 1812, were at work on their drawings; and immediately east, on Lot No. 90, Nicholas Cornwall, a member of that U. E. Loyalist family whose members formed early leading settlers of Colchester and the Upper Thames, and not only twice gave the County of Kent a member of Parliament, but the County of Essex one of the first and subsequently, by marriage, a second, under the

name of McCornick, had broken into the surrounding forest, and was then perhaps planning and anticipating the erection of his pioneer saw mills on Big Creek, which he completed in 1819 or 1820. Later, and a little farther east, the Hackney brothers, Mr. Desmond, also of patriotic 1812 fame, not forgetting Mr. Green, a member of that long-lived family whose eleven members aggregated a lease of life of 907 years, were at work hewing out their future homes. Present Palmyra was located for the future by the advent of Messrs. Street, Eberlie and W. Mills, the latter little thinking that his son in the person of the Hon. David Mills would not only represent his own locality and the County of Bothwell in the Parliament of the country, but become a leading Minister in the Cabinet Councils. But it is needless to continue the list of pioneers whose many enterprising sons still very generally possess the homesteads of their fathers—the Bells and Smiths of magisterial reputation; Unsworth of the Western District jailorship; Stover, the first local tavern-keeper; Armstrong, Desmond, Galbraith, Stewart, Palmer and other well-known families in the west; and Moorehouse, Gesner, Ridley, all of municipal fame; McTavish, McPhail, McLaren, and Ruthven in the east. In Harwich, too, a number had settled in the locality long known as the "Old or Little Fields," and had effected out of the dense bush what the name suggests, a cultivated oasis, when the discovery of prior grants and other causes dispossessed and drove them from their clearings, two or three of their number, Hall, Bolton, etc., going to the Upper Sydenham and there becoming the pioneers on that river."\*

The chief service which Colonel Talbot rendered to the county of Kent was the building of the Talbot road which opened out the southern section of the county for settlement. While Elgin county, where he lived and where he did the major share of his life's

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NOTE—\*James Soutar's account of the lake Erie Settlement.



work, owes its settlement more to him than to any other man, Kent county was well on its way towards settlement two decades before he may be said to have begun his. Every institution of a pioneer settlement—grist-mill, saw-mill, trading-house, church and school—had become a permanent establish-

ment along the Thames and the settlement well on towards a self-supporting stage a full decade, at least, before Talbot had begun to settle Elgin county. But settlement on the south awaited his road, and for that enterprise in Kent county, he should receive his just meed of praise.

POPULATION OF THE COUNTY OF KENT—1817-1881

also

THAT OF THE LAST CENSUS RETURNS, 1921.

	*1817	†1842	‡1851	§1861	1871	¶1881	1921
Camden.....	102	298	1434	2744	4095	3239	2133
Chatham Township...	162	931	1768	3585	5036	5907	5766
Dover.....	324 (1)	1075	1723	2656	3315	4447	4345
Harwich.....	114	1590	2627	4556	5974	6410	4952
Howard.....	150 (2)	1891	4364	3976	4512	3962	2897
Orford.....	167 (2)	575	(4)	2554	3113	3766	2032
Raleigh.....	273	1596	2460	3750	4081	5298	4343
Romney.....	30	237	(5)	470	711	1082	1563
Tilbury East.....	60	510	1023	1267	1846	2872	3197
Zone.....	—	1129	(6)	4159	1083	1495	905
Chatham Town.....	—	(3)	2070	4466	5873	7873	13256
Bothwell.....	—	—	—	—	995	965	633
Dresden.....	—	—	—	—	—	1979	1339
Ridgetown.....	—	—	—	—	—	1538	1855
Blenheim.....	—	—	—	—	—	1212	1565
Thamesville.....	—	—	—	—	—	740	800
Wallaceburg.....	—	—	—	—	—	1525	4006
Indian Reserves.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	1011
Tilbury.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	1123
Ericau Village.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	205
Eric Beach Village...	—	—	—	—	—	—	28
Highgate Village.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	394
Wheatley Village.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	378
Total.....	1382	9832	17469	31183	40634	54310	58726

(1) Includes Talbot Street, Orford. (2) Includes 54 in Haldon settlement. (3) Moravian Indians. (4) Chatham Village numbered 812. In 1830 there were but 4000 in Kent and Lambton, and in 1835, 500 in Chatham. (5) Included in Howard. (6) Included in Tilbury. (7) Included in Camden. In 1842 Zone then included Euphemia. In 1843 population of Kent and Lambton, 10,000. \*Gourlay's History. †Western District returns. ‡Census returns.

The above table is here inserted to indicate the years in which the population of the County made its greatest progress. The thirty years, 1830—1860, were the years wherein the settlement of the County by immigration mainly took place. After that period the natural increase accounted for the growth in population, the addition to it from immigration becoming a negligible quantity, and much less than what was lost of the natural increase to the United States and to other sections of the Dominion. It will be seen that although there has been an increase of 4416 for the whole County in the thirty years between 1881 and 1921, there has been a marked decrease in every rural district excepting Romney and Tilbury and in the rural towns and villages also, Chatham and Wallaceburg because of their industries, alone showing a marked increase.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### AN ERA OF



**SIR ISAAC BROCK**

Acting Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada. A General of the British Army, and Hero of the war 1812. Killed in a successful battle with the Americans, at Queenston Heights, October 13th, 1812.

THE opening period of the Nineteenth Century may be rightly designated a period of retarded progress as far as the development of this district is concerned. Few additions were made to the settlements in its first two decades, and while the third saw a greater influx than either of the first two, it

was not until after 1830 that settlement of the county began in real earnest. The only village at that date which has since continued an urban centre was Chatham, yet, notwithstanding that the County could already boast a history of forty years standing, the population of this village was less than one hundred.



**T**he condition of Europe and the struggle of Great Britain in the Napoleonic War put a stop to immigration into Canada.

Europe was suffering from the effects of the French Revolution. If those of the French nation who were behind the overthrow of monarchy in their own country had confined their operations within their own shores Canada might have gone on increasing its population by settlers from the British Isles, at least. But by violating the independence of neighboring states, they dragged the whole of Europe into a war which lasted until Napoleon was finally overthrown and exiled. During that struggle every available man in England's population was needed for the war. Her national existence was at stake, and her industries and commerce in danger of being ruined. Every loyal citizen felt that he was needed at home, and those few who sympathised with the aim of France to overthrow monarchy in England found a more attractive field for settlement in the United States of America.

During this struggle many things were done by both of the warring parties in Europe that was irritating to the United States of America, a neutral nation. For some of these the United States took sides against Great Britain.

**T**he real reason why the United States took sides against Great Britain and invaded Canada.

In her warfare against Napoleon, Great Britain found that her strength depended upon her fleet, but this she discovered, was being depleted by the desertion of British seamen to American vessels. Britain declared that they had a right to search American vessels on which they believed that deserters were employed. Instead of acting the part of a friendly nation and aiding the return of these to their own country, the United States took a hostile attitude in respect to Britain's claim, and the breach between the two nations widened until war was formally declared by the Americans on June 18, 1812.

But while this was alleged to be the reason for their declaration of war the real cause was found in the desire of a large element of the American nation to annex Canada to the United States, and the time they considered an opportune one for the doing of it. This aim, however, was not supported by the entire population of the United States. Had it been, there doubtless would have been no difficulty on the part of the eight millions of the American nation to force the sparsely settled communities of the three hundred thousand people of Canada to capitulate and become submissive victims to their neighbor's greedy ambitions. The hands of England were tied. Not much help could be expected from that quarter. The brunt of defence must fall upon the Canadian militia. That we were enabled to come through these three years of struggle, still possessing our national independence we owe to the protesting sentiment of this same part of the American populace rather than to the strength and successes of our own and the British arms.

**T**he attitude of the Canadian inhabitants to the war was that of universal loyalty to British allegiance.

We owe our national independence, in the second place, to the universal loyalty of the Canadian people to their British connection and their readiness to take up arms to defend their rights. There was no lack of loyalty found anywhere among truly Canadian settlers, and this is the more remarkable since the major portion of the inhabitants were French and the war in Europe between Britain and France. The population of the county of Kent at that time was very small, consisting of the Thames river settlement, the Deleware Indian Mission at Fairfield, Selkirk's settlers at Baldoon and about a half a dozen of families in the Lake Erie district, yet, at the outbreak of the war volunteer companies were enrolled under the command of Captains John Dolsen, William McCrae, John McGregor, Frederick Arnold and Francis



Drake in which practically all the manhood of the county were represented, the women and boys remaining at home to look after their stock and crops. True, there was here and there a large sprinkling of Americans settled in the district, some of whom returned to the United States when war was declared, mention being made of one Thames river settler who did this and became the guide to Harrison's army in their successful pursuit of Proctor. But that was only one man out of several of the same name and of the same family. The defence of their homes, and the defeat of the attacking armies of their near neighbors was

taken as a paramount duty and the serious business of practically every settler in the county. The indifference to British connection which that section of the American people in favor of the war expected to find among Canadian settlers was not discoverable among either the French, Irish, Germans, English or Scotch when they arrived here. They found instead a readiness to take up arms and a perseverance in their resistance to attack that spelled for them a greater task than they anticipated. In the meantime, however, the internal affairs of the country were in a state of stagnation and disorder.

**I**n the west, progress in the war was first favorable to the Canadian army under Brock.



TECUMSEH

**"HIS** appearance was very prepossessing, his figure light and finely formed, his age, I imagine, to be about five and thirty; his complexion, light copper; countenance oval, with bright hazel eyes, beaming with cheerfulness, energy and decision. Three small silver crowns or coronets were suspended from the lower cartilage of his aquiline nose, and a large silver medallion of George III., which I believe his ancestor received from Lord Dorchester, was attached to a mixed coloured wampum string, and hung round his neck. His dress consisted of a plain, neat uniform—trimmed deerskin jacket, with long trousers of the same material, the seams of both being covered with neatly cut fringe. He had on his feet leather moccasins, ornamented with work made from dyed quills of porcupine."

—Description of Tecumseh by  
Captain Clegg, Brock's aide.

The United States sent three invading armies into Canada. One moved against Montreal under General Dearborn; another against the Niagara frontier under the command of General Van Rensselaer; the third, under General Hull, the governor of Michigan, was to operate from Detroit and overrun the western sections of the province. The war began in the west. General Hull crossed over the Detroit with an army of 2,000, and at Sandwich issued a proclamation calling on the inhabitants of that section to surrender. "The United States offer you peace, liberty and security; your choice lies between these and war, slavery, and destruction." The first answer to this came from the north-west. Under instructions from General Brock, the Lieutenant-Governor of the province, a statesman and soldier of foresight, energy and decision, Captain Roberts, commandant of a small military post established on St. Joseph's island, Lake Huron, for the protection of the north-west fur-trade, with his garrison force of 45 regulars, augmented by 160 French voyageurs and 250 Indians, attacked and captured Fort Mackinaw, an important American post commanding the entrance into lake Michigan. Minor successes by Colonel St. George at Fort Malden, Colonel Proctor at Amherst-



burg, and Chief Tecumseh, an Indian ally, induced General Hull to withdraw his invading army from Canada and take up his position again at Detroit. In the meantime General Brock arrived at the western frontier to command in person the defensive campaign against General Hull, the Indians from the north-west were assembling under Tecumseh in increasing numbers, and Canadian citizens were swelling the ranks of the militia, among whom were the volunteers of Kent county, until an army of 1300 were gathered together ready to defend their country from capture by the Americans. On August 15th, General Brock erected a battery on the bank of the river opposite Detroit and three guns were placed in position. General Hull was summoned to surrender, and when he refused the guns opened out on the Fort. The next morning, he led his whole army across the river, three miles below Detroit, and when landed marched his men to an attack upon the Fort. His resolution to assault was, however, prevented by the capitulation of Hull with all of his army of 2,500 soldiers. A large quantity of military stores and provisions were given up, and the whole territory of Michigan was surrendered and once more in its history came under British rule.

**A** cessation of hostilities now ordered by General Prevost led afterwards to disastrous consequences.

At this juncture in the campaign, Governor Prevost from his Headquarters at Quebec, gave orders to General Brock to cease hostilities, and patched up an armistice, which was only a one-sided opportunity for the American forces to strengthen themselves for a renewed attack. Thus were the advantages gained by the captures of Detroit and Michigan in a large measure neutralized. But, worse, it prevented Brock from carrying out his resolve to destroy American shipping on Lake Erie, the increase of which was pushed forward with vigor and diligence by him until, with such a favorable

opportunity at their disposal, it was not long until they had a fleet which outclassed the Canadian's in size, number and equipment. In the autumn of 1813, the western frontier reaped to the full the effect of this weak and vacillating policy. General Proctor was now in charge of the land forces at Detroit and Captain Barclay of the fleet on the lake. General Harrison had amassed an army of 6,000 on the borders of Michigan and was bent on the recovery of that territory and Detroit in preparation for a renewed invasion of western Canada. Proctor's food and supplies were being endangered by the presence of an American fleet of ten vessels on the lake. With only six vessels, and manned by crews not too well trained in naval warfare, Captain Barclay saw salvation only in an attack upon the enemy fleet, and put out to sea on September 10th, with this end in view. A most obstinate battle ensued. The advantage at first was on the side of the British, but an unfavorable wind unexpectedly arising, the encounter finally ended in the complete destruction of Captain Barclay's fleet although officers and crew fought with a desperate and stubborn valor which merited for them a better fate.

**T**he evacuation of Detroit and the retreat up the Thames by General Proctor.

Proctor finding his resources and supplies cut off by this disaster and hostile armies on his flank and a victorious fleet on his front, determined to evacuate Detroit and retreat eastward to Burlington Heights. He dismantled the fortifications at Detroit, Sandwich and Amherstburg, took the guns with him, and began retreating eastward along the Thames river valley to the Niagara frontier, there to join his forces at Burlington Heights with those defending that area. But either his purpose was too long delayed or intelligence had prematurely reached the Americans of his intentions, at any rate, with an army of at least 2,500, several hundred of whom were Kentucky horsemen, and with ample



equipment and munitions, General Harrison started in quick pursuit, overtaking Proctor's forces within the bounds of this county, and thus gave to Kent the distinction of being the arena on which was staged that engagement which is now usually styled, The Battle of Moraviantown.

**A** fleet of five vessels accompanied Proctor's army to aid him in his retreat.

To assist in his retreat, and to enable him to bring needed equipment and supplies along with him, General Proctor requisitioned a small fleet consisting of four gun boats and a schooner. This fleet had arrived as far east as the vicinity of Chatham when they were overtaken by the pursuing American army. In his report, General Harrison informs us that at the first farm above Chatham they found in flames a large vessel loaded with ordnance and military stores. Two miles further up they found two others in a similar state, and six miles still further on, they captured the other two.

Tradition relates that the Indian chief, Tecumseh, urgently requested that they should take a stand against the American army on that triangular area formed by the junction of McGregor's creek and the Thames river at Chatham. Had they done so, they might have saved their fleet and the supplies

which they contained. As the American army had to cross the creek here, no better place for a defensive battle could be provided.

**O**ne of these vessels was discovered in the Thames in the year 1900.

A melancholy reminder of these early days was discovered by workmen employed in the river Thames in the year 1900. The presence of cannon balls in the vessel led to the belief that it was the "General Myers", the largest of Proctor's gunboats. Under the leadership of Captain J. S. Black, an historical society was organised and the vessel was raised and placed on exhibition at Tecumseh Park. Here it remained for a time, but later it was taken apart and canes and odd ends of furniture made from its ribs and planks by numerous persons seeking souvenirs of the war. The other two vessels were discovered later. As the vessel raised contained two tons of cannon balls, bayonets, flint-locks of American origin and other munitions of war, this discovery would seem to confirm the prevailing impression since, that in wishing to give battle to General Harrison at McGregor's creek, Chief Tecumseh displayed a superior wisdom to Proctor in the choice of a battlefield.

**T**he engagement of October 5th ended disastrously for the British and the death of Tecumseh.

Instead of the Forks, the battle was staged in the near neighbourhood of Fairfield, the Delaware Indian village established by Moravian Missionaries in 1792. This battle has been the occasion of more written comment than perhaps any other event connected with the war arising from two incidents connected with the engagement, the so-called inefficient leadership of Proctor, and the death of Tecumseh, this last a loss to the British cause second only to the death of Brock. The wide divergence of statements made by varying writers concerning this event leads to an



inevitable conclusion that some of the facts recorded have been supplied by a generous imagination. That the General did not burn his bridges behind him or do anything else to impede the advance of the enemy's army, of this there is a universal consensus of opinion. The prudence, energy and pluck which characterised the leadership of his past engagements seemed to have deserted him, on this occasion. His conduct was strongly disapproved of by his contemporaries, but no taint of dishonor or cowardice can be attached to his name even although the humiliating experience of a court-martial investigation at Montreal might seem to lend color to that stigma. Neither again is there any ground for the assertion that the regulars and militia of his army proved themselves inferior in courage to the Indians. The fact that only 240 of the original army of 1,300 arrived at Burlington Heights is a sufficient answer to the charge. An impartial examination of all the authorities available leads to one conclusion, that in a commendable effort to escape disaster, Proctor's forces were overtaken by an army far superior in numbers, equipment and training, and put to rout, and although the story of it may not be either palatable or pleasurable to Canadian readers, this disaster was an inevitable consequence of war conditions which no amount of prudence and valor could have wholly averted. The rear guard of Proctor's army was attacked on October 4th, resulting in the capture by the Americans of all his stores and provisions, and of his men over one hundred taken prisoners. In the battle which he hazarded the following day, his army was speedily beaten at every point, Tecumseh slain, and the body of the dead soldier mutilated by Harrison's triumphant soldiers.

**T**he shameful destruction of the peace-loving Christian village of Fairfield.

Many prolific writers who have waxed eloquent over the short-comings of Proctor, and the death of Tecumseh have entirely over-

looked a major incident connected with that battle—the burning down of the Christian village of Fairfield and the massacre of many of its inhabitants. This village, as recorded in another chapter, was made up mainly of Delaware Indians who came to us from the United States to escape a threatened extermination by the American militia. They were brought here under the leadership of Moravian missionaries, whose aim was to establish a community where their Indian converts might be free to follow the principles and practises of the Christian religion as taught by the Moravian church. These missionaries were pacifists. They taught their disciples to forego war on pain of eternal death. For the twenty-one years since they were established here, they had given themselves up with diligence to the clearing of their reserved lands, to the increasing of the quantity of their yearly harvests, and adding to their stock of cattle, sheep and poultry. But this village and their comfortable homes, the Americans committed to the flames. The husbandmen of their tribes, as many as they could lay their hands upon, they massacred. The women and children escaped only by fleeing and hiding in the woods. Their corn was stacked in the fields ready for husking. This they foraged for the maintenance of their cavalry. Their domestic animals, cattle, sheep, swine and poultry, they pillaged to feed their army. The escaped remnant, collected from their hiding places by their zealous and faithful missionary, followed the British army to Burlington, spending the winter, already come upon them, in bark huts. The following year they were brought back to their Reserve by their Missionary, where they built a new village but on the opposite side of the river from Fairfield, which is now known under the name of Moraviantown.

This wanton and shameful act, repeated later by another American army at Niagara stirred up a spirit of reprisal and revenge which found vent in the burning of the



frontier towns and the capital of the United States, producing conditions that compelled their statesman, Quincy, to declare that "Since the invasion of the Buccaneers, there is nothing in history more disgraceful than this war."

**F**urther pillaging forays among Kent settlers during the following year under American subjugation.

The withdrawal of the British troops from the western area left the country undefended, an opportunity which the Americans seized to harass the settlers by sending out foraging parties to seize their crop and their cattle. Six hundred of the sheep, which were brought out by Lord Selkirk at so great a cost of labor and expense, were carried off to Detroit and the poor crofters of Baldoon were left without the means of making stockings for their feet, or clothes for their children. Three hundred cattle, fattening on the marshes of Raleigh and belonging to the Thames river settlement, met a similar fate. But notwithstanding the danger to themselves which they invited by armed resistance, a number of the settlers determined they would strike a blow in their own defence. A Baldoon man, learning that a body of Americans was on its way to make a raid upon some of the families of the Thames river settlement and that they were bivouacked in a certain barn in Dover township, gathered a following of forty-five settlers, and after a difficult night's march, arrived at the place of their rendezvous at break of day. They fell upon the invading party with vigor, killed several, took eighteen of them prisoners, and put the rest to an ignominious flight, saving, for the time being at least, the crops and cattle of their neighbors.

It was not only in respect to the coming in of new settlers, and the extension of clearances and other farm improvements, wherein progress was retarded during this war, but also in the matter of public works, the survey of townships into lots, and the laying out and building of new roads through the county.



SIR GEORGE PREVOST.

He was appointed Governor-General of Canada in 1811, an amiable man and a good ruler in time of peace, but lacking that decision of character and energy required of a leader in war. Many historians attribute the disaster to the Lake Erie fleet, and subsequently, to General Proctor and his army to the Governor's lack of prescience and energy.

Colonel Burwell had just begun his survey of the Talbot road through Kent, and the division of its south-eastern section into farm lots, when he was attacked by a detachment of Americans, and his instruments captured, necessitating his withdrawal from the work until after the close of the war. These and many other minor incidents serve to show how much the country suffered during the continuance of this war.

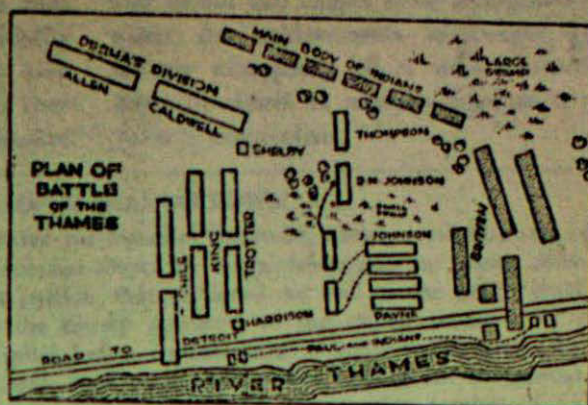
**T**he war left the inhabitants of Canada more British than ever.

In the face of all the evil suffered during this war, there was one result which ministered to the future welfare of the country, its inhabitants, without regard to their former nationalities adhered to each other with a commendable spirit of unity, in defending their own and their neighbors' properties. "We do not belong to you," was their answer to America! "We are a new but a different nation." The settlers along the Thames were made up of Germans, French and English; those at Baldoon, wholly Scotch; and those in the lake Erie district



## PLAN OF THE THAMES RIVER BATTLE.

"General Proctor arranged his little army for battle with a good deal of skill. The men of the 41st Regiment were drawn up in open files in a beech forest without any undergrowth. This right reached on a small swamp which ran parallel with the river. Further to the right was a larger swamp and in front of it a forest of thicker growth. Along the margin of this, the Indians were posted, their line forming an obtuse angle with the British drawn up in front. Behind the 41st Regiment were the 38th Provincial Dragoons. A six-pounder enfiladed the only road which the Americans could advance. The five other guns which Proctor had with him had been stationed on an eminence near Moravian Town, two miles from the field of battle in order to protect a word there. They would have been much better placed if used to protect the British front in battle."



"Three brigades of volunteer infantry, aggregating 1500 men, were placed by Harrison in three lines, with their right on the river and their left on the swamp, under the command of Major-General Henry. Two other brigades, numbering about 1000 men, comprising General Desha's command, were formed on the left of Henry's command so as to hold the Indians in check, and prevent a flank attack. Colonel Johnson's mounted regiment was placed in front of Henry, formed in two columns. The regulars of the 27th Regiment were posted between the road and the river to seize the British six-pounder, while the Indians with Harrison were to gain stealthily the British rear and by their attack convey to them the impression that their own Indians had turned against them."

The attack was opened out by Johnson's mounted men. As they advanced "they received two volleys from the British infantry which threw them into some confusion, but immediately after the second fire the cavalry charged with such overwhelming force as to break the British line."

—Hannay.

—Hannay.

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mainly Irish; and to these we must also add our Indian allies. Most of those at one time had been residents of the United States before coming into Canada. The war was a test whether we should be swallowed up and become a part of the United States, or whether we should become a separate nation and a separate people. The country, and with it the sparse settlements of the county of Kent, unanimously chose the latter alternative. That was a commitment which Canadian people have never regretted, and from which they have never receded. The representatives of these six different nationalities in Kent stood side by side in battle to uphold their choice, an attitude of mind towards the ambitions of America which found its counterpart in every other section of Canada. We, the generations of today rejoice that the pioneers of 1812 chose to be a free people under British institutions, and while we appreciate with pride the spirit in which they upheld their choice in battle,

we rejoice most of all in that the vicissitudes of war did not force upon them a destiny different from the one which they chose. The war did not create their choice,—“a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit”—but the manner of its close did disclose to them and to the world that we are a people destined to take our own and separate part in the affairs of the world, and that we can best obtain our destiny under our own chosen flag, the Union Jack, rather than under one which we did not choose and which we do not want, the Stars and Stripes. If the narrative of this war and its events serves to create an attitude of mind opposed to war then it will serve a good and useful purpose, but if it tends only to recreate the animosities and cruel prejudices exhibited in its conduct, then the sooner the incidents connected with it are forgotten, the better it will be for the peoples of both the nations which participated in it.

On the side of the Longwoods road, a short distance east of Thamesville, a block of



marble has been erected to commemorate the place where the battle of Moraviantown took place, and as a monument also to the fidelity and bravery of Tecumseh, the British ally. But no monument has been erected to commemorate the place where once stood the first

considerable village of the county, where the first school and chapel were established and where the achievements of twenty years zealous missionary effort were reduced to ashes in almost as many minutes as it took years to accomplish.

#### BATTLE OF MORAVIANTOWN

ON the 24th September he concentrated his forces at Sandwich, having previously sent off to the Thames his remaining ordnance and stores of every description for which transport could be found and destroyed the small portion that remained, as well as the public buildings, etc., etc., at Amherstburg. On the 26th the enemy appeared in the offing, sounding in every direction, and on the 27th landed nine miles below Amherstburg in considerable force. On the evening the public buildings at Detroit were destroyed and Proctor commenced his retreat and by easy marches arrived on the 29th at the river Thames. A considerable number of Indians remained behind, but not, Proctor thought, from want of attachment to the British. He had abandoned all idea of occupying the narrows of the St. Clair river to prevent the enemy's vessels passing into Lake Huron. He at first determined to make a stand at Dover, where he had had ovens constructed, three miles below the forks at Chatham, a measure necessary to protect the craft laden with stores which had ascended the river as far as navigation allowed. While he was reconnoitering in the rear, the troops were moved to the forks. This was apparently contrary to the wishes of both the General and the Indians—one of the unfortunate consequences of the former's continued absences, reconnoitering the country beyond. The Indians thereupon, in the absence a second time of the General on an inspection of the country in the rear, retreated to Moraviantown, while the troops under Lieutenant Colonel Warburton, the General found on his return already retiring to the same point, with vessels and stores left behind, which had therefore to be destroyed. One of these vessels has been recently raised after having lain nearly ninety years under water. In the attempt to save provisions and ammunition the force became encumbered with boats not suited to the state of navigation. The Indians and troops retreated on different sides of the river, and the boats, to which sufficient attention had not been given, became particularly exposed to the fire of the enemy, who were advancing on the side on which the Indians were retiring, and most unfortunately fell into the possession of the enemy, and with them several of the men, provisions, and all the ammunition that had been issued to the troops and Indians. This disastrous circumstance afforded the enemy the means of crossing and advancing on both sides of the river. The want of ammunition was unknown to the men and to but few of the officers.

Finding the enemy approached too near the General determined, he said, to meet and give him battle in a wood below the Moravian town as he (the enemy) was in considerable force, and particularly strong in mounted infantry and cavalry. The position Proctor had taken he also conceived to be favourable, as it reduced the enemy to a small front, while it secured his own flanks, his right being on an impenetrable swamp and his left on the river. The 41st regiment occupied the space between the river and the Indians, who were on the right with their right thrown up. The troops had a reserve and marksmen near the six-pounder on the road, for its further security. It was under the direction of Lieutenant Gardner of the 41st, who on a former occasion had been found very useful when attached to the artillery. The gun, when taken, was 'loaded with canister and a sponge case shot, laid and the port of fire light'—the gun did not fire a shot. A plan of co-operation was cordially established with the Indians, who were to turn the left of the enemy and executed their part faithfully and courageously.

'If the troops had acted,' wrote the General, 'as I have ever seen them, and as I confidently expected, I am still of opinion, notwithstanding their numerical superiority, the enemy would have been beaten. All ranks of officers exerted themselves to rally the men—though ineffectually. Though retreating was furthest from my thoughts, I had caused as far as time and circumstances would admit every impediment to a retreat to be removed and had also placed the field ordnance under the orders of Lieutenant Thornton of the Royal Artillery, so as to defend an important point by which the Indians had retreated to us and also to cover the retreat of the





ISAAC DOLSEN'S HOUSE

Herewith is a sketch of Isaac Dolsen's house as it appeared in 1860. It was a hewn log structure, and stood very near to the right or north bank of the Thames, about two miles and a half below Chatham. Half a mile below was the farm of John, his brother, where the American army encamped on their return after the battle and the burning down of the village of Fairfield. The two brothers were born in Pennsylvania but educated at the Moravian Mission, and were about thirty years of age when the battle took place.

troops, whilst order was retained by them. The Indians, after the troops were broken retired through the woods, and brought with them those who escaped in that direction. On the evening of the 5th of October, provision was made for the feeding of the Indian troops who should arrive at Delaware; the commissariat were also stationed on the route to Ancaster for the same purpose, as well as parties of dragoons to aid and assist those who had effected their retreat. I proceeded to the Grand river, and endeavoured to prevent individuals who might create false alarms and immediately communicated with the officers in command at Long Point, Burlington and General Vincent commanding the centre division.

The foregoing account, which is in the main that of Proctor himself, was not supported by the statements of his officers nor that of Major Richardson, then a young volunteer accompanying the force, in his history. It was charged that the General left the officer second in command (Warburton) of the troops in the dark as to his intentions and without proper orders, the enemy being close at hand, while he went long distances in advance—some twenty six miles towards the last—and that so great was the dissatisfaction at Proctor's conduct in this regard that a council of war to deprive him of his command was talked of and Lieut.-Colonel Warburton was censured for not assuming the command; that his account of the action itself was incorrect in several respects; that his object in selecting the battle-ground in the wood was to cover the departure of his family and personal effects from Moravian town; that the infantry made as determined a stand as was possible under their circumstances and considering their lack of ammunition, that there was not a single round of ammunition for the gun, and that the other guns were misplaced—and finally that the General having taken his position in rear of the second line, mounted and fled as soon as the first line retreated and the second opened fire, accompanied by his staff.

According to General Harrison's report, he had above 3000 men at his disposal in the battle—of whom seven were killed and twenty two wounded, five of the latter—dying subsequently of their wounds. According to Lieut. Bullock of the 41st, the senior and only officer of the regiment who escaped, the British force consisted of the 1st battalion of that regiment, 367 of all ranks, eighteen or twenty men of the Tenth Veterans, some artillery and 800 Indians—about 1200 in all. Of the troops, twelve were killed, 36 wounded and the greater number of remainder taken prisoners. Of the Indians, thirty three were slain, including the gallant Tecumseh—distinguished alike for his bravery and humanity, his eloquence, and his influence over the Indian tribes. The story of his secret burial place has found wide credence since, but there is too much reason to believe that the story of the mutilation of his remains by the Kentuckian militia after the battle—in a most inhuman way—is in accordance with the facts."

—Judge C. O. Ermatinger  
in *The Talbot Regime.*

Carefully revised figures give the strength of the American army as consisting of 2620 Infantry, 1200 Cavalry, 260 Indians, a total of 4080. The British had a total of 894, made up of 356 Infantry, 38 Cavalry and 500 Indians.



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## OLD COUNTRY CONDITIONS AND THE BETTER INDUCEMENTS WHICH THE UNITED STATES OFFERED TO IMMIGRANTS PREVENTED RAPID PROGRESS IN SETTLEMENT

WE have seen that Settlement in the Eighteenth century in the county of Kent was confined to the Thames river district and comprised two settlements. The first, known as the Dolsen settlement, began about eight miles from the mouth of the Thames and extended intermittently to what was then known as 'The Forks'; but now the site of the city of Chatham. The second settlement was farther up the river at the eastern boundary of the county and was composed of a band of Delaware Indians, brought to this country from the United States by Moravian missionaries who established a village called Fairfield on the north bank of the Thames river in the early spring of 1792. After these two settlements there was one other established at the very beginning of the Nineteenth century when Lord Selkirk brought out his colony of Highlanders in 1804, and settled them on the borders of lake St. Clair, on the Sydenham river. These three settlements, with the addition of several families in the Lake Erie district comprised the total within the bounds of the county when the Americans declared war against us in 1812. For the next two decades after this, settlement made very slow progress; in fact, it was not until about 1830,

that it began in real earnest. It will be in order in this chapter to consider the causes that hindered or promoted settlement in this early period of the county's history.

### Progress in settlement reflected Old Country conditions.

It will be found on examination of these causes that there were two classes; one, arising from Old Country conditions; and the other from conditions found within the bounds of the county itself. When conditions in Great Britain were favorable to the emigration of their people to Canada, settlements in the country increased and those in Kent county along with others. When conditions were unfavorable progress in settlement lagged. In the first two decades of the Nineteenth century conditions were unfavorable. From 1806 until 1815, the people of Great Britain, along with the rest of Europe, had to concentrate all their energies in a war of defence against the ambitious projects of Napoleon, and for this they needed all their man power available. Contrary to what might be expected under the circumstances, there was an abnormal increase during the same period in population in all the three sections of the country—England, Ireland and Scotland without a corresponding increase in the resources required to provide



them a living. The effect of this surplus population was not felt until after the close of the war, when a season of unemployment was ushered in, the evils of which were aggravated by the burdens of war-debt and taxes consequent upon the war. These conditions provided a season favorable to emigration, only those who suffered most were unable from lack of means to avail themselves of this as a way by which to obtain a desired release from the burdens of want forced upon them by the circumstances of the times.

**Individuals, Societies, and the Government encourage emigration.**

Troubles never come singly. The workless population of Great Britain, groaning under the burden of heavy taxes resulting from the enormous debt created by the war, found themselves facing a prospective famine by reason of the comparative failure of two harvests following the war. Emigration was now looked upon as the only remedy for existing circumstances. Such men as Wilmot Horton and Wakefield publicly advocated it as the only way by which the country could recover itself. From 1819 until 1827, the Parliament voted six grants of money to assist the unemployed to emigrate to Canada. Societies were organised to further the same ends. With these encouragements people flocked to North America, yet, the county of Kent, notwithstanding the fertility of its soil, the wealth of its forests, and that it was one of the first counties opened out for settlement, received very few additions in these years to its population.

**Why Kent did not receive its proportionate share of British immigrants.**

The causes were not far to seek. In the first place, the United States gained the greater number of them. The figures are very illuminating. In a census of the emigration taken, covering a period of sixty years, 1815 to 1875, it was found that 8,286,720 persons emigrated from Great Britain to North America. Of these the United States received

5,391,542 and Canada, because a less attractive field, received only 1,536,683. Of this small share obtained by Canada of these immigrants, Kent county, before 1830, received very few. The surveying of the lands into farm lots and the opening up of roads were not proceeded with as rapidly as would enable the county to be prepared to receive very many of them, at an earlier date. The Government had handed over the settlement of the West in a large measure to the supervision of Colonel Talbot, and with him the settlement of his lands in Elgin county would have prior consideration. It was not until 1811 that the Talbot road was surveyed through the townships of Orford and Howard, and lots surveyed for settlement on either side of the road. It was the intention of Surveyor Burwell to continue it on westward right through to Amherstburg but the war broke out immediately after, and this necessary work to enable settlement to take place was left in abeyance until after the close of the war in 1815. The Communication road was delimited in 1795, but it was 1840 before it was completely opened out to Lake Erie, so tardily did the progress of road-making proceed in these early times. The township line road between Howard and Harwich was opened out in 1823, and a range of lots surveyed on either side of it for immediate settlement. The Middle road was laid out in the same year, 1823, and opened out in Howard and Orford townships, and a further readiness for settlement effected there. These surveys helped towards inducing a certain number of these Old Country immigrants to settle in Kent but there was another cause hindering any rapid progress in settlement.

**The lavish granting of lands to absentee holders retarded settlement.**

The Government had adopted a system of land grants, giving away large acreages to absentee holders, many of them Old Country favorites. In 1838, Lord Durham made a thorough inspection of the land systems in vogue, and in his report to the home



Government describes the Loyal which grants were made to unapplicants. Those who took part in it of 1812 received large grants for them and their children. Little evil resulted this where there was a likelihood of settling upon the land, which many of did, but the greater number obtained grant only to turn it over to a jobber trifling sum. But in addition to a grants, "Every intending settler", Durham reported, "received an ord proportion to his alleged capital, leader of an immigrant party was en according to the number of his pre followers, every one who applied appa got his grant, until it seemed as if Government had no other object but to itself as quickly as possible of all co over the unsettled portions of the provin The public domain soon passed over in way into the hands of land speculators.

**T**he Canada Land Company was the grea of these monopolists.

The Canada Land Company was greatest of these jobbers. This Compe was organised in 1826 and to them was giv a monopoly of about two and a half millio of acres, sometimes in detached lots, and others in blocks of twelve hundred to fort thousand acres each, except in the case of that tract of land lying between Lakes Erie and Huron, which was granted to them in one block comprising a million acres. These lands they purchased at a price of about seventy five cents an acre, a part of which only was to be paid in cash, the rest to be paid in public improvements in the vicinity of their own lands, such as in the building of roads and bridges and such like needed conveniences to make their lands more marketable. Small settlements were separated in this way by large blocks of unoccupied lands, which made on that account the establishment of public conveniences all the more difficult. One has only to examine some of the early survey maps of the county

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their use when they arrived in their new homes, gave them gifts of cattle and paid their passage to Canada.

But a more potent influence than the generous aid supplied by individuals and organisations, or by government grants in speeding up settlement, was the favorable accounts of the prospects of the country sent by prior settlers to their friends still left in Scotland. "We live much better here than at home", wrote one of the earliest of these, in seeking to induce his relatives to follow his example. "A man by honest industry here may live comfortably and support himself decently and save something beside", wrote another. And that first saving was usually devoted to pay the passage money of his next in kin, in order that they, too, might enter into the heritage of comfort and independence awaiting them in this country. At the time when emigration from the Mother Land was at its height, millions of dollars were thus sent back annually.

**T**hese Highlanders made the best of settlers.

In seeking for settlers, Colonel Talbot expressed his preference for British settlers, and of these, the Scotch and North-Irish were his favorites. Of the Scotch, the Lowlanders were generally conceded to be the best farmers, and in Canada, if to both were given cleared land this undoubtedly would have been a true estimate of their comparative qualities, but judged by the conditions which both met in this country, and the unrelenting industry which the forests demanded of the settler before he could provide himself with a cleared farm, the superiority of the Lowlander as a farmer did not find here its adequate expression. Although many of the Highlanders were fishermen and craftsmen, and the vocation of farming new to them, the habits of industry forced upon them by their cramped condition in Scotland, stood them in good stead in this new land. They were accustomed to hardships. They had to wrest a living from very meagre resources,

and it was only by abnormal industry, initiative and economy this could be done. When, then, the unlimited resources of this country were placed at their disposal, and with the same aptitude for labor undiminished, they soon found themselves in circumstances of comfort and independence, some even of wealth. Judged by the ultimate results obtained by these and their descendants, the partiality of Colonel Talbot towards them as settlers, has been amply justified. They were not only industrious and resourceful, but influenced by the educational and religious revivals, and the political reforms exercising the minds of men in the pre-Victorian era, they became ambitious not only to better their condition materially but also to raise the standard of their social, mental, moral and religious life as well. They supplied leaders in all the movements that lent themselves to the advancement of the country and county in respect to the establishment of municipal institutions, schools, colleges and churches. The names of many of these will readily come to the mind of the reader as he thinks of the leaders of the affairs of the county during the past hundred years of its history—the two McVicar brothers of Chatham township, both of whom became religious leaders, the one in the Presbyterian, the other in the Baptist church; Archibald Blue of Orford, a prominent government official; Senator Campbell of Howard township; P. D. McKellar, Archibald McKellar, and Senator McCoig of Chatham city; A. D. McLean, its first mayor, the Selkirk settlers who founded Wallaceburg; the Fergusons of Thamesville, and many others. These are illustrative examples of the enterprise, ambition, resource and persevering industry characteristic not of a few only—but of all of that class of settlers which came to us from Argyle and other shires of Scotland in the first half of the Nineteenth century. For fifty years this drainage of Scotland's best continued. The population of Argyleshire



decreased from 100,973 in 1830, to 76,468 in 1881, showing that emigration had absorbed all of its natural increase in that fifty-year period, and 24,000 others besides. Perthshire gave up their natural increase, and 14,000 others. And what was true of these shires was true also of others, though it was from Argyle that the county of Kent obtained the greater number of its Scotch settlers. These came here mainly in the first half of that emigration period, that is, prior to 1850.

**C**onditions in Ireland were similar to those in Scotland.

The conditions in Ireland in the beginning of the Nineteenth century were not dissimilar in respect to over-population from those in Scotland. In 1823 the county of Cork found itself with a population too great to provide for all an adequate living. Other counties also were similarly situated. The same consolidation of land holdings was also taking place in Ireland as in Scotland. When a lease expired the land-owner refused to renew it and the occupant had no other alternative but to remove to some other place of abode. There does not seem to have been the same consideration for the tenant on the part of any of the landlords of Ireland as in the case of some of the Scottish owners, and evictions were therefore more numerous. It is said that fifty thousand of these were turned adrift by heartless overlords, such as Lord Wyndham, between the years 1849 and 1856, and the consolidation of land holdings was going on many years before this.

**T**he Potato Famine of 1846-7 greatly aggravated unfavorable conditions in Ireland.

This treatment of the small landholder was more inexcusable at this time because of the sufferings which the populace of Ireland were enduring from the ravages of the Potato Famine of 1847. This crop failure was not confined to any one district but spread throughout the whole island, carrying death and misery in its train. This occurred at a time when the population of the country had

reached a period of unusual density, and the potato was their staple article of food. The major portion of the people depended on this crop alone for their living. Even prior to the famine the country had reached an unsatisfactory state of pauperism and want existed to a large extent among the poor in years when there was obtained a normal harvest of food stuff. But with the total loss of the potato crop, occasional want in years of good harvests became in 1847, a time of starvation and death to thousands. The people therefore began to flee from the country on the occasion of every available opportunity. Emigration to North America became the only hope of life to thousands. It is recorded that in the period between the years of 1847 and 1854, there was an emigration of 1,650,044 persons, or one out of every four of the country's population, and of these 1,300,000 went to the United States, the remainder going to Canada. This rapid emigration was made possible by the monetary assistance given to them from outside sources. In 1852, a sum exceeding five millions of dollars was sent from the United States and Canada to assist emigration from Ireland. As this was more than three times the amount sent in 1848, the year in which the effect of the famine was felt at its worst, it serves to show that this aid came mainly from their friends and relatives recently emigrated to the United States and Canada. In addition to the aid received from abroad, the "Society of Friends" and other Old Country agencies were assisting in the despatch of Irish families to Canada. Of the number of these who came to Canada at this period, (350,000), the county of Kent received its proportionate share, and at no period more than at that time was there a greater addition of Irish families to the county's population. A goodly number arrived during the period following the agricultural depression of 1831 and 1832, but they did not nearly equal the number who came as a result of this potato famine.



**T**he Industrial Depression of 1826 and 1827 furthers emigration from England.

In respect to England and Wales an additional feature which made conditions for emigration favorable was the industrial depression from which the country suffered in the years 1826 and 1827. In England, the evils of over-population were felt more in the urban centres rather than in the rural districts where the people derived their living from the land. Before the close of 1826, Yorkshire alone had 15,000 people out of work, and this before the full effects of the industrial depression had reached their climax. The introduction of steam-power had increased manufacturing products with a decrease of the man power required for their production. The growth of European competition narrowed the markets for these increased products. With the establishment of a new nation in North America, and the emigration of skilled workmen to the United States, schooled in the methods of manufacture practised by Great Britain, and with raw material at its own door, there was created there a new and dangerous competitor to the Mother Land for the trade and commerce of the world. As a result of these varied influences, much unemployment existed in England, and many emigrated to Canada, but as these were mainly from the villages, towns and cities, and few from the land, Kent county did not profit at this period to any great extent from this emigration.

**T**he disadvantages in regard to settlement in which Canada stood as compared with the United States.

From the foregoing it will be seen that the human exodus from Great Britain which led to the settlement of Ontario was made up of persons who had to be aided before they would be in a position to emigrate from their own country. They were forced by the necessitous conditions produced by the circumstances of their times to emigrate from their native land yet the majority of them were without the means to effect the exchange.

This placed Canada in a position of great disadvantage as compared with the United States. Divided at that time into two provinces, without an immigration policy, or at best a very shifting one, and in Ontario with a Government Executive seeking only for themselves the loaves and fishes of office, there was no systematic effort put forth to induce settlers to come to Canada. On the other hand the United States had many schemes to generously assist intending immigrants to settle in their country. There was placed at their ready disposal unlimited resources of land where roads, schools and churches did not have to await the coming, but preceded the settler. They had numerous agents stationed in the Old Country enticing skilled workmen by the promise of increased wages to accept positions in their new and increasing manufacturing plants. Under these circumstances, the wonder is, not that so few but that so many came to Canada in the early decades of the Nineteenth century.

**T**he Era of Immigrant settlement for the county of Kent.

In respect to the county of Kent, settlement by immigration practically ceased shortly after 1850. The period between the years 1830 and 1860 may rightly be designated the era of Immigrant Settlement for the county. Before and after that period immigrants came intermittently and not numerously.

After this period additions were made to the population of the county mainly by natural increase or from settlers coming from other sections of our own Dominion. Genealogical charts of two families of the township of Harwich appear elsewhere in this volume illustrating the place which this natural increase occupies in the present population of the County. For the past sixty years, increase by immigration has been a negligible quantity and has been confined chiefly to the urban centres. From this time forth growth in population will follow, and not, as formerly, precede, increased development of the native resources of the county.



# NEGRO COLONIES

## THEIR ESTABLISHMENT IN KENT COUNTY CONNECTED WITH THE MOVEMENT FOR THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY IN THE UNITED STATES

**B**EFORE leaving the subject of the various classes comprised in the first settlements of the County and the taking up of the discussion of their subsequent achievements, there is one other class which merits special mention—the colored element in our population, of which Kent county has received a generous supply. These came to us in the beginning years of the Nineteenth century as runaway slaves from the United States. Before a prohibitory law was passed covering all of the States of the Union, the movement for the abolition of slavery took the form, first, of the liberation of the individual slave by assisting him to escape from the United States to Canada. This was made possible by the fact that slavery was not at that time permissible in British North America. In Ontario, or Upper Canada, one of the first enactments to find a place on our Statute Book was the law forbidding slavery, the treatment of human beings as if they were personally-owned chattels, to be bought and

sold and made to labor in a manner similar to horses and cattle.

**S**lavery was not permitted to root itself in Canada.

The system had been introduced in a small measure into the original colony of Canada through slaves having been brought into the country as part of the household property of Loyalist families from the United States and the gentry from England. But public opinion was too strong from the first against it, and it was not permitted to root itself in the social system of our country.

**T**he system flourished for about two and a half centuries in the United States.

In the United States, however, slavery, and the importation of slaves, became from the very first one of its most important and greatest industries. From August, 1619, when the first cargo of slaves

was disembarked in America, until 1807, at which time a law was passed prohibiting any further importation, the total number of stolen humans from Africa comprised over



**LORD ELGIN**  
Governor-General of Canada  
1847-1854

A warm-hearted friend of the colored race in Canada and a generous patron of the Buxton Settlement, Raleigh township.



half a million of their population. The following report of the slave population of seven of their states will serve to illustrate the rapidity of the increase in the

Delaware,	in 1840, possessed	2,605 slaves;	in 1850,	2,289
Columbia,	" " "	4,694	" " "	3,687
Maryland,	" " "	89,739	" " "	89,800
S. Carolina	" " "	327,038	" " "	384,925
Virginia,	" " "	448,987	" " "	473,026
Alabama,	" " "	253,532	" " "	342,894
Georgia,	" " "	280,945	" " "	362,966

A grand total of 1,659,587 by the middle of the century.

From these figures it will be seen that through natural increase and a system of smuggling there were in these seven states alone by 1850, more than three times as many slaves as there were in all of the states of the Union when their importation was prohibited by parliamentary enactment.

**T**he Society of Friends originated a movement looking towards its abolition.

Alongside of this rapid increase in the slave population of the United States, there began to be formed a body of public opinion strongly opposed to it, which found expression in the establishment of an organization to assist runaway slaves to escape to Canada and freedom. The initiation of this movement is attributed to the Society of Friends, or Quakers. One of their number, C. S. Torrey, is credited with the origin of the scheme for the assistance of runaway slaves known by the name of the Underground Railway. Another, Thomas Garrett, in the face of repeated fines and confiscation of property, is known to have assisted no less than 2061 to make good their escape to this country. The name, Underground Railway, is somewhat misleading, as it suggests a railway with its train of cars loaded with slave refugees, running along in some underground mysterious tunnel. Instead of that it was a series of houses arranged along the track of the runaway slave wherein he could find food and shelter and assistance to make good his escape. A Vigilance Committee was appointed to keep the runaway informed as to the places where he could find kindly treatment,

numbers of this slave population and the magnitude of the evil which had by this time firmly rooted itself in their social system:

the imminence of danger from pursuing officers, and such other information as would be necessary in order that there might be no miscarriage in his effort to escape from servitude and the cruel tyranny of his master. In this way 30,000 slaves were assisted into Canada before the middle of the century, and there continued to be added to this number 2,000 annually until 1865, the date when slavery became prohibited in every State of the Union.

**T**wo colonies of refuge slaves were established in Kent county.

But the freedom of these serfs raised up the problem of their future destiny. What was to befall them after they arrived here? The circumstances of their former lives had been no assistance to them in the cultivation of the virtues of self-reliance and thrift, qualities so essential to provide a living for the pioneers of an uncleared, undeveloped country. Wretched and miserable, these helpless and homeless refugees had to be taken care of, by the benevolently disposed, after they arrived here, or they would be worse off in a state of freedom than they were in a state of slavery. Associations were consequently formed, to render them this needed assistance, of which two, the Elgin Association and the British and American Institute operated in the county of Kent. The former established the Buxton Settlement in the township of Raleigh and the latter a colony and industrial school in Camden Gore, on the site where is now located the town of Dresden.



## I.

## THE ELGIN ASSOCIATION

**T**HE Buxton Settlement, a colony of colored refugees from the United States located in the township of Raleigh, has an interest that is national attached to it, in that it indicates what was the attitude of mind and the spirit of our people towards slavery from the very commencement of our country's history. Although a slave system was in operation in Canada to a small extent under French rule, yet when it became a British possession and British laws and institutions established, the system was banned. At its very first session, the Legislative Assembly of Upper Canada made a pronouncement against human slavery and passed a law making it illegal for anyone to practise the system within the bounds of the province.

**S**laves were given their freedom and made citizens on a par with other settlers as soon as they reached Canada.

Before slavery was abolished in the United States, many of the slaves of that country found escape from their servitude by fleeing into Canada. As soon as their escape became known to their masters they were immediately followed, and if found on American soil they were shackled and whipped back to the life of cruel hardship from which they sought to escape, now made doubly hard because they had the effrontery to try and make their escape. They could be seized and flogged on the public streets of any city of the United States and yet no laws of that country afforded them any protection. But immediately they touched their foot on Canadian soil, they became free. "Slaves touch our country and their shackles fall" as one of the poets wrote. Naturally there were demands made upon Canada at these times by the Government of the United States that these slaves should be returned, claiming them to be chattels in which they had property right. But the answer was ever

in the negative, and instead the slaves were given the assurance that as soon as they touched our country they would be treated as free men. Citizenship in Canada was given to them on a par with all other men. The protection of the laws of the land was theirs like unto that of other persons. They were encouraged to take up land and become permanent settlers in the country. When they did so, they were given the franchise, and allowed to send their children to the Common schools or to have Separate schools established for them where strong prejudice existed against them.

**A**ssistance was given them by benevolently-minded citizens of the United States and Canada.

It would be hardly true to say that they were received without prejudice in this country. When the first efforts were undertaken for the establishment of the Buxton settlement in Raleigh, meetings were held and protests were sent to the Government, and petitions were sent asking them not to give them a grant of land. They had a warm friend in Lord Elgin, who was then the Governor-General of the country, and most of our citizens were in sympathy with them and were ready to help them get freedom and citizenship in this country seeing that they could not get it in the United States. Indeed, if it were not for the warm-hearted sympathy that slaves obtained from both sides of the line, and the efforts put forth to assist them to escape, instead of the thousands that entered into Canada, there would not have been even tens. Routes for them to make their escape were established and houses provided along the way where they would be sheltered and fed. Along the boundary of the States of New York and Pennsylvania, there were twelve points where runaway slaves were passed over into Canada. On lake Erie and the Detroit river, there were





REV. WM. KING.

Rev. Wm. King, the founder of the Buxton Settlement, was the pioneer among those who sought to secure the freedom, and betterment of the colored slaves of the Southern States, by establishing them in colonies in Canada. He was associated with the Elgin Association as their most active member in securing the land, in Raleigh township, for this colonization work. He

established a Christian Mission and a school at the settlement and there they were taught husbandry in addition to a literary and religious education. The colony was established in 1849, and continued until the emancipation of the slaves in the United States in 1865. From that time forward, Mr. King was engaged in the Christian ministry for the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Interested in educational matters, he was instrumental in the first establishment of the Chatham Grammar School, and was for twenty years actively connected with the Board. Towards the close of his days he retired to Chatham, where he died at eighty years of age.



REV. WM. KING'S RESIDENCE.

eight ports at which the fugitives were landed. Missions were established by philanthropic societies to provide them with homes and work until they were got on their feet in this new country, of which the Elgin Association was the one connected with the organising and establishment of the Buxton Settlement.

**F**ounding of the Buxton Settlement by Rev. William King.

The Buxton settlement was founded in 1849. A tract of land in the township of Raleigh was secured by this Elgin Association from the Canadian Government and the organisation of the colony effected under the direction of Rev. William King. Mr. King was an Irishman, a graduate of Glasgow College who had been made Rector of a college in the State of Louisiana. There by marriage, he became the owner of fifteen slaves of the estimated value of nine thousand dollars. He freed his slaves and brought them to Canada where they formed the nucleus of the Buxton Settlement. The strip of land secured by the Association for the use of the Negroes extended in length six miles and in width was three miles, containing altogether nine thousand acres of good farm land. This tract was divided into farm-lots of fifty acres each and was sold to the

incoming slaves for two dollars and a half an acre, on easy terms of payment. A model house was erected, eighteen feet in width by twenty four in length and twelve feet high, and it was prescribed that on each farm there should be built a similar house by the purchaser. This was to be set thirty three feet back from the road, and a picket fence erected on front of it,

**R**apid progress was made and a flourishing village was established.

The fifteen slaves freed by Rev. William King were the first to be located on this tract of land, but as soon as the lots were surveyed, other refugees came in, took up farms, and began making clearings. Within four years there were four hundred refugees located in the settlement and in 1857, it had a population of eight hundred. Buxton village was built on the Middle road in the centre of the Settlement, about twelve miles south of Chatham. It grew rapidly. In 1864 it contained a steam grist-mill, a saw-mill, two pearl-ash factories, two general stores, one shoe shop, one blacksmith shop, one wagon shop and one cooper shop. Outside of the local trade its principal business was the manufacture of staves and square timber both of which were exported extensively at that time from the county. There was a



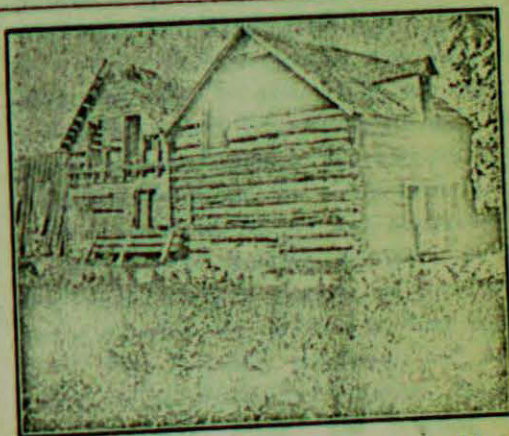
69 good school with an average attendance of forty pupils, a semi-weekly mail service with a post-office of which Mr. George Coutts was the first postmaster.

**T**he Mission work and chapel was placed in charge of the Canadian Presbyterian church.

A Mission church was established for the benefit of the settlement and a commodious church built in 1850 with a seating capacity for two hundred. The church was a neat structure twenty four feet wide by forty two feet in length, and yet so cheap was labor and material in those days that the erection of it only cost them four hundred dollars. The Mission was put under the charge of the Canadian Presbyterian church, with the Reverend William King as the missionary. An annual collection was taken up in all the Presbyterian churches throughout the country, known as the Buxton Mission Fund, for the support of the work. In 1857, a commission from the Irish Presbyterian church visited the Mission, and so well pleased were they with the work of the Mission that they invited Mr. King to visit Ireland with a view to raising funds for the erection of a church and schools. Mr. King not only visited Ireland but England and Scotland as well and succeeded in raising six thousand dollars for this end. When war broke out in the United States, in 1861, the buildings were delayed until the end of the war, and when, in 1865, the liberty of the slaves was proclaimed throughout the United States, the object for which the Mission was established no longer existed, the schools were merged into the common schools of the district and the church work ceased to exist as a special missionary endeavor in behalf of negro slaves. Half of the six-thousand-dollar fund was used to build a Presbyterian church and manse, and the other half used as an endowment to create an annuity for Rev. William King during his life time, after which it became a part of the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

**B**uxton village described as it flourished in 1864.

A contemporary of 1864 gives this account of the Settlement. "Buxton is certainly a very interesting place. Sixteen years ago, it was a wilderness. Now good highways are laid out in all directions through the forest and by their side, standing back thirty three feet from the road, are about two hundred cottages, all built on the same pattern, all looking neat and comfortable; around each is a well-cleared place of several acres, which is well cultivated. The fences are in good order, the barns seem well filled, and cattle and horses, and pigs and poultry, abound. There are signs of industry and thrift and comfort everywhere; of idleness, of want, nowhere. There is no tavern and no groggery, but there is a chapel and a schoolhouse. Most interesting of all are the inhabitants. Twenty years ago, most of them were slaves who owned nothing, not even their children. Now they own themselves; they own their houses and their farms; and they have their wives and children about them. They are enfranchised citizens of a government which protects their rights. The present condition of all these colonists, as compared with their former one, is remarkable. Here are men who were bred in slavery, who came here and purchased land at the government price, cleared it, bought



A Buxton Mission house, the former residence of a refugee slave, as it appears in 1925.



their own implements, built their own houses, and have supported themselves in all material circumstances, and now support their schools in part. I consider that this settlement has done as well as a white settlement would have done under the same circumstances."

**T**he Mission has proved that the colored race have a capacity for development and progress.

During the fifteen years that the Mission

was in operation seven hundred children of both sexes received a good Christian education. Since that time they have nearly all gone to the United States where a large field of usefulness has opened out to them. Some are teachers, some preachers and some doctors; others are lawyers and some members of Congress. But the Settlement, as a negro colony, is fast disappearing. The colored families are leaving rapidly and their places are being occupied by white settlers.

## II.

### THE BRITISH AND AMERICAN INSTITUTE

**T**HE British and American Institute of Dresden was organized under the auspices of some philanthropic gentlemen—principally British—for the purpose of providing escaped slaves and colored people with an education. This Institution owed its origin to the efforts of a Mr. Thomas Fuller, a Quaker gentleman who, having to traverse the country lying between London and Amherstburg, along the Tecumseh road, observed that the colored people whom he met with in the course of his journey—principally runaway slaves, who at that day were fleeing to a land of freedom in large numbers, were destitute not only of the ordinary necessities of life but of educational privileges of any kind. Mentioning this fact to some friends in England, which he visited shortly after, a small sum, \$1300, was subscribed by them—the list headed by a young girl—which he was to apply as he thought best. On his return to Canada, a meeting was called at Toronto to decide in what way the money should be applied, at which were present, amongst others, the Rev. Mr. Rolfe and Mr. Jas. C. Brown, of Chatham. It was agreed that the amount should be expended in the purchase of lands and the erection of a school house in which to provide education for colored people. The Rev. Josiah Henson

was deputed to select the necessary lands, and after a tour through the western country he located at Dresden, purchased Lot No. 3, on the 4th Concession, Gore of Camden for the Institution and for himself secured the adjoining lot on the same concession, part of which he subsequently sold to the Institution. These lands now form the southwest portion of the town of Dresden.

**T**he Institute established a boarding-school for refugee slaves.

Under a Board of Trustees, and with Mr. Henson as agent or manager, operations commenced in due course of time, and a low, long, story-and-a-half building of hewn logs arose in a small confined clearing near the river bank, and which for some years, was used as a boarding school for refugee slaves. This school, partook largely of the character of an industrial institution, the slaves being set at work in the woods cutting logs, cordwood, or at the primitive farming operations on the Institution lands, a portion of their time being set aside and devoted to their education. The "Friends" in Boston and other places, on Mr. Henson's solicitations, furnished the needful funds; and clothing and provisions arrived in bulky consignments at Chatham from the different receiving depots—Cleveland, Sandusky, and Detroit. The agents at Detroit were the well known



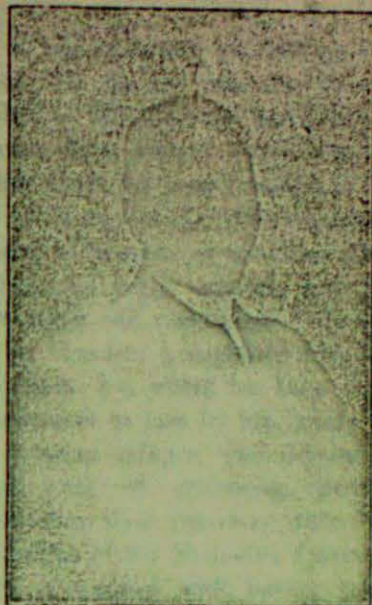
merchants, Messrs. Moore and Foot, and the goods were brought to Chatham by the steamboat "Brothers," and thence conveyed by friends of the Institution to Dresden. By Mr. Henson's efforts, during several successive winters, sufficient funds were raised in eastern cities in the States for the erection of a saw-mill, followed in 1846 by that of a grist-mill although for some reason the latter did not begin operations until 1849.

**I**t also developed a flourishing lumbering business.

The Institution was now flourishing; a large business was being done in lumber, walnut crotches and cordwood; the export of the latter commodity being so considerable as to require the use of a large scow. This traffic in lumber grew to large proportions. Mr. Henson took a Mr. Carey in partnership with him; they became lessees of the association's properties and pushed the lumber industry with aggressiveness, still using slave labor to do the work.

**A**n emissary of its English patrons brings trouble to the Institute.

In course of time, trouble arose and the property of the Institution became so heavily involved that Mr. Henson found it necessary to visit England in order to raise funds to wipe out the debt. Whilst there, the English patrons became suspicious that there was something wrong, and it was decided to send out a Mr. John Scoble to look into its affairs. This gentleman, of supposed philanthropic tendencies, had nevertheless a good eye to business, and under the plausible plea that to put matters aright, it was necessary the Trustees should assign their trusts to him. The demand was acceded to by all, save Mr. J. C. Brown. He thus succeeded in getting the entire business into his own hands. He and Mr. Henson worked harmoniously together for a time, but, later, trouble arose and an action was instituted in the Court of Chancery to eject Mr. Scoble. After a determined fight of seven years' duration, in which the character of Mr. Henson was most



**BISHOP WALTER HAWKINS**

A colored preacher in Kent county in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, and an illustrative example of the capacity of the Negro race for progress and development.

creditably vindicated in his conduct of the Institution, for whose welfare he had sunk much of his own means, a decree was granted, on the 24th of March, 1868, by which Mr. Scoble's control ceased and the estates were vested in Mr. Jas. C. Brown, Archibald McKellar, Isaac Holden and others, as Trustees appointed by the Court.

**S**ale was made of the Institute lands in 1871.

The new trustees decided that the lands—a portion of which had been laid off in lots with a reserve of one acre and a half for a market and six acres for a cemetery—should be sold. This decision was consummated, partly by private sales at different times, and partly by an auction sale the 13th day of January, 1871, on which occasion \$21,735 was realized, and which with the sums received for lands otherwise disposed of earned the Institution a sum exceeding \$40,000. On the 2nd day of March, 1872, the association



was formally merged into the Wilberforce Educational Institution of learning for the purpose of affording the colored people of Canada with higher education, with headquarters at the Town of Chatham, and the operations at Dresden were ceased.

Nothing now remains of the old Institution buildings, long an interesting place to visit by transient travellers in Dresden, but the Cemetery. It still remains, an historic landmark; wherein lie many of the colored and enslaved people of an American past, and for whose education and spiritual betterment the British and American Institute, and the Elgin Association were established.

The Wilberforce Institute building still stands in a fairly good state of repair, on King Street East, Chatham, but the education of the children of colored families is no longer dependent upon private enterprise and institutions. In equal standing with the children of the white population, with whom they freely mix, they are educated in the Public and High schools of the province, and pay, according to their assessable property, their proportionate share of the school rate.

**Josiah Henson continued a resident of Dresden until his death.**

Josiah Henson, the leading and prominent figure intimately connected with the rise and fall of the Institution was born in slavery at Charles County, Maryland, in 1789. He remained under bondage until shortly before his arrival in Canada, about the year 1830. Residing a short time at Fort Erie he removed to Colchester in the County of Essex in 1837, where he was instrumental in organizing a company of colored volunteers, which took part in the rising of that period. At the inception of the British and American Institution he was residing at Amherstburg, but immediately after took up his abode at Dresden, where he remained until his death. It is he, supposedly, whom Mrs. Stowe chose for the hero of her renowned story, the 'Uncle Tom,' of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin'.

It was while she was visiting in Boston in 1850 that she met him—her book was published in 1851-52—and heard the story of his escape from slavery. Her biographers say what struck her most forcibly, in the relation of his story was the Christian spirit he manifested as he spoke of the injuries he received, where one might naturally look for vindictive anger and resentment. His burial place is at Dresden, a neglected and uncared for cemetery, but where has been erected a fine monument to him by his family.

Another refugee, who devoted himself to the work of sheltering, protecting and educating these run-away slaves, was Bishop Hawkins of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He is credited with having composed the colored man's 'National Anthem', which appeared in a Sandwich paper published by Henry Bibb, *The Voice of the Fugitive*, a popular song among fugitive slaves in the days of the secret path, or underground railway, which led them to freedom and Canada.\*

Although many of these colored refugees returned to the United States after slavery had been banished from that country, yet a goodly number remained. Raleigh, Dresden, Chatham and Shrewsbury, have each their quota and as domestic and farm helpers, they occupy a useful place in the community. A few of them follow farming on their own account, owning their own farms, but most of them are tradesmen and laborers. The families scattered among the whites do better than those huddled together in colonies. On the whole, it cannot but be said, that the expenditure of time and money upon them by their sympathizers in 1850 and afterwards has been amply justified by the results. There is a tendency amongst them to drift cityward and southward, and, consequently, every year sees a diminishing number of them remaining residents of the country and the county.

NOTE—\*For this information we are indebted to James Soutar's Annual.



The Following are extracts and references  
taken from the facts as recorded by the  
Reverend Mr. Hugh Cowan.

Referring to the Underground Railway and  
escape of slaves he has the following to say:

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benevolent disposed, after they arrived here or they  
would be worse off in a state of freedom than they  
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At the inception of the British and American Institution, he was residing at Amherstburg, but immediately after, took up his abode at Dresden, where he remained until his death. It is he, supposedly, whom Mrs. Stowe chose for the hero of her renowned story, the Uncle Tom of Uncle Tom's Cabin. It was while she was visiting in Boston in 1850, that she met him, and heard the story of his escape from slavery.

Her book was published in 1851-52, and heard the story of his escape from slavery.



Colonel Talbot, referring to his survey of the Middle Road in 1830, wrote, "At the time I had the Middle Road surveyed, I did not instruct Colonel Burwell to run it through Harwich as the whole of the Township was locked up for me by the blocks of Crown and Clergy Reserves and the remainder had been deeded many years to non-residents.

I have completed it through Orford, Howard and Raleigh and expect during the course of the present year, to have settlers on the whole land with the exception of Harwich, which can only be accomplished by the Clergy and Canada Company. Harwich has been and will continue to be a great obstruction to my labours in this part of the Province, unless relieved by your exertions, and assistance.



# PARLIAMENTS AND PARLIAMENARIANS 1792--1841

THE FIRST INSTITUTION TO BE SET UP IN THE  
COUNTRY WAS THAT OF PARLIAMENTARY  
GOVERNMENT

**P**ARLIAMENTARY history for the province of Ontario dates from the passing of the Constitutional Act in 1791, which provided for the establishment of representative bodies, to consist of a Legislative Council and a Legislative Assembly for this province. The Council was to consist of not fewer than seven nor more than fifteen members, and the Assembly of not fewer than sixteen members.

**F**irst parliament of Upper Canada met at Niagara, the temporary capital.

The first Parliament was convened by Governor Simcoe on September 17th, 1792, at Newark (now Niagara), the permanent capital for the province not yet being chosen. Honorable James Baby represented this Western District in that Parliament as a member of the Upper Chamber or Council, and continued a member until the time of his death in 1833. He was the son of Jacques Duperon Baby, one of the Judges of Common Pleas appointed by Lord Dorchester in 1788, but who died the following year. He had two brothers, Jean Baptiste and Francis, the former a member of the Legislature in 1792 and Francis at a later date.

**E**ight Bills were passed at this first Session, which lasted five weeks.

The Session of this first parliament lasted five weeks and passed eight bills. The laws of England were made the basis for the government of the province. Trial by jury was established. A law was passed for the recovery of small debts. Millers were restricted to a toll of one bushel to every twelve for milling and bolting. Provision was made for one gaol in each of the four districts, Detroit being the site chosen for the erection of the one for the Western district. In the next session, which was convened on the 31st May, 1793, a bill for the abolition of slavery in Upper Canada was enacted, and thus paved the way for the work which was done in the county in behalf of fugitive slaves coming to this country from the United States. These cover the chief matters legislated upon during Governor Simcoe's incumbency of office which lasted from 1792 to 1796, when he returned to the Old Country and was succeeded in office by Peter Hunter, Esq. appointed in 1799. During the interval the affairs of the province were administered by Mr. Russell, senior member of the Legislative Council.



### Representatives of Kent in the Legislative Assembly.

In the first Parliament of Ontario, the Western district appears to have had three representatives, J. B. Baby for Essex and David William Smith and William McComb for Kent. Captain Thomas McKee, a United Empire Loyalist, resident at Sandwich was elected member for Kent (1796-1800) in the second Parliament of the province. Preceding this period, Governor Simcoe had divided the province into nineteen counties, of which Kent was the nineteenth, but the manner of electing the representatives from these counties in the first century of the history of the country has apparently not been kept on record, and hence future generations will have to content themselves without the possession of this knowledge.

### Thomas McCrae represented Kent in the Third Parliament.

Thomas McCrae has the honor of being the first resident of the territorial district within the bounds of the present county to represent it as a member of parliament. He was elected its representative in 1800 for the third Parliament, which convened the following year. Mr. McCrae was one of the pioneers of the Raleigh River Front, and is credited with having built the first brick house erected in the county of Kent. He was the progenitor of an influential family, of that name, many of whom held important positions in the history of the county and province.

**J**ohn McGregor was representative for three successive Parliaments followed by Joshua Cornwall and James Gordon.

In the fourth Parliament, elected 1804, John McGregor represented Kent. He had been a Sandwich trader, but in the early days of settlement secured control of the Thomas Clarke farm near Chatham, together with the milling privileges on it, and other Dover lands as described in another chapter of this volume. He and his family maintained control of the milling business here for upwards



THE EARL OF DURHAM

John George Lambton, Earl of Durham, was appointed Governor-General of Canada, 1838-1839, to discover the causes and remove the difficulties that led to the Rebellion of 1837. His "Report on the Affairs of British North America" is one of the most important of state documents on British Colonial government and ranks him as one of the greatest of our Governor-Generals. He was the father of Responsible Government and the Union Bill of 1840.

of half a century or more, building several successive mills, and in other ways, lending enterprise and capital towards the achievement of that development so creditable to the early settlers of the county. His prominence as a man of influence as well as of enterprise is attested in that he held the seat for three successive Parliaments. In 1817, Joshua Cornwall, a United Empire Loyalist and a pioneer of Camden, river front, was elected a representative for one Parliament followed by James Gordon, an Amherstburg merchant of good ability and wide popularity, who subsequently was called to a seat in the Legislative Council.

**M**cDonald describes the weakness and faults of these first attempts at government.

The contestants for the seat in the tenth Parliament were two non-residents, William Berczy, a Dutch merchant of Amherstburg,





LORD SYDENHAM

Charles Poulett Thomson, Lord Sydenham and Toronto, was appointed successor to Lord Durham as Governor-General of Canada and shares with him the honor of the establishment of Responsible Government in Canada. He was a strong and capable governor and carried through to a successful issue the suggested reforms of his predecessor.

and John Lewis, a resident of Sandwich. This was the year 1828. Prior to this no great interest was taken in elections, the results being decided by local or personal considerations, but in this election we have the first expressions of that agitation for necessary reforms, which culminated in the ill-advised attempt to obtain them by force of arms in 1837. The first open champion for reform was Robert Gourlay, a voluminous writer, whom the party opposed to these reforms had imprudently, and probably, unjustly, put into prison for so-called seditious utterances. The conditions of the times which gave rise to the rebellion is thus described by McDonald in his historical sketch of this country.

"As early as 1805, however, the disposition of the Executive to arrogate to themselves the exclusive powers of government was distinctly discerned by those who watched the current of political events in Canada. The 'gentlemen' and retired officers of impecunious circumstances, who formed a vast element in the composition of early society in Canada, loth to adopt the means of muscular exertion by

which to better their material condition in their adopted home, evinced a predisposition to form an 'aristocracy' where every circumstance demanded a broad democracy; they had a weakness for what few remunerative offices were at the disposal of the Government, all of which soon became filled by this class of individuals without regard to the fitness of the incumbent, as the Executive Council was also recruited from the same material; and by holding themselves aloof from the 'base-born common herd,' and intermarrying for a long period, this class soon became a distinct party of great influence in the land, and, to quote the words of a Canadian historian, 'at length emerged into the full-blown, famous Family Compact'.

The compound of educated arrogance grew and waxed strong with the growth of the Province, but it was not until the close of the Anglo-American War of 1812-15 that their influence upon the destinies of the country became the subject of general alarm among those whose labor was fast developing the country. After the struggle alluded to, they closed up their augmented ranks and grasped the administrative reins with a firmer and more determined hold, and soon developed into an engine of oppression and arrogance such as few other countries have ever had the misfortune to be afflicted by. The provincial purse was held by them, and the revenues appropriated without regard to the Parliament. Their political friends monopolized all places of profit under the Government, and the functions which the Assembly was supposed to be invested with were practically annulled and suspended, owing to the disinclination (when no obligation existed) of the Executive to act upon the advice or legislation of the popular House, except such legislation chanced to suit their own exigencies. Protests by the Assembly against this arbitrary exercise of power proved unavailing, and public interests, where they clashed with those of the 'rulers of state,' were quite ignored.



The argument of the adherents of the Compact was that its members were immeasurably the best fitted by 'birth', education, experience and social standing to administer the affairs of the Province—facts which would have been much more potent had the additional qualification of political integrity been possessed by them. Their definition of capable men was the same in principle as Dr. Johnson's definition of sensible men, namely, 'men who think as we think.'

Theories aside, however, the fact remains that their administration through a succession of Parliaments (some of which were uncere- moniously dissolved for the crime of enter- taining sentiments at variance with those of the powers that were) became very unpopular with a large class of the inhabitants, who clamored for the reform of abuses in the political system, and eventually came to be known as the Reform party."

It will be quite apparent to those reading the above quotation, that the writer is undoubtedly biased in favor of the viewpoint of those designated 'Reformers', the leaders of whom were clamoring for a change in the method and manner of government then prevailing in the province. At first, these were a very small fraction of the total population, as the first concern of the people, and certainly their chief one, was centred in the building of houses in which to dwell, and the clearing up of the lands to yield for them harvests. But as the population increased and the affairs of government became more muddled and tyrannical, their numbers rapidly increased until they could count among their followers a majority of the citizenship of the country.

**T**he first expression of Party alignments in the election of 1828.

In the County of Kent the agitation against this state of affairs was not discernible until it had become a leading issue in other parts of the Province. For many years after the

cause arose, there was no apparent sentiment here either for or against the Government. The elections were conducted strictly with regard to the personal merits of the respective candidates.

Mr. Lewis was the first parliamentary candidate to represent the Reform party in Kent. This election was held at Chatham, where all votes were received, the polls being kept open for a week at that time but later on kept open for only two days. Soutar describes the polling booth as a grove of maples on the river's bank, where was provided at the expense of the candidates or their friends, barrels of liquid, the 'argu- ments' which determined for them their choice of a candidate and to which the electors had free access. In this way Mr. Berczy received his election in 1828, but went in unopposed at the next election in 1830.

**K**ent elects two representatives from 1834 to 1841.

In 1834, there was a redistribution of seats, and the county of Kent became entitled to two members. There were a great number of candidates for parliamentary honors during this and in the next following election in 1836 including such names as John Langford of Zone; Neil McQuarrie, Harwich; Duncan Warren, Morpeth; Samuel Smith, Ancaster; James O'Reilly, P. P. Lacroix, and Duncan McGregor, Chatham; George Duck and James Ruddie, Howard; William McCrae of Raleigh, and Nathan Cornwall of Camden. In both elections, 1834 and 1836, these latter two received the highest number of votes and were declared elected. Mr. McCrae was a son of Thomas McCrae, and Mr. Cornwall of Joshua Cornwall and both of them therefore sons of former members of Parliament for Kent, continuing as the representatives of Kent until the inauguration of responsible government and the union of the two Canadas in 1841, at which time the representation of Kent was again reduced to one member.



# PARLIAMEN S AND PARLIAMENTARIANS 1841-1867

## THE FORMATIVE PERIOD IN THE HISTORY OF OUR POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

THE period extending from the year 1841 to the year 1867 may rightly be called the formative period in the history of our political institutions, the crucial period in their development. It was a period of great growth for the country, both in respect to its population and its material wealth. Farms were being rapidly cleared, industries established, roads built, foundations of cities, towns and villages laid, a period of expansion and development second to no other in our country's history. It was befitting that the Government should keep pace with the ever-changing but constantly improving conditions of this new country. In this period there was established a constitution for Canada based upon representative or responsible government, but this was not obtained until at the end of a long period of struggle and bitter controversy.

**T**he history of Parliamentary Government in England.

In the half century immediately preceding this period, 1791 until 1841, there was parliamentary but not democratic government in Canada. In the primitive days of Great Britain, all authority to rule was vested in one man, the king. When he delegated any

of his power to another, that person was under him and responsible to him alone as to the use he would make of this delegated power.. In the middle of the Eleventh century, a number of representative men used to meet to "parley" with the king in matters pertaining to the rule of the country, and hence our word 'parliament'. At first it was voluntary with the sovereign whether or not he should take the counsel of his subjects expressed at these meetings, but gradually this advice began to be accompanied with the demand that it be followed, until eventually the centre of authority shifted and the parliaments stated what should be done and the sovereign saw that it was carried out. When one refused, as in the case of Charles I., his refusal cost him his head. Thus partly through physical force, and partly through considerations of expediency, the sovereigns of Great Britain surrendered their authority to their parliaments and the government of the country became the responsible work of these parliaments. At first these parliaments represented only the minds of one class of citizens, the land-owners and nobles, but in the course of time the representative character of its members widened until all classes had a part in their election, and thus brought



about a truly representative or democratic government of the country.

**T**he British system of government, has been adopted in Canada.

In Great Britain the Sovereign is retained as part of its system of self government—an unchanging executive head, holding office for life, whose right to it is hereditary. In the United States the executive head is elected by the votes of the people and for a period of four years. Canada had to choose which of these two systems it would establish. Although the latter system found a few advocates, the great mass of Canadian people desired no other than the continuance of the British system. Patterned after this form we have a Governor-General, appointed by and representing the sovereign of Great Britain; a Senate, corresponding to the House of Lords, the members of which are appointees of the government of Canada and hold office for life; and, lastly, an elective House of Commons. The provincial government is patterned after this but without a second chamber. There has been no controversy aroused as to the form of government which we should adopt. Difference of opinion has been expressed only in respect to its application to the needs of our country and its problems.

**S**elf-government presupposes a people capable of self-government.

The sovereign of the country is still the executive head of the government in England, and in Canada through his representative, the governor-general, but the responsibility for the goodness or badness of that rule, rests not upon the executive head but upon the parliament elected by the people. He acts only on their advice. Periodically, the electorate choose their representatives in parliament, and these have arbitrary power in the period intervening between one election and another. If the ruled are satisfied with the government, they continue them in office;

if dissatisfied, they dismiss them, but this they cannot do until the parliamentary term has run its course. In the case of a reckless government, the sovereign could dismiss the ministry if he carried with him the consensus of public opinion, but the inefficiency or recklessness would have to be very glaring before he would be able to carry with him a universal public opinion. In an ideal state the office should seek the man and there should be no lack of men capable of measuring up to the requirements of the office, but in a democracy there is nothing to prevent the self-assertive and the unscrupulous from wrestling their way into the seats of the mighty except the votes of the electorate. If these should be favorable to them, they can then take their methods and their spirit with them into the larger field of parliamentary opportunity. In that case we would still have representative or responsible, but not good, government. To say that a government is democratic is therefore not to predicate that it is good. The right and best will have to be selected for representatives when the time comes for their selection, for if the electorate do not secure sane and efficient men for their representatives, they will not be able to insure for themselves wise and honest government. If persons capable of measuring up to the office are not to be had, or, if available, the electorate will not select them as their representatives, the democracy cannot insure for itself a good government. There is always lurking the dangerous possibility that the unfit may obtain a majority of votes especially in elections where there are more than two candidates. This danger is increased under a system of universal suffrage. A half-witted illiterate, whose vote could be purchased for a dollar, has as much power in selecting a candidate as has the sanest and most honorable person in the country. The illiterate has the power to mark his 'X', at the right place, and if he cannot some one will do it for him, and more than that the sane and honest man cannot do.





JOSEPH WOODS  
Member of Parliament 1841-47.

Equality of power is given to persons wholly unequal in ability to discern or judge concerning the issues at stake. On account of this possibility, there was a considerable body of the electorate who had little faith in a representative government and who therefore hesitated to put so great a power into the hands of a promiscuous democracy. The landlords were not easily convinced that they had no rights superior to their footmen, and we have not yet wholly proved that democracy has arisen above this danger. Self-government presupposes a people capable of self-government.

**C**anada supplied a large and varied field of opportunity for the activities of the demagogue.

Canada afforded to the opportunist a field of activity which supplied him with a rich harvest at every election. Apart from the inherent weakness pertaining to the democratic system, the country had problems of its own increasing the difficulties of its govern-

ment. Differences of race and religion, distinctions of classes and the rivalries and sentiments arising from these, transformation in social conditions, human greed which sought to capture for itself the native resources of the country—these and many others gave rise to disuniting forces among the electorate which made the rule of the country that much more difficult.

**A**mong the disuniting influences making government of the country difficult, was, first of all, the race question.

Canada, at that time, was made up of two nations, speaking different languages, each with its own but opposing forms of the Christian religion, as Lord Durham so aptly put it in his Report, "two nations warring with one another in the bosom of one state". The two peoples were accustomed also to different forms of governmental institutions. Parliamentary government had not made the advance in France preceding this date that it had in Great Britain. In Great Britain, it was a product of the Eleventh century, but in France, although the word 'parliament' was adopted into their language as early as the twelfth century, there was not among the French in Canada any form of parliamentary government during the period of their possession of it from 1608 to 1763. During this period Canada was governed by the absolute rule of a governor and council, whose functions and authority were clearly and carefully defined by the French king. The people under him had no share, whatever, in their own government. They were merely automatons to be moved and directed according to the King's will, a system of government in vogue among the French in North America for over a century and a half, which the British king, George the Third, sought to impose only in part upon his subjects in the colonies south of them, which he not only failed to do, but lost his colonies in the attempt. The two peoples



were different in spirit and training as well as in race. A form of government which suited the one was wholly unacceptable to the other.

### **The Effect of the French Revolution on Canada.**

The movement for reform which was going on in France, and which culminated in the French Revolution of 1789, found no counterpart in Canada. The settlements in the country were small and scattered, and the leaders in the colony, explorers and fur-traders or Christian missionaries. These adventurous ones moved from one lake or stream to another, from one Indian village to a second, knowing no law and needing none other than that of their own desires and will. Afar off from the habitations of civilised men, they were called upon to acknowledge fealty to no state, save the state of their dreams, of the greatness of which every new adventure made a new discovery. These knew nothing of the revolution occurring in the homeland until a new leadership was brought to their shores and became a part of their community life. This change in leadership was brought about by the influx of that stream of priests and nobles driven by the persecuting hand of the Revolutionists from their sacred cathedrals and ancestral homes to seek an asylum of safety among their compatriots in Lower Canada. Thus into Lower Canada there was brought a cultured class which corresponded among the French to the loyalist British driven from America, and who with them formed the aristocracy of Canada in the coming years as it struggled forward to the status of nationhood. These carried with them no glad memories of the benefits to be conferred upon the nation by the rule of democracy, as they reflected on the bitter experiences which drove them from their homes in France and America to establish for themselves new homes in the inhospitable wildernesses of Canada.

**M**ilitary rule was the first form of British government in Canada.

The early years of British rule in Canada did not provide any more favorable preparation for democratic rule than did the absolutism of the French regime. From 1763, when Canada passed over to the possession of the British until 1791, the rule of the country was entirely of a military character. The governor was a military man and every official under him belonged to the army. The people were governed as a subjugated state and settlement of public questions were made according to the terms dictated by these military rulers. During the whole period of the British regime up until 1841 the government never lost entirely its military character. The separation of Upper from Lower Canada was not done in the interest of and with a view to the establishment of a representative government. It was an expediency that sought by this method to get rid of the race problem. Let the French have their own country and their own laws, and we, British, shall have ours also but apart from them, and let the waters of the Ottawa be the dividing line between the two races. This suggestion was accepted by the British Parliament, and Governor Simcoe was sent out to establish a new colony west of the Ottawa.

**S**imcoe's Parliament of 1792 was not democratic.

Simcoe began his rule by convening a Parliament at Niagara, in the month of September, 1792. But this parliament was not in any sense a democratic or representative one, nor any that followed after until the adoption of the Durham Report in 1840 and the establishment of a constitution based on its recommendations. Indeed, under the circumstances, they could hardly be expected to be, for there would have to be an electorate and the division of the country into parliamentary constituencies, before men could be appointed to represent them in the govern-



ment of the country. The form of government set up by the Act of 1791 had in view the inclusion of representatives of the inhabitants of the country into the government, when and as soon as they came into it. It had four departments:

1. The Governor
2. The Executive Council
3. The Legislative Council.
4. The Legislative Assembly.

The first three of these were appointees of the colonial secretary representing the Parliament of Great Britain. The fourth, the Legislative Assembly, was supposed to be elected by and represent the people. The manner in which the members of this first parliament received their appointment is so shrouded in obscurity that nothing can be said with certainty in regard to it. That they were in any sense representative of the people, that is, that they were chosen by a majority of the inhabitants of the country, and that they were a voice in parliament expressing the desires of these inhabitants, of this there is absolute certainty that they were not. Throughout the whole of this regime, 1791-1840, the rule of the country still maintained a prominent autocratic or military element, yet there was no dissatisfaction engendered at first by this fact. The social relationships of these times were so simple that no complex form of government was required to adjust them. The matters for adjustment were no greater than what a township council would have to settle to-day. The laws to be enacted were as simple as the state of society for the benefit of which they were enacted. They consisted in such matters as the regulation of the height of the fences around the clearances, the size of the space permitted between the rails and later the size of the pigs which might be allowed to run at large. To protect the early settlers from the avarice and dishonesty of their fellow countrymen, there were enactments regulating the amount of toll the millers

could take for their services, whether it were grinding corn or sawing lumber. As the country began to improve and settle up, there were enactments in regard to roads and schools to be placed on the state-book, social relationships became more complex, and the kind of Government which should rule the destinies of the country became a matter of public discussion. The military aspect of the government became more noticeable, dissatisfaction with autocratic rule arose, and an agitation was commenced demanding that the Assembly, as representing the people, should have a freer hand and a larger place in the country's government.

**T**he attempt to impose Old Country conditions upon Canada was the root cause of our first political troubles.

Dissatisfaction was first stirred up in the country, by the attempt to transplant Old Country conditions and impose them upon the people of Canada, although there was here neither the soil nor the atmosphere congenial to their growth. By the division of the country into two provinces, there was a temporary relief from the race problem as between the French and the British, but they could not by this means escape a rising feud between the two branches of the British people themselves, the classes against the masses, which showed itself first in the social and afterwards in the political life of the country. There was no opposition to the rule of the government in Simcoe's day, although soldiers and gentry occupied a prominent and took a leading place in it. If there was any dissatisfaction it did not find any expression in public, neither at that period nor for some considerable time afterward. Yet the democratic spirit of the people was plainly noticeable even at this early date. "The spirit of the country is against half-pay officers, and in favor of men who dined with their servants," wrote Simcoe concerning them in a letter written to Dundas. If then when few in numbers this was characteristic of them, it is not to be wondered at, that the



unpopularity of the retired soldier, the gentry, and other representatives of class distinctions increased as the settlements progressed in size and numbers. The struggle was hastened by the autocratic spirit of those of them occupying government posts. The Executive and the Legislative Council, the two departments of the government whose members and officials were appointed by the Crown, were comprised of this class, and their appointments given to them because of military services rendered by them to the British army. On the other hand, the members of the Legislative Assembly were made up of those representing the masses. This of itself could have no ill effect if both worked harmoniously, but the Executive and Council, studiously ignoring the place which the Assembly should occupy in the government of the province, undertook to do many things on their own initiative and authority, which were not acceptable to the Assembly and to the masses of the people whom they were supposed to represent. In this way an opposition party rose up in Parliament, known as the Reform Party, whose main plank in their platform was to curb the power of the Executive and the Legislative Council, the Crown's appointees, and to increase that of the Legislative Assembly.

**E**xamples were numerous of men receiving heavy blows from the autocratic rulers of the Executive and Council.

Notwithstanding that the spirit of the country was democratic, the representatives of the autocratic party would surrender none of their privileges, brook no interference with their rule and suffer no criticism of their public actions. Bartemus Ferguson, the proprietor of the Niagara Spectator, as early as 1817, was fined £50, imprisoned for one year, and bound over to good behaviour for another seven, for the insertion of a letter by Robert Gourlay, which found its way into his paper, and without his knowledge on one occasion when absent from his home. In 1828, Francis Collins, another

newspaper man, in like manner, and for criticism of the government was fined £50, imprisoned for eighteen months, and required in addition to give security for good behaviour for three years more. The treatment accorded to Robert Gourlay and William Lyon MacKenzie, are such well-remembered incidents of common knowledge, that they require no further repetition. Like begets like. In this way there rose up a party in the country who favored and counselled meeting physical force with physical force, culminating in the ill-advised insurrection of 1837. The strength of militarism in the country can be gauged from the ease and rapidity with which the uprising was crushed.

**N**otwithstanding the summary punishment of the insurrectionists of 1837, the agitation for Reform increased in intensity.

The rapidity and ease with which the insurrection was put down was not, nevertheless, a true index of the strength in numbers of the advocates of Reform. Only a small percentage favored the violent measures with which the radical element sought to remedy existing evils and bring about responsible government. Every addition to the population of the country districts increased their numbers though this had at first no effect in weakening the stranglehold which the Executive and Council had upon the government of the country.

**T**he Highland Scotch were the backbone and strength of the Reform movement.

Immigration from Scotland had by this time assumed considerable proportions, and these, almost without exception, added to the strength of the advocates of responsible or representative government: "Every vessel", wrote Colonel Talbot in 1831, brings lots of Highland Scotch; many of them possess the means of purchasing." This class of settlers, educated and well-to-do, which Talbot rejoiced to see come into the country and purchase his lands, were not a class to meekly submit to arbitrary rule. But there



was another class of these Highland Scotch immigrants, not well-to-do, but accustomed to fight against fate and poverty in their homeland, and taught self-reliance in the doing of it. The revival of religious and secular education, the experience of which they had passed through in Scotland, added to the qualities which they required to lift them to a higher destiny in this new land than that their cramped conditions in Scotland could provide for them. These, deeming themselves capable of self-government, and seeing the profligate manner in which the public domain was handed out to favorites of government officials, became the backbone and leading spirits in seeking redress from existing evils. Although most of them were too law-abiding to countenance insurrection, they had, on the other hand, too keen a sense of justice to sympathize with or countenance the arbitrary methods with which the Family Compact sought to carry out colonial government. Though the insurrection was soon crushed and those who took part in it, treated with that merciless cruelty which became the spirit of the times, yet there were many quiet and determined folk on the back concessions, with growing influence, who were soon by more peaceable methods to obtain the substitution of representative or responsible government for arbitrary rule. The agitation was continued. The reformers of the day sought the ears of the British Parliament, who, compelled by reason of the insurrection, to look into its cause, sent over Lord Durham to discover the conditions which gave rise to the discontent of the times, and to suggest a remedy.

**T**he Report of Lord Durham, the Magna Charta of Canadian liberty and government.

A better choice for the undertaking, the British Government could not have made. With painstaking care and impartial mind he gave himself unstintedly to the task, using every means at his disposal to become

thoroughly acquainted with the situation. His discoveries and recommendations he embodied in a Report which has been justly deemed the greatest of state-documents produced in reference to colonial government. This Report was presented to the British Parliament in 1839, and in the year following its suggestions were embodied in an Act of the British Parliament which has become the foundation strata, the first beginning of the Constitution of Canadian Government.

**L**ord Durham's enumeration of the Evils to be remedied.

Although Lord Durham discovered the lack of responsible rule as the first and greatest evil from which the country suffered, yet he found other major evils associated with or rising out of this one. Among these was the reckless handling of Crown lands. Thousands of acres were constantly being handed out as gifts to favorites and friends. Although Governor Simcoe was also generous in his grants these were always in view to settlement of the country, not for speculative purposes. One of his favorites was Thomas Talbot, a Lieutenant in his own regiment and later a Colonel, who received large grants in western Ontario. But Colonel Talbot used these to develop settlement of the country. His one great boast was, that he settled more people, built more roads, and helped more needy immigrants than any other man in the country, and this estimate of his service, no well-informed person today will attempt to deny. He was the first to introduce road-making as an aid to settlement; the first to require settlement duties before obtaining patent-right to the land; the first to introduce the block system of settlement, a great aid to schools and road-making. The government itself could do no more to remove the disabilities of pioneer life which were associated with the first attempts at settlement of the country than did Colonel Talbot in that district where he carried on his land operations. In getting



possession of these large tracts of land, that his aim was to bring about the development of the country, is clearly seen in his attitude towards non-resident and speculative land-owners.

**N**on-resident and speculative land-holding kept back settlement and the Middle Road from the township of Harwich.

*Colonel Talbot* Referring to his survey of the Middle Road in 1830, he wrote, "At the time I had the Middle Road surveyed, I did not instruct Colonel Burwell to run it through Harwich, as the whole of that township was locked up from me by the blocks of Crown and Clergy Reserves, and the remainder has been deeded many years to non-residents . . . . I have completed it through Orford, Howard and Raleigh, and expect during the course of the present year to have settlers on the whole line, with the exception of Harwich, which can only be accomplished by the Clergy and Canada Company . . . . Harwich has been, and will continue to be, a great obstruction to my labours in this part of the province unless relieved by your exertions and assistance." While Colonel Talbot made a commendable use of his land grants, the same could not be said of any others. The system was vicious for settlement of the country was not their aim, but the exploiting of the country for their own self-aggrandizement.

**I**llustrative examples of the exploiting of Crown Lands.

After Simcoe left the country, the affairs of the province were administered by Hon. Peter Russell. "Had it depended upon Russell," Governor Hunter, his successor wrote of him, "he would have granted lands to the Devil and his family (as good loyalists) provided they could have paid the fees". From that time forward, the evil complained of, continued unabated, and although some governors had a conscience in the matter, the most of them had none. William Berczy, a Dutch Tory, received a

grant of 64,000 acres in Markham township. Benedict Arnold asked for a grant of 50,000 acres for war service. He got 5,000, a generous donation, though not so generous as his asking. These supply illustrative examples of the method in vogue in dealing with Crown Lands. One hundred thousand acres had been granted between 1892 and 1897 to those who named themselves Loyalists. Of the eight millions of acres given away by the Crown between the years 1792 and the coming of Lord Durham to Canada, half of it went in gratuity donations to men who claimed themselves entitled to it for military services. When we add to this the amount handed out for speculative purposes, it will be seen that consideration for the bona fide settler on the land found little place in the minds of those handling the Crown lands in the first half century of the province's history. Loyalists, Dutch Tories and soldiers were the chief beneficiaries of the scheme. Lord Durham attacked this evil with no uncertain language.

**T**he attempt to foist an Established Church upon Upper Canada.

Associated closely with this evil was another which later received the name of state-churchism. In England, as also in Scotland, there was an Established Church, and one also before the Revolution in France. In respect to these Old Country conditions there was an attempt to foist an Established Church upon Canada. The apostle of a state church, and that the English, in Upper Canada, was Bishop Strachan of Toronto. The apostles supporting a state church, and that the Roman Catholic, in Lower Canada, were the refugee priests who came to escape persecution, perhaps assassination, at the hands of the revolutionists of 1789. It was suggested that for the support of the clergy there should be set aside an endowment of one-seventh of all the land of the country. To this the ruling element agreed. The withholding of so much land as this from



immediate settlement was in itself a great evil, but there were other features of it that gave rise to much controversy and bitterness of feeling between different denominations of the Christian religion. What clergy were entitled to benefit from these reserves was the first question which had to be answered? The English Church said—'Ours, for we alone are the Establishment.' In Lower Canada, where the people were mainly of one faith, the majority there could see no harm or injustice in a state-endowed church, but in Upper Canada, where the majority of the people were made up of Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Moravians, and other denominations outside of the bosom of the Anglican church, that one church should have privileges which all the others did not equally enjoy was a condition of affairs that from the very first a large body of the electorate refused to recognise. The leaders of the English church were prepared to make some concessions to the Established church of Scotland, but further than this they would not go. Such a concession only increased the difficulties arising out of the question, for it but aggravated the evil in the minds of the other branches of the Presbyterian church who were opposed to the support of the churches by the state in any form. These claimed that all religious institutions should be supported by the voluntary contributions of its membership—a complete separation of church from the state. Thus the Clergy Reserves question became more than a land problem. It became the subject of a bitter religious controversy kept up for many decades in the country.

**R**esponsible Government suggested as the remedy for existing evils and the removal of discontent.

The remedy for existing evils suggested by Lord Durham was the establishment of responsible government, and the union of the two provinces of Lower and Upper Canada under one parliament, looking forward to an ultimate union of all of the dominions of

Great Britain in North America under one federal government. There were other suggestions embodied in the Act of Union but these two were the most prominent features and the most important enactments of the Bill. The putting of a law on the statute book is one thing—but the observance of it is quite another. It took twenty five years of agitation and development before the principles embodied in the Report had become a part of the working constitution of the country. In this period there were eight parliaments and Kent county represented in them by six different members. These were Joseph Woods, Malcolm Cameron, George Brown, Edwin Larwill and Archibald McKellar. Hon. S. B. Harrison was elected for the second parliament, 1844, but was appointed a Judge immediately after the election and resigned before taking his seat.

For this reason, it would hardly be accurate to chronicle him a member, although it is to be regretted that a statesman, who was the father of our Municipal system of government and the sponsor of the School Bill of 1841, did not have further opportunity to distinguish himself in the arena of politics before quitting for that quieter but less important position in the Surrogate Court of the Home District.

In the bye-election the defeated candidate, Joseph Woods, was re-elected and thus sat for the first two parliaments in the Union Government.

**J**oseph Woods was the first representative of Kent in this period.

Joseph Woods was a resident of Chatham, a brother of Judge R. S. Woods, the author of Harrison Hall. Their father, James Woods, a well-known solicitor practising at Sandwich, Essex county, was one of the first lawyers of that place. As Solicitor for Lord Selkirk, he had the oversight of this gentleman's properties in Ontario, and after the reverses which befel him, James Woods got possession of that portion of his estate



now comprising North Chatham and which later were surveyed into town lots and added to the corporation of Chatham.

Joseph was his second son. He was born at Sandwich in 1808 and was among the first students in the first Grammar School of the Western District, established at Sandwich because it was then the district town. After his education he entered into business as a lumberman erecting a saw-mill, first at Puce, Essex county, and then another in 1835 at Chatham. He was never married.

He was a lieutenant-colonel of the 14th battalion, Kent militia, and on the breaking out of the rebellion in 1837 he was deputed to the Detroit frontier, where he took a prominent part in all the activities centred at that point. He there raised a troop of cavalry which was afterwards known as Grant's troop, assisted in repelling the invasion into Canadian territory of the American sympathizers of Mackenzie and took part in the execution of those of them sentenced to summary death by Colonel Prince, participating also in the capture of the schooner *Ann* at Malden.

one polling booth, situated at Chatham, was all the conveniences supplied for taking the vote in a 130-mile wide territory.

Four years after this event, when the first elections under the Union Act took place, he was chosen as the candidate of the extreme wing of the Tories, himself being one of the most uncompromising of them. This election assumed unexpected prominence by the entrance into the field of S. B. Harrison, the provincial secretary of the first cabinet associated with the governorship of Lord Sydenham. An attempt was made to have this election go by acclamation to this distinguished candidate, but Colonel Woods, was a Tory of the old school and backed by a numerous following, no amount of allurements or government solicitations could induce him to withdraw from the contest.

"Although there were several candidates in the field all retired in his favor except my

brother", wrote Judge R. S. Woods in giving a contemporary account of the election. "The constituency consisted of twenty townships extending from Rochester to Bosanquet, a distance of one hundred and thirty miles with only one polling place and that in Chatham. The long winter had just broken up and the streams were flooded and the bridges carried away. This was the last election under the old law when the polling began by open vote at nine o'clock on Monday morning until—twelve o'clock on Saturday night." All the government office holders throughout the Western District, including Sheriff Mercer, a personal friend of Joseph Woods, were required to attend at Chatham and vote for Harrison, without regard to their personal or political preferences. Parliamentary government had yet a long way to travel from the standard of those days before its rule could be accounted pure as well as responsible. When the results of this election were announced at three o'clock on Sunday morning, Joseph Woods was declared elected by a majority of forty three votes, after which there was a celebration befitting the times in which the elements of Sabbath quiet and sobriety did not enter. At the close of this parliament, these two men were again the candidates, this time Joseph Woods suffering defeat, but as Hon. S. B. Harrison was shortly afterwards appointed a judge, he resigned without taking his seat and Mr. Woods was given a second term by acclamation.

**H**on. Malcolm Cameron of Sarnia, a Clear Grit, was the second representative.

The second representation of the county, in this formative period of our political institutions, if we leave out the temporary holding of the seat by Hon. S. B. Harrison, was Malcolm Cameron, one of the Clear Grit party. The members of parliament had not yet aligned themselves into two distinct parties, this, like the constitution, being a product of growth and time, arising from the



political conditions through which the country passed. Those who came into the country with Tory predilections were divided into two camps, the ultra or die-hard Tories, and members more moderate who afterwards named themselves Liberal-Conservatives. Similarly the Reform party had its two branches, the radical element of them being designated 'Clear Grits,' a phrase which Mr. Cameron is alleged to have coined and applied to the section of which himself was one of the number. These were suspected of having a leaning towards independence, perhaps, even, annexation with the United States, or it was their judgment, at least, that this would be the ultimate destiny of the country.

o clear-cut division of parties in this period—  
this a later product of the times.

As a matter of fact divisions occurred not according to parties but according to the problems which had to be faced and the methods by which it was proposed to solve them. A member might be a moderate on a question coming up one day and an uncompromising radical on another rising up the next. The questions to be considered were so numerous and the circumstances surrounding them so new and varied that fixity of opinions on all questions was an impossibility. This will be clearly seen as one notes the shifting places occupied by members during the course of their political life. For instance, when the question of the federal union of the provinces first came up, John A. MacDonald, afterwards Sir John A., took an uncompromising attitude of antagonism towards it, yet afterwards, forced by the logic of events, he was leader of the government through which it became an Act of Parliament. Sir Allan McNab was at first a bitter opponent to the solution of the Clergy Reserve problem by transferring the income from these lands to the support of education instead of religion, yet he, too, headed the

government which accepted this solution and passed the statute for their secularization. The day when members supported parties, irrespective of their measures, had not yet arrived.

**M**alcolm Cameron achieved his place of prominence through self-assertive pluck.

Malcolm Cameron was the son of a Highland soldier, who came with his regiment to Canada in 1806. After the disbandment of this regiment in 1816, he located at Perth in the Ottawa district as a tavern-keeper. Malcolm, who was born at Three Rivers, Quebec, was then eight years of age, and his mother, a noble-souled woman who realized the menace to her children's welfare which the hotel-keeping of her husband created, began early to cast about for some way by means of which she would enable them to escape it. At twelve years of age she had Malcolm apprenticed to a farmer on the Mississippi, but this place he greatly disliked and ran away from it at the end of three years. But while he did not fall in line with his mother in the choice of a place of employment for him, he seems to have responded loyally and nobly to the moral and spiritual training she gave him. A contemporary writer informs us, that throughout his whole life he was specially prominent as an advocate of the temperance cause to which he freely devoted time, influence and money, and that he gave free sites for the building of churches in Sarnia, not only to the Presbyterians, the religious body to which his mother belonged, but to the Methodist people as well, and this several years before he became their representative in parliament or thought of becoming one.\*\* When, at fifteen, he struck out for himself, it was first as a stable-boy in Montreal and then as a clerk in a distillery by means of which he worked his way up to young manhood. In the meantime he purchased books, and obtained by an industrious study of them, as

\*\*Mrs. C. J. Nisbet.



much scholarship and culture as the reading of a wide range of them could supply him. He opened a general store on his own account in the early thirties, married his cousin, Christina MacGregor, the daughter of a Glasgow cotton-spinner, and three years after, 1836, became a member in the Old Upper Canada Assembly for the county of Lanark, which constituency he continued to represent for the next eleven years.

**B**ecame in 1835 the founder of the present city of Sarnia.

About this time, 1835, he purchased one hundred acres of land on the St. Clair river, adjoining that of a soldier-settler, Richard Emeric Vidal, a place where was then the beginning of a village called "The Rapids," but since named Sarnia. This land he had surveyed into town lots, and induced many from his own county of Lanark and other places to come and purchase, an undertaking which ranks him as the founder of the present city of Sarnia. "When he first came to Sarnia he was a handsome young man with bright dark eyes, curly hair, firm pleasant mouth and a genial hearty manner. He was full of fun and had a great stock of stories to tell on every occasion and was altogether a very popular man".\*\* This personal description by the same writer, adds something of human interest to the record of his achievements.

At this time Lambton had not been separated as a distinct county from Kent, and Mr. Cameron was still the representative of his former home constituency, Lanark. But in 1848, he contested the constituency of Kent with Captain Joseph Woods of Chatham, and succeeded in winning out against him. At the close of that parliament, 1851, he became a candidate in Huron county, that territory, also, at one time a part of Kent, and was elected. In 1854, Lambton, the place of his domicile, was separated from Kent and

made an independent constituency, and from that time forth Malcolm Cameron's name ceased to be associated with the political history of Kent.

**P**arliament and business achievements of Malcolm Cameron.

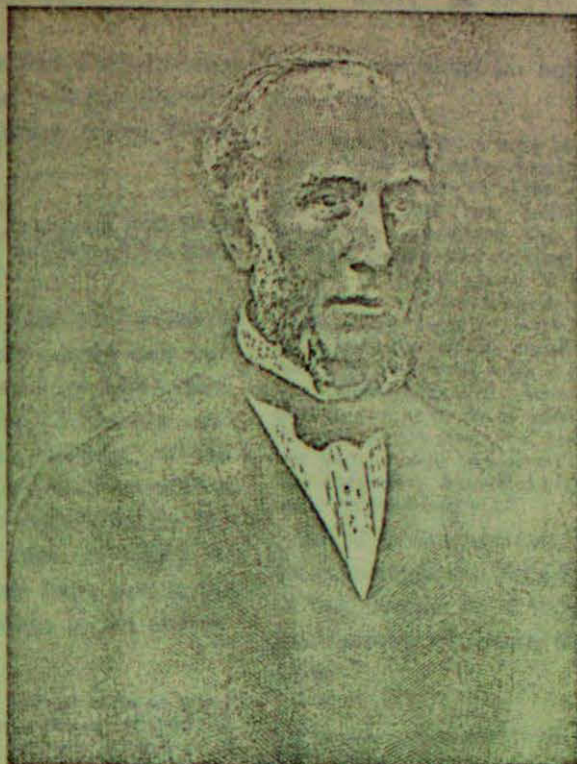
A biographical sketch of Mr. Cameron represents him as a man of strong individuality, as many of the men of that day, fighting their way up to achievement, were. "In the parliament and upon the hustings he opposed oligarchy, favouritism, and corruption, advocated responsible government, and declared loudly for separation of church and state. He was instrumental in the passage of much useful legislation, and strenuously advocated the abolition of imprisonment for debt. In public life he always kept his hands pure."\* During the years in which he was a parliamentary representative, he was, at different times, Assistant Commissioner of Public Work, a president of the Executive Council, Minister of Agriculture, and Postmaster General. In 1862, he acted as agent for the inhabitants of British Columbia, in carrying to the Home Government a petition setting forth the grievances under which they labored and praying for responsible government.

His business career was marked by daring initiative and courageous enterprise, yet, of his many ventures not all of them were successful. In Sarnia he established a general store, built the second saw-mill in the history of the hamlet to which later he added a grist-mill. In addition he was a large owner of lake vessels which he operated in connection with his lumber business. So extensively did he carry on this enterprise, that in one particular year, one-sixth of all the oak timber shipped from Canada to Great Britain was shipped by him from Lambton county. But he spent too much time on politics to make a successful

\*\*Mrs. C. J. Nisbet.

\*A cyclopedia of Canadian Biography by George Maclean Rose.





HON. GEORGE BROWN  
Member of Parliament for Kent County  
1851—1854

achievement in both fields and although his life was characterized by strenuous activity, he died in 1876 "leaving little behind save an irreproachable name."

**T**he distinguished Honorable George Brown began his parliamentary career as representative of Kent county.

At the general election in 1851, Mr. Cameron having selected Huron county as his next place of candidature, the Reformers of Kent, sent a petition to George Brown, the editor and proprietor of the *Toronto Globe* asking him to become their candidate. Mr. Brown was a native of Alloa, in the neighborhood of Edinburgh, Scotland, where he was born in 1818. He was the son of Peter Brown, a Lowlander, but his mother was a Highlander, a daughter of George MacKenzie, of the isle of Lewis. Unlike Malcolm Cameron and many others of that period who

had to obtain an education through their own indomitable pluck and assertiveness, George Brown's education was well looked after by his parents in the schools and colleges of Edinburgh. This training added to his native gifts, with which he was generously endowed, provided for him the equipment by means of which he became one of the greatest of Canadian statesmen in this formative period of its constitutional history. His father, meeting with business reverses in Edinburgh, removed with his family to New York in 1838. Here they established a paper—the *British Chronicle*—but in 1843 they came to Toronto and established first the *Banner*, and a year afterwards, 1844, the *Globe*. The *Globe* was started in the interest of the Reformers, the party advocating the establishment of responsible government in the rule of the country. It was ably and



fearlessly edited from the first and continued to grow in circulation and influence throughout the whole period during which Brown was associated with it.

**G**eorge Brown was first connected with Kent as a farmer and the founder of the town of Bothwell.

The petition, inviting him to become a candidate, was very largely signed, and contained the names of Alexander MacKenzie, afterwards Prime Minister of Canada, and Archibald McKellar, the chairman of the committee inviting him. A link of connection with the county had been established by Mr. Brown previous to this time, of which he makes mention in a private letter sent to the secretary some time previous to the convention that nominated him.

"My Dear Sir,—I am in receipt of your letter of the 11th inst., and am very much indebted to you and my other friends for your kindness. I shall give you a frank answer to your question. There is no constituency I would feel so gratified to represent, were I in parliament, as Kent. I have many friends in it, it is a large rising county, capable of much improvement, and therefore a good field for an energetic representative; and moreover, I own some seven or eight hundred acres of valuable land in it."

The possession of this land was through purchase of a block of the Moravian Indian Reservation, which had been obtained back by the Government, and surveyed into the township of Zone. Mr. Brown's lands were heavily timbered with walnut, hickory, maple, and other valuable kinds, which were suited to supply timber for furniture making. A part of this land he surveyed into a town plot, and named it Bothwell, erected there two saw-mills and a furniture factory employing thirty hands, expert tradesmen whom he brought over from Scotland for this work.

The timber, not suited for lumber, he had chopped into cordwood and sold to the newly-built railway now passing through his town plot. The land thus denuded of its wood he devoted to agriculture which he seemed to have carried on quite extensively. In midsummer of 1863 he wrote to his home

a letter describing his holiday operations on this farm:

"I have been very busy in the fields these two days—hard at work from six o'clock in the morning until ten at night, examining the crops, the stock and the buildings—planning new operations, arranging the Fall work, settling with the hands, and making up the books. Lots to do. I could spend a fortnight here very profitably. Everything is looking well. The crops are very good—never so good before; and the cattle are all in excellent condition. You would be delighted with a herd of 52 calves in one field—beautiful smooth coats, elegant shapes, and as lively as crickets. It will do some damage to the hay, and a vast deal of good to the corn, roots, and peas. I have 350 tons of hay secured in beautiful order, and there is any quantity to come yet."

All of these businesses he carried on under the managership of John Taylor, who because of that became the first mayor of Bothwell, made a town by special act of parliament in 1866.

**H**is possessions sold to oil-boom speculators in 1865.

But before this, Brown began to withdraw from his activities at this place. When the oil boom started he sold out his interests to the '*Bothwell Land and Petroleum Company*'.

"It does pain me somewhat to part with Bothwell," he wrote after the sale of his possessions there. "I feel a blank. It supplied relaxation when I wanted to escape from the pressure of thought about things around me. I believe, thinking of Bothwell has been of essential service to my mind, and the working it out was most enjoyable. I could readily to-morrow, without regret or hesitation, give up politics and the press and go on a large farm. I might tire of it, of course, but I don't think I would."

From all this we can see that Brown's relationship to Kent county was more than that of a politician. A pioneer adventurer in the realm of farming, he found in this occupation, a recreation and freedom from the strenuous life of journalism and politics which crowded every moment of his working hours. The eight hundred acres which comprised his land holdings when he first became its parliamentary representative, increased until it had become an estate of four thousand acres. When it passed out of his possession, it was turned into a commons, and the scene



of his agricultural aspirations became the centre of one of the greatest oil-booms and land speculations ever known in the history of our country. Of this boom he wrote on the date of October 15, 1865:

"Bothwell village lots are in great demand, and selling from hand to hand at constantly increasing prices, and persons who bought from me ten years ago, and from whom I never expected to hear again, are coming in every hour, demanding what they owe and ready to pay up. You have no idea what a stir there is here, houses and stores and churches running up all round, as if by magic. People are absolutely sleeping in stables, and paying any sum for the privilege. And if another good well or two should happen to flow soon, the excitement will be prodigious. As it is, the streets are crowded with people, and money is flying about in thousands. The fifth part of a lot I sold a few months ago for \$200 was sold to-day for \$1500 in gold."

**A** Dresden convention of reformers induces him to become their candidate in the general election of 1851.

At this period in his career, Mr. Brown was still in the prime of his life. He was but thirty-three when elected member for Kent. The great achievements of his life had been accomplished. The *Globe* was firmly established, the political measures which he sponsored were settled, federal union was now taking place. It remained now to hold that which had been obtained. It would seem then, that a link of connection between him and Kent was continued during the whole period of his achieving years, though he represented it but for one parliament.

The convention which tendered him the candidature was held at Dresden, in the last week of September, 1851. Mr. Brown's reply was written October 2nd.

"My Dear Sir,—I duly received your letter announcing the result of the Dresden Convention, which, I assure you, very much surprised me. I had not the least expectation of such a result. I am much obliged to you and other friends for your exertions in my favour. With yours I received a letter from Chatham stating that I had no friends there, that I had not the ghost of a chance, that some prominent reformers will vote against me, and that the Roman Catholics will to a man go against me. Of course I take all this *cum grano*, but I am the last man to divide the party interest. I have no personal object to gratify in the matter, and

unless the electors generally want me, I assure you I do not want to trouble them. I am ready to do anything for the cause, but I am sure I can be better employed here, firing away in the *Globe* and perhaps affecting several counties, than canvassing Kent with a divided party supporting me. I am entirely in your hands. Your committee, of course, know the county and could not be deceived as to public feeling on the subject. Unless all go with the movement it would be wrong to proceed; wrong in any one, but doubly wrong in me, who must preach union to others many times ere the elections are over."

Notwithstanding that Mr. Brown saw the need of union among the Reformers, that political condition was not to prevail during this election. Mr. Malcolm Cameron was at the helm (the Huicks-Morin) then in power. When at his solicitation, Mr. Brown refused to promise this administration his support, because he said he had no faith that they would carry out their promise of reforms which the country needed, Mr. Cameron prevailed on Mr. Arthur Rankin of Sandwich to become a candidate. Mr. Edwin Larwell of Chatham had already been nominated by the Conservatives and it was presumed that by this movement Mr. Brown would be defeated and Mr. Larwell elected. But Mr. Brown by his earnest eloquence made so favourable impression wherever he went that he was elected with a considerable plurality.

**S**trong individualism compels him to blaze out a path of his own.

In his candidature, Mr. Brown clearly set forth the political measures which he advocated. There were five major ones—responsible government, equality in religion and the complete separation of church and state, the secularisation of the clergy reserves and their devotion to education, representation by population, and finally, federal union which would make provision for a separate government for each province dealing with matters of its own local affairs with a joint authority to take care of matters in which both were mutually concerned. To these may be added his advocacy of purity in politics.

Mr. Brown's career was marked by a



strong individualism. His training in journalism made him a perspicuous thinker and he mapped out clearly for himself the political measures which he believed would be for the highest ultimate good of the country. With high-minded aim and sincerity of purpose he adhered uncompromisingly in his advocacy to this programme. He lived at a time when the weight of the individual counted for more in the attainment of successful achievement than it would subsequently. There was then no fixity in opinions or of methods. This trait of character, needed then for a successful career, would, carried to the same extreme to-day, have made it impossible for him to obtain a place anywhere. In loyalty to his espoused measures he would sacrifice nothing of them no matter how politically expedient it might be, but he would separate from parties and friends, if necessary, to obtain their realisation. In consequence a steady stream of antagonisms and estrangements followed him continuously throughout his whole political career. Had there been a little more elasticity in his nature he doubtless would have got further ahead personally and the measures which he advocated would have been just as fully and expeditiously realised. But he was born for the times and in the exercise of his great gifts by indefatigable labours he has placed our country in the position of an undischarged obligation to him for his services. Durham, Sydenham, Elgin and Brown, these are the outstanding four whose labours have secured for Canada its constitution.

Yet the political road which he travelled was anything but smooth. His views of relationship of the state to the church brought him the antagonism of both the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches; the one because he opposed the claims for superiority and privilege set forth by Bishop Strachan of Toronto; the other, because he opposed the establishment of Separate schools in either Quebec or Ontario. For the

same reason he estranged from him the reformers who belonged to the Established Church of Scotland. Religion he considered a sphere in which the state had nothing to do, and as the state should not interfere with any man's religion, so no religion should come to the state begging for either favors or privileges. Freedom for all and favors for none—to this principle, he insisted, the state should rigidly adhere.

In regard to the race problem, he was placed in a false light, because of his rigid adherence to these other political measures. In regard to the French he received less than justice at the hands of these people. When he went to parliament as Kent's representative, it was meeting at Quebec, and he found himself compelled to face there an atmosphere anything but friendly. He was dubbed anti-French, and anti-Catholic, though the mistrust at that time, so prevalent among the British towards the French, and which looked upon the giving of self-government to them as the handing over the rule of the country to traitors and rebels, was not shared by Mr. Brown. This feeling against him was increased by his advocacy of representation by population, which would give Ontario, now that its population had so rapidly increased, a larger number of members than Quebec. So mutual was the mistrust of the times that the French looked upon this measure as but an opportunity to place Quebec under the heel of a British tyranny, although Mr. Brown's aim was that of a noble mind which sought equal justice and equal privilege for all classes and conditions of the country's diverse population.

The same inflexible adherence to the measures he espoused compelled him to go in opposition many times against his own political party. "Wrong legislation, which created new abuses, and the want of legislation to remove old ones," this, his apologists tell us, accounts for every deser-



tion from the reform party of which his political career gives us prolific examples.

# **R**evue of George Brown's parliamentary career.

His life's work has been differently estimated. While one points him out to have been "a great popular advocate" who "left his mark in ineffaceable lines on the history of his adopted country",\* by another he has been described as "impulsive, imprudent, often lacking in sane statesmanship, and once or twice in nice honour",\*\* By the same writer he has been charged with "impracticability and lack of restraint".

Yet, notwithstanding anything that can be said against him, he stood in point of ability, high-minded purpose, and sanity of aim, head and shoulders above any of the other Canadian leaders of his time.

Baldwin, in single-minded sincerity, stood his equal; in ability to make compromises, his superior; but in tenacity of purpose fell far down below Brown's level. And after all, 'since the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong' endurance alone reaches the goal of success Kent can look back with appreciative remembrance to the one term in which Brown battled for them, as their representative in the Union Parliament, for the establishment of a truly representative and responsible government, and thus paved the way for his greater victory in 1864-7, when was consummated the Federation and the establishment of the constitution of which we, to-day, have such good reason to be proud.

# **E**dwin Larwell of Chatham succeeds as the fourth representative.

At the close of this parliamentary term, 1854, Lambton was separated from Kent and became a separate constituency, and Mr. Brown accepted from the Lambton reformers their invitation to become their candidate. This brought to a close his parliamentary

connection with Kent but not with his business interests at Bothwell, which, as we have seen, were continued for twelve years longer. A new member had now to be found for Kent and this gave Edwin Larwell of Chatham another opportunity to come before the electors, this time to receive a favorable verdict. Mr. Larwell represented the Tory party, and in the preceding election, with three reformers in the field, Brown, Rankin and Wilkes, the presumption was, that he and not Mr. Brown, would be the successful candidate. But Lambton was almost unanimously on the side of the *Globe's* able editor, and Mr. Larwell had to be content with a second place among the four candidates. Kent was considered at this time to be mainly conservative, but like all other constituencies in the province, the number of its inhabitants was increasing and the political complexion changed accordingly. At the election of 1854, Mr. Larwell was early nominated and, in fact, he kept a friendly eye on the constituency during the time that intervened from the last election when he was defeated by Mr. Brown. In addition, there was considerable delay in getting matters adjusted among the reformers it being supposed that Mr. Brown would again contest Kent, leaving the Lambton field to Hon. Malcolm Cameron, then Postmaster-General in the Hincks-Morin administration. But at the solicitation of his Lambton friends he contested Lambton with Mr. Cameron and defeated him by a majority of 200.

# **H**on. Archibald McKellar begins a ten years' representation at the general election of 1857.

The delay caused by Mr. Brown's withdrawal from Kent prevented the reform party's nominee, Mr. Archibald McKellar, to make that preparation for the election that was necessary for the defeat of Mr. Larwell, and, in fact, the dissatisfaction among the reformers with the Hincks-Morin adminstra-

\*Mackenzie. \*\*Morrison.





HON. ARCH. McKELLAR.

tion led to the success of the Conservatives not only in Kent but throughout the whole province. But what Mr. McKellar failed to do in 1854, he succeeded in doing in the next general election in 1857, and continued from that time until the end of the Union Parliament to be the representative for Kent County.

The McKellar family became a very prominent family of the County of Kent. Archibald McKellar, was the eldest son of Peter McKellar and Flora McNab, who came to Canada from Inverary, Argyle-shire, Scotland, in 1817, when Archibald was but an infant child, one year old. They settled first in Aldborough, Elgin County, but in 1837, they removed to a farm which they purchased in the township of Raleigh, Kent County, three miles west of the town of Chatham, on the banks of the River Thames. Archibald was educated, first in the public schools in the township of Aldborough, then at Geneva, New York, and finally at the High School at Niagara taught by Dr. Whitelaw. On leaving school he went to the farm, and settled there with

his parents. Later he engaged also in lumbering conducting a mill at Chatham under the firm name of McKellar & Dolsen. He had a long and useful experience in municipal offices before entering into the larger arena of parliamentary government, both as a representative of Raleigh Township and Chatham town, during which time he sat as a member of the County Council for fifteen years, an experience unto which he doubtless owed some of the success which he afterwards obtained as a member of Parliament.

**H**is important contribution to the agricultural development of the country.

His career as a member of parliament has been marked by singular success. In the first election in which he took part, it was as a supporter of Joseph Woods, an ultra-Tory, but this allegiance was changed at the next election to the support of the Honorable S. B. Harrison, also a Tory. He was chairman of the convention that invited George Brown to become a candidate in 1851, and from that time forward including his ten years' representation in the Union Parliament, he was a consistent follower and supporter of the policies and measures for which the party, represented by the Honorable George Brown stood. His success, however, was chiefly attained in the provincial field where he represented Bothwell 1867 to 1875. In the Union Parliament, his name is associated with one unique, though not an important event, which brought him into universal notice. On one occasion, speaking against time, for party exigencies, he sought to equal the French in their loyalty to their mother tongue, and addressed the house, much to the amusement of its members, in the Gaelic language, the first and doubtless the last time in which this language competed with the other two for a place in the parliamentary records. The political measures for which he receives honorable

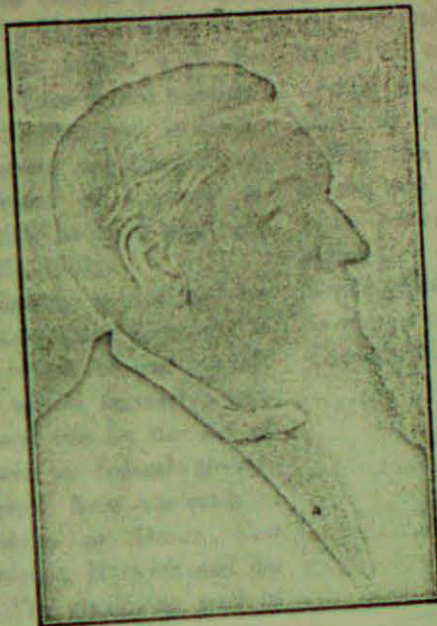
\*George MacLean Rose.



credit have been very concisely described by one of his biographers." He was 'the author of the Drainage Law, which has been the means of reclaiming hundreds of thousands of waste land; and to aid the public to have this important work done as cheaply as possible, he had, while he was Commissioner of Public Works and Minister of Agriculture the sum of \$400,000 appropriated to purchase drainage municipal debentures bearing interest at 5 per cent., thus giving the public money at a lower rate than they could get it elsewhere, and at the same time securing to the Government the highest rate of interest obtainable from the banks and municipal debentures, than which there is no better or safer security. It was during Mr. McKellar's term of office, as Minister of Agriculture, that the Ontario College of Agriculture, which is now proving of so much benefit to the country, was established at Guelph. He carried through Parliament the Charter for the Southern Railway, extending from the Niagara to the Detroit and St. Clair rivers, and was quietly instrumental in raising upwards of \$30,000 by way of bonuses in the southern counties to aid in its construction. He also carried through the Charter for the Erie and Huron Railway Company. This road extends from Rondeau harbor on Lake Erie and runs north through the towns of Blenheim, Chatham, Dresden and Wallaceburg, and then to the St. Clair river to Sarnia, a distance of about seventy miles.

*Wentworth*  
Appointed by the provincial government sheriff of Wellington, and his son to an alike appointment in Kent.

In the federal field, he was defeated in 1867 by Rufus Stephenson, when he turned his attention to Bothwell, and which he represented as stated above from 1867 to 1875. He then was appointed the sheriff of Went-



**RUFUS STEPHENSON**  
1835—1901.

Member of Parliament  
1867—1882.

Publisher of "The Planet"  
1857—1878.

Mayor of Chatham  
1865—1867.

worth, and moved to Hamilton where he continued to live the rest of his days. During the last four years of his political career, he was a member of the Government, both in the Blake and Mowat administrations, as Commissioner of Public Works, and Minister of Agriculture and Immigration, and afterwards as Provincial Secretary.

He was married in 1836 to Lucy McNab, his second cousin, to whom he had nine children, four sons and five daughters. His oldest son Peter D. McKellar was a well-known registrar of Kent.

In the third period of our parliamentary history, from Confedera-

tion until the present time, we have had fourteen parliaments including the one ushered in by the general election of 1925. In this period eight different members of parliament have represented the county of Kent, Rufus Stephenson, Henry Smyth, Archibald Campbell, George Stephens, Herbert Clements, Archibald B. McCoig, James Murdoch, Alexander D. Chaplin, and James W. Rutherford.

Rufus Stephenson was born in Springfield, Massachusetts, on January 13, 1835. He was a descendant of Deacon Samuel



Chapin, a Puritan who came to Roxbury, Massachusetts, prior to 1640. Mr. Stephenson's grandfather was from Lancashire, England, and was of that branch of the Stephenson family from which came George and Robert Stephenson, so famous as railway engineers. In 1850 Mr. Stephenson came to Chatham as manager and associate editor of the *Kent Advertiser* and became proprietor of *The Planet* in 1857. He conducted this journal until 1878, after which, until its amalgamation with the *News* it was published by his son, Sydney Stephenson. In 1882, he retired from Parliament and accepted an appointment as Collector of Customs at Chatham, which position he held until his death, on February 15, 1901.

Although the constituency represented by Mr. Stephenson was designated Kent, yet it did not comprise the whole of that county. Kent and Lambton, which formerly comprised one constituency, was by the Act of Parliament which gave us federal government, divided into three. Kent was made to comprise the townships of Dover, East Tilbury, Romney, Raleigh, Harwich and the town of Chatham. The remaining part of the county, consisting of the eastern townships of Gono, Camden and Camden Gore, Orford and Howard, together with three townships of Lambton county, Sombra, Dawn and Euphemia, were made to comprise another constituency, which was named, after what was then its most important town, Bothwell.

David Mills became the first representative of this constituency in the Federal House. He was a son of Nathaniel Mills, a farmer of Orford township, who migrated first to the United States and then to Canada, settling in Orford township in 1817. He was educated in the local school of his home district and Michigan University, and began his career as a public school teacher, from which he was promoted to become the Superintendent of the public schools of Kent in 1856, a position which he held for nine years. He became

quite a prominent member in the House of Commons, and was a Minister of Interior in the Liberal Administration, 1876-1878. He opposed both the coming in of British Columbia into the union, and the building of the Canadian Pacific railway as premature, claiming that the railway construction needed by British Columbia, should be undertaken by Imperial and not Canadian authority. The National Policy, he claimed, should be based on commercial extension, not commercial exclusion, but the country did not adopt his viewpoint in either of these matters.

With the inclusion of these two pioneers of the new Era to the list of the members of the pre-confederation period, we bring the sketch to a close by quoting the prophecy of Kent's greatest parliamentarian of that period in respect to the benefits to be obtained from Confederation:

"Well, Mr. Speaker, may the work we have unitedly proposed rouse the ambition and energy of every true man in British America. Look, sir, at the map of the continent of America, and mark that island (Newfoundland) commanding the mouth of the noble river that almost cuts our Continent in twain. Well, sir, that island is equal in extent to

Portugal. Cross the strait of the mainland, and you touch the hospitable shores of Nova Scotia, a country as large as the kingdom of Greece. Then mark the sister province of New Brunswick—equal in extent to Denmark and Switzerland combined. Pass up the river St. Lawrence to Lower Canada, a country as large as France. Pass on to Upper Canada—twenty thousand miles greater than Great Britain and Ireland put together. Cross over the continent to the shores of the Pacific, and you are in British Columbia, the land of golden promise—equal in extent to the Austrian Empire. I speak not now of the vast Indian Territories that lie between—greater in extent than the whole soil of Russia—and that will ere long, I trust, be opened up to civilization under the auspices of the British American Confederation. Well, sir, the bold scheme in your hands is nothing less than to gather all these countries into one—to organize them all under one government, with the protection of the British flag, and in heartiest sympathy and affection with our fellow-subjects in the land that gave us birth. Our scheme is to establish a government that will seek to turn the tide of European emigration into this northern half of the American Continent—that will strive to develop its great natural resources—and that will endeavour to maintain liberty, and justice, and Christianity throughout the land."

Has the history of our country since verified his expectations?



## THE ESTABLISHMENT OF TOWNSHIP, VILLAGE AND TOWN COUNCILS AS THE LOWEST UNIT OF SELF-GOVERNMENT, WITH THE COUNTY COUNCIL AS THE NEXT ABOVE IT



ISTORY affords abundant testimony of the inherent instinct in the Anglo-Saxon race for self-government. At a very early period in England the tithing, afterward called township, had its reeve and four associates who managed its local affairs and were representatives at the hundred mote, or public meeting, over which the hundred men presided, and, when counties were organized, at the shire mote, over which the caldorman presided. Many cities and boroughs early obtained royal charters conferring upon them large measures of self-government, and it is said that such a charter granted by Athelstane, and another by Edward the Confessor, are still extant. The rights and privileges of British cities and boroughs undoubtedly were the natural result of the self-reliance and independence of the people, and their genius for self-government, assisted most materially by the long continued and bitter struggles between the king and the feudal lords of which the cities and boroughs were not slow to take advantage.

It is most interesting to follow the development of these corporations, the growth of the representative system and the right of election

of councillors and appointment of officers to manage the affairs of the corporations as the cities became too large to be governed on the town-meeting plan. The governing principle, which runs through all the years of struggle handed down from sire to son, was that the governing class retain supreme control as long as possible and grant to the boroughs such privileges only as might make for the security and maintenance in authority of those in power. The contest was, as always, one of the governed against the governors, in which the latter for a considerable period had the best of it; but this is another story.

**O**ur municipal institutions were based on the New England system.

Our municipal institutions, admitted to be the simplest, most symmetrical and best anywhere, are modelled not on the English or Scotch systems, but rather after the plan adopted in New England, where the conditions and circumstances of the people more closely resemble those of Ontario. Professor Bryce, in his *American Commonwealth*, points out that three somewhat different types of local self-government obtain in the American Republic. In the New England

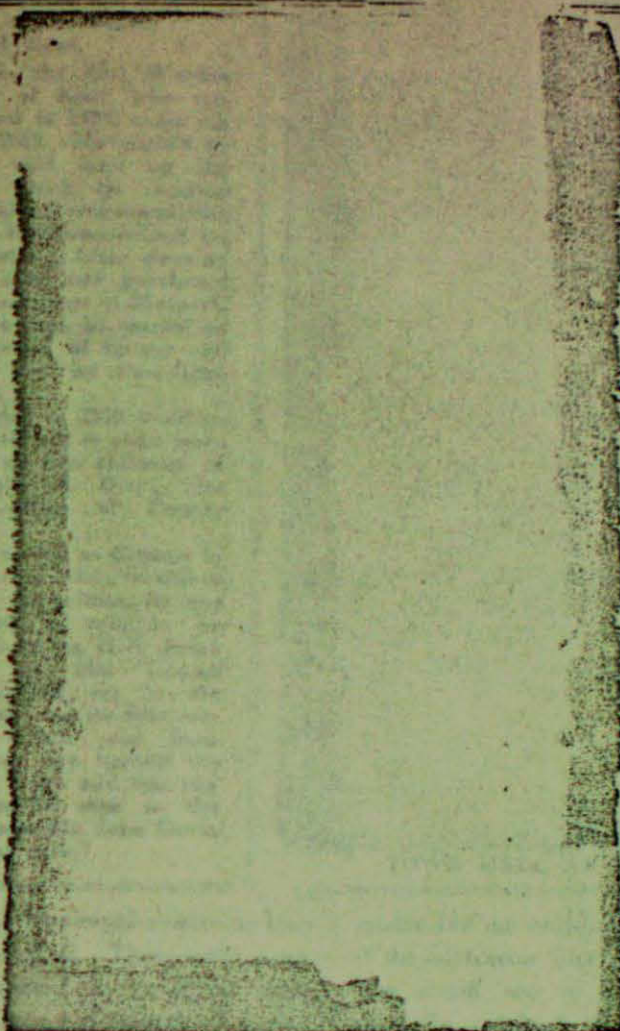
*This Chapter was written by the late J. A. WALKER, President of the Kent County Historical Society, who made copious use of R. S. Woods' book, Harrison Hall, in the preparation of it. His unexpected death prevented the addition of a review of Chatham City's government as was contemplated.*



Harrison Hall is the largest municipal building of Kent. It is erected on a triangular site at the junction of Fifth and Sixth streets, Chatham, fronting on them and on Wellington street and looking up Centre street, a position both central and conspicuous.

The building is Byzantine in its architecture, with heavy stone foundation, pressed brick superstructure, trimmed with Ohio freestone slate roof, which is well set up with turrets, towers and dormers. It has a frontage of 112 feet on Fifth street, 100 feet on Sixth street and a circular frontage of 48 feet on Wellington street. The cornerstone was laid on August 27th, 1889, and it was finished and occupied on the 1st day of July, 1890. The cost of the building was \$38,203.09, of which the County paid \$28,652.32, and the city, (town then) \$9,550.77.

The building received its name in honor of a former member of Parlia-



HARRISON HALL

Joint municipal building of Chatham city and Kent county.

ment for Kent, Hon. S. B. Harrison. He was an English lawyer of distinction who came out to Canada in 1837. In 1839, he was appointed secretary to Lieut.-Governor, Sir George Arthur. Made Provincial Secretary in 1841, he contested Kent county for a seat in parliament, but, defeated by Joseph Woods, he was given a seat in Kingston. He was successful against Mr. Woods in the next election, but, before the meeting of Parliament, he accepted the Judgeship of the Surrogate Court for the Home District. He was the promoter of two very important bills which associate his name with the founding of two of our institutions, the Bill which gave to us Municipal Government in 1841, and, in the same year, the first general School Bill of the province. A more suitable name could hardly be discovered, than that of the founder of the institutions which the Hall serves.

States, greater importance is placed upon the township as distinguished from the county system. In the Southern States the county is the municipal unit, while in the Middle and Western states there is a modified adaptation of both, and, indeed, some states are divided in their choice, as is Illinois, where the southern portion has taken the county system and the remaining portion the township.

It might have been expected that the presence of the United Empire Loyalists in this province would have encouraged and

facilitated the adoption of municipal government with us, but this is not strictly the case, although the allotment to them and to disbanded soldiers of free tracts of land, and their taking up and settling of the same, necessitated the formation of townships. This, however, was not so much for the purpose of government, as for a designation of specific areas or surveys. The practice of the people to gather at town meetings to discuss the building of roads and other local affairs prepared the ground-work for the



**GEORGE DUCK**

Member and Warden of the  
Western District, and first  
Warden of the County  
of Kent.

George Duck, the first Warden of the County of Kent, who was born in England in 1790, came out to Canada in 1833. He located on 220 acres of wild land on the Howard road which he received from Colonel Talbot, accommodating his family in a log house which his own hands erected. After cleaning his farm, he sold and purchased another near the village of Morpeth, and where, for a time, he carried on the dual occupation of farmer and merchant. He died on this farm, December, 1869.

He was married in 1819 to Margaret A. Epworth and to them were born a family of five children, of which one, John A. Duck, also occupied the office of County Warden.

George Duck served as Captain in the militia during the troublous days of 1837-9. In politics, he was a Liberal; and in religion, an Anglican. In Harrison Hall, Judge Woods wrote of him—"George Duck, Esquire, had sat in the Western District from its first session, January, 1842, and been Warden of it, and now became the first Warden of Kent, and was one of the most useful men in the Councils, as his son, Mr. John Duck, also Warden, has been."

**TOWN HALL AT RIDGETOWN**

organization of the municipal system as later determined and adopted. These early townships were designated by numbers until, possibly, they became old enough to name.

**L**ord Dorchester, in 1788 divided the province into four districts.

On the 24th July, 1788, the Governor-General, Sir Guy Carleton, divided this province, then Upper Canada, into four districts, viz., Lunenburg, Micklenburg, Nassau and Hesse, but our first legislature, in 1792, changed the name of these districts in their order to Eastern, Midland, Home and Western. The same act provided for the erection of a gaol and court house in each district, according to plans to be selected by magistrates in Quarter Sessions. The lowest

tender for the buildings was to be accepted if the contractor furnished sufficient security. The sheriff was to be gaoler and it was specially enjoined that he should not be licensed to sell liquor within the gaol.

**G**overnor Simcoe made a further division of the province into nineteen counties.

The Constitutional Act of 1791 authorized the lieutenant governor to divide each province into districts, counties or circles, and determine their limits for the purpose of choosing representatives for the legislature. Accordingly, Lieutenant-Governor Simcoe issued his proclamation dividing Upper Canada into nineteen counties; Essex and Suffolk, two of these counties, adjoined each other and were entitled to return one member.



George Young, a native of Roxboroughshire, Scotland, was the only son of his parents, Charles Young, who died before his birth, and Agnes Nisbet, who reared and educated him. He attended a private Border school, where he associated with English as well as Scotch scholars until his removal to Paisley at eleven years of age. At thirteen, he was apprenticed to a cabinet-maker to which he later added that of house-carpenter. In Glasgow he continued studying, and gifted with a retentive memory, he became widely and well read, being assisted in the selection and obtainment of the required books by a clergyman who took a kindly interest in him.

After seven years apprenticeship, he entered into a cabinet-making and house-building partnership with a Mr. Stuart, a Glasgow contractor. A flourishing business was inaugurated, but through a disastrous fire and the dishonesty of his partner it did not end profitably. As a result of the world-wide financial depression of 1839 and 1840, he determined to emigrate from Scotland, and declining a very tempting offer as a Superintendent of a government ship-yard in New Zealand, he came to Canada and settled in Harwich township in 1842.

In Glasgow, he was a well-known and public-spirited citizen. He studied municipal institutions and became an authority on municipal law. He was associated with the founding of the first Mechanics' Institute in Glasgow and had much to do with the Anderson Institute, and contributed no small share in raising it to be a flourishing institution, employing fifty professors and attended by thousands of pupils. He was employed to superintend the construction of Glasgow's new municipal buildings, was given the freedom of the city as a leading member of the Mechanics' Guild, and when leaving a public dinner was given him by the City Council, and about three thousand of his fellow-citizens and employees were at the wharf to bid their farewell, when he and his family embarked for Canada in 1841.

In 1832, he was married to Janet Robertson, a daughter of Professor Robertson of Glasgow, and they reared a family of nine children—Rachel (Mrs. John Coutts), Agnes, Elizabeth (Mrs. Theophilus McCarroll), Jessie, George E.,

Isabella (Mrs. Peter McKerrall), Alexander, Marion and Richard.

In Canada, he came to Kent by way of Windsor and boat to Chatham, and purchased a block of land from Mr. Irvine, on which there was a log-house, log-barn and ten acres cleared. On this farm, ten miles out from Chatham, Mr. Young spent the rest of his days.

From the very first, he took an active part in the community life of the district. In 1845 he was elected to the Western District Council and served until the change in the counties took place. He erected the first bridge at Kent Bridge and drew plans and inspected the bridges at Thamesville, Bothwell and Moraviantown and Dresden afterwards. He had the contract for the sewer and first pavement on King Street, Chatham, in 1856. He also superintended the building of the piers, and dredging the Rond Eau harbour in 1872-3-4-5. He was appointed a Justice of the Peace in 1851 and Clerk of the Fourth Division Court in 1852, and held these offices until 1886. He was elected to the Council in Harwich in 1852 and served almost continuously until 1878. He was Warden in 1865 and 1866. He always took great interest in Education, and was High school trustee for a great number of years.

In the maintenance of religious ordinances in the community, Mr. Young took a prominent part. His name, and that of Mrs. Young appear on the roll of charter mem-

bers of the Ridge Road United Presbyterian, the first church established in south Harwich, and he and his family were regular worshippers at Rushton's corner, one of the three preaching places of that charge. He was a pioneer, also, in his advocacy of free or public schools, and, at a public meeting held in Chatham, Dr. Ryerson attested his appreciation of the helpful service that Mr. Young rendered, in bringing about their establishment.

As a member of the Western District Council, the county and township councils, a member of the Grammar School Board of Chatham, and the first Board of Health, and Superintendent of the Public schools, in the opinion of his contemporaries, no man of his time did more for the founding of the municipal and educational institutions of the county than did George Young.



GEORGE YOUNG  
1809—1890.



Kent was the nineteenth county and comprised all the territory not included in the other counties. It extended northerly to the limits of the province and westerly to include Detroit and other portions of Michigan, and was entitled to two members, the first two being elected at Detroit in 1792.

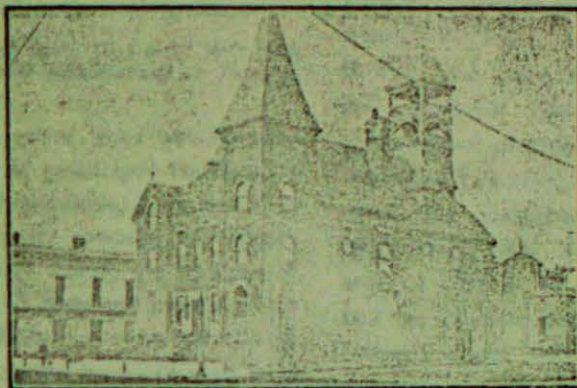
**P**rovisions were made by succeeding Acts of Parliament for the establishment and government of municipalities.

The second Act of the second session of this parliament provided that two Justices of the Peace within a parish or township or other place might issue their warrant to a constable, authorizing him on the first Monday in March to assemble all resident householders, liable to assessment, in such parish or township, in the parish

church or other convenient place, for the purpose of choosing parish or town officers, a clerk, two assessors, a collector of taxes, and from two to six persons to serve as overseers of highways and pound-keepers, (at that time, very important and necessary officials, who were authorized to impound cattle trespassing on land properly fenced), and further, to appoint two persons to serve as church wardens. A subsequent Act gave other powers to the inhabitant householders in their annual town meetings, but it was many years before these powers were much enlarged. Magistrates in Quarter Sessions exercised many privileges in managing and regulating the local affairs of towns and parishes, but this method proving unsatisfactory and irksome to the people, changes were agitated and pressed for, and, from time to time, separate special acts were passed bestowing special municipal authority on

towns. The first so favored was the town of Brockville, which in 1832 procured an act to be passed establishing a "Board of Police," giving the people control of the town's affairs. The town was divided into two wards, each entitled to elect two members of this body. The electors were the tenants or freeholders within the ward rated from the assessment roll; the fifth member was to be appointed by a majority vote of the four elected, and, if they could not make a choice, the electors of the town were to make the choice. The

five members thus constituted elected one of their number President. Both electors and elected were required to possess a property qualification. The corporation thus constituted was given very considerable powers. It could make rules and



BLENHIM TOWN HALL

regulations for its government, appoint officers, levy rates and pass by-laws for the good order and general government of the town. Thus Brockville blazed the way. Other towns soon followed, Hamilton, Belleville, Cornwall, Cobourg and many others, and in 1834, Toronto, or York, as it then was known, procured an extension of its limits and was formed into a city to be called the City of Toronto, divided into five wards and power given it to elect a mayor, aldermen and common councilmen. Two aldermen and two councillors were to be elected for each ward and these were to elect the mayor. Should their votes be equally divided the member with the highest assessment gave the casting vote. Very extensive powers were given which we will not take time to recite and only refer to these acts to indicate the trend of public opinion.



Stephen White, Warden in the county in 1870, came to Canada from Pennsylvania, where he was born of English parentage, and was one of the first settlers on the Middle Road, Raleigh. He cleared and farmed lot twenty-four, concession eleven, and became very prominent in the municipal affairs of his township and county. He married, in 1846, Harriet E. West, and they had a family of nine children, five sons and four daughters, several of whom became well-known residents of the county, but others of them moved to the United States and other parts of Canada. He was a Conservative in politics and was on one occasion an unsuccessful candidate for the Provincial Legislature.



STEPHEN WHITE,  
Warden, 1870.

**G**overnment of rural townships until 1841, was mainly under the jurisdiction of Justices of the Peace.

While the cities were thus successfully securing a measure of municipal freedom by special Acts of the legislature, there was very little advancement made towards this object in the rural districts. There, the Justices of the Peace in General Sessions continued to control all local affairs much as they liked. True, the electors at town meetings soon were accorded the privilege of electing fence viewers, pound-keepers and road overseers, or commissioners, and, later on, other officers, but these officers were not entrusted with sufficient authority for efficient municipal control, and the power of taxation and the right to raise rates remained with the Quarter Sessions. Matters were in this position when the rebellion broke out, and afterwards came the vigorous report of Lord Durham, in which he strongly recommended the establishment of local municipal institutions.

**T**he first general Municipal Act was sponsored by the Hon. S. B. Harrison.

In 1841 the parliament of the united provinces passed the first general Municipal Act establishing municipal authority, which Act was introduced and piloted by the Hon. S. B. Harrison, the Provincial Secretary for Upper Canada. Mr. Harrison in that year unsuccessfully contested the representation of

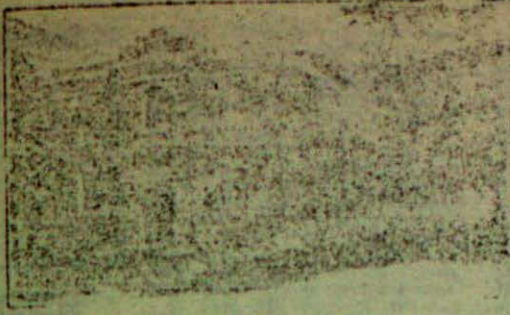
Kent with the late Joseph Woods, but he was subsequently returned as the representative of Kingston. When we read of the determined and violent opposition to this bill, and the bitter feeling engendered by it, we are at a loss to realize the cause of all the wasted energy of its opponents, for the measure was but a very modest advance on the old law. It provided that there should be a district council in each district to consist of the warden and councillors. The warden was still to be appointed by the Governor, as were the treasurer and clerk. Each township was to elect two councillors when the freeholders and householders on the assessment roll exceeded three hundred. Extensive powers were granted to the council, but the serious defect was, that the act still recognized the magistrates appointed by the government, and there, not unfrequently, arose a conflict of authority between them and the councils elected by the people. The councils were authorized to pass bylaws respecting roads, bridges and public buildings, for defraying certain expenses connected with the administration of justice, for the establishment and maintenance of schools, assessing, raising and levying rates, fixing salaries, et cetera. Several subsequent Acts added to these powers.

Israel Evans, a Pennsylvanian by birth, came to Chatham with his family in 1825. His father, Israel Evans, Senior, was a miller by trade, and for the first five years of his residence in Kent was an employee in the McGregor mills. In 1830, he established the first industry of Chatham, a carding and a grist-mill, whose motive power was furnished by horses. Israel Evans, Junior, began business for himself early in life, and took an active part in the municipal affairs of Chatham from young manhood, being elected a member of the Town Council for twelve consecutive years, and Mayor in 1869. He was the only representative of the town of Chatham ever elected to be Warden of the county. Among other public offices, he was a Justice of the Peace and a License Inspector of West Kent. His sister, Nancy Evans, was the first woman married in Chatham.



ISRAEL EVANS,  
Mayor of Chatham,  
1869.  
Warden of the County,  
1871.





## TOWNSHIP HALL, HOWARD

**T**he first council of the Western district met at Sandwich, 1842.

The Province had been divided into twenty-two districts, of which what are now the counties of Essex, Kent and Lambton, formed one, known as the Western District. The first Council of this district elected under the Act of 1841, which went into effect on the first day of January, 1842, met at Sandwich. There were present twenty-six members and the Warden, John Dolsen, appointed by the Government, who continued as Warden for five years. In this formative period the councillors seem to have taken their duties seriously. The first clerk was John Cowan, Esq., one time editor, and the minutes are interesting, well phrased and concisely written. Many familiar names appear on the list of members and officers. Schools and roads, assessments and petitions on various subjects occupied a large proportion of the time of the members.

**T**reatment accorded early prisoners. Examined the complaint to Council of Jonathan Schooley.

A little color is given to a circumstance recorded in 1843. One Jonathan Schooley, a cabinet-maker, who was a prisoner undergoing sentence in the gaol, wrote a long letter giving in considerable detail on agreement between himself and the gaoler, who agreed, in consideration of Schooley making certain articles of furniture for him, to pay him extra therefore and

release him from solitary confinement. A work shop was set up in the gaol and Schooley performed his part of the contract very faithfully, but the gaoler refused to pay him. The complaint was referred to sheriff Mercer, for many years the sheriff of this county, for investigation and report. The sheriff's letter is not given but one can imagine what it contained from the resolution passed after the reading of the letter, on the motion of Mr. Reynolds, that this "Council does not assume the power or right to interfere with the sheriff in the appointment of a gaoler; but it does claim the power and right and considers it its duty to look to the safety of the public buildings endangered by using them as a carpenter's work shop."

**P**rogressive changes in Municipal Government, 1847-1850.

In 1847 Kent was formed into a separate district and a provisional council met at Chatham in August, its special purpose being the erection of our present gaol and courthouse, which was completed about the year 1850. It would appear that all the members also attended the Sandwich meetings.

In 1849 was passed the municipal Magna Charta of this province, the preamble of which declared that, "It will be of great public benefit and advantage that provision should be made by one general law for the erection of municipal corporations and the establishment of regulations of police in and





## PRESENT DAY COUNTY OFFICIALS



JOHN FREDERICK FLETCHER

Angus McColl, a native of Argyllshire, Scotland, and for many years a well-known minister of the Presbyterian Church of Chatham. To Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher have been born three children, Alice Isabel, Frederick McColl and Grace Marion. In politics Mr. Fletcher favours the Liberal party; in religion he is a Presbyterian.

John Frederick Fletcher was born in Tilbury East Township, Kent County, Oct. 7, 1886, the son of John and Isabel (Dawson) Fletcher, natives of Aberdeenshire, Scotland, who settled in Tilbury East Township in 1872.

John F. Fletcher farmed in Tilbury East until 1921. He was elected to the township council in 1908, was five years councillor, one year deputy-reeve and seven years reeve. He was elected warden of Kent County in January 1921, and was appointed County Clerk in October of the same year.

In 1909 Mr. Fletcher married Marion Louise McColl, granddaughter of the late Rev. Dr.

James C. Fleming is the youngest of the family of twelve children of Andrew Fleming and Frances Ward, pioneer settlers of Moss township, Middlesex county; and grandson of James Fleming, the first white man to settle in Elgin county. At twenty-seven years of age, James C. Fleming moved with his father's family to Chatham township, Kent county, where he followed farming and looked after the material interests of his aged parents. In 1895, he married Mary Margaret Rutherford, and they have had a family of three children, Margaret Frances, Andrew James and Jean Isabel. In 1885 he was elected a member of the Chatham township council; in 1887, he was appointed county clerk; and in 1902, treasurer. In politics, he is a Liberal, and in religion a Methodist.

JAMES C. FLEMING  
1896  
Treasurer, County of Kent.

"for the several counties, cities, towns, townships and villages in Upper Canada." The Act took effect on the first day of January, 1850. Some fifty or more previous acts of parliament were repealed and ample powers of self-government were conferred upon all municipal corporations, largely as those powers exist and are exercised today. All minor municipalities were to elect five councillors, who elected one of themselves reeve, and, in each township having five hundred resident rate-payers, a deputy-reeve. By this and the amending Act passed two or three years afterwards, the old districts were abolished and counties defined. The inhabitants of each county became a body corporate whose council consisted of the town-reeves and deputy-town-reeves of the several townships, towns and villages within the county. The county council was to meet at the shire hall, if one, and, if none, at the county court annually, on the fourth Monday in January. At the first meeting they chose from among themselves a warden who should preside at their meetings.

About the end of 1850, possibly after the court house was completed, Kent was separated from Essex and Lambton for municipal purposes, while the two last named remained united for municipal and judicial purposes until 1853, which led to a peculiar difficulty requiring a special Act to

remedy. As it was impossible to take prisoners from the one county to the other without passing through Kent, it became necessary to indemnify the sheriff and bailiffs taking prisoners from Lambton to the Sandwich gaol, passing through Kent under warrants of arrest.

#### First officers and first meeting of Kent County Council.

The first council for Kent as a separate county met at the court house on the 27th February, 1851, and consisted of ten members of whom George Duck, the reeve for Howard, was elected warden. There were no deputy reeves. George Witherspoon represented the town of Chatham. William Cosgrove was clerk and continued to hold the office until 1867. His successors were Messrs. Hart, Kerr, Fleming, and the present incumbent, Mr. Jonas Gosnell.

#### Examples of the matters dealt with by the first County Council.

In 1851, James Smith, the Reeve for Camden and Zone, was elected warden and continued to be so elected annually for 11 years. He was a member of the council for 22 years. During the initial years of the county council strong men were necessary, and James Smith was a strong man. The officials and those dealing with the councils were inclined to be over reaching. Persons entrusted with money were not



always prompt to account for the same. There was considerable litigation. The law was in the settling. Many persons, led by the Canada Company, took advantage of every technicality to avoid payment of taxes. There were large arrears. We find Thomas A. Ireland presenting an account of £220, 8s., 3d., for printing the advertisement for sale of lands for arrears of taxes. There were six insertions of about half a sheet of the Advertiser newspaper. The finance committee "could not refrain," as the report stated, "from expressing strongly their disapprobation" of this account and recommended that Mr. Ireland be paid £76, 5s., in full discharge of his account.

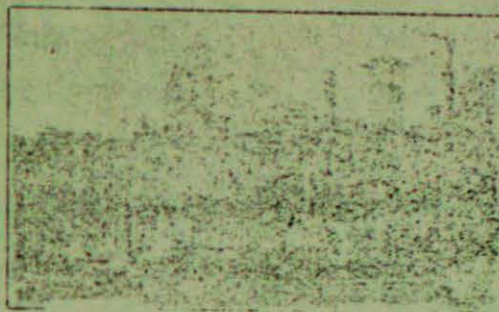
Alexander Knapp made application for assistance to put the books of the registry office in better shape. He was very emphatically told that the receipts of the office which he enjoyed should be sufficient for the purpose. Two debtors escaped from the gaol and R. K. Payne, the gaoler, and the Sheriff, were informed that the escape could be attributed to no other cause than gross negligence on their part. The gaoler was subsequently sued by the execution creditors and put to considerable costs defending the action and applied to the Counsel for assistance, but, in the language of the report, "No action was atken." The Council petitioned the Legislature to amend the law so that the appointment of all county officers should rest with the municipal councils.

No one reading the minutes of these earlier councils can resist the conclusion that the members were for the most part fearless guardians of the public interests and possessed the courage of their convictions.

**L**itigation of doctors' fees in connection with the Great Western Railway disaster of 1854.

On the 27th October, 1854, occurred the calamitous accident on the Great Western Railway at Baptiste Creek in which upwards of fifty persons were killed, and equally as many more maimed or injured. The County Council refused to pay what they were pleased to call the exorbitant bills of Dr.

Askin, and the coroner, Dr. Donnelly, in connection with the inquest, and referred the bills to the Government. Dr. Askin sued the treasurer, Alex. Charteris, and the court of Queen's Bench awarded him £12, 10s., each party to pay his own costs. The lawyer's bill,



TOWN HALL, BOTHWELL

one item of the cost, was £5, 8s., 3d.

In this year also a fire that took place on the 15th August destroyed the By-laws and many of the records and papers of the council.

**T**he first Board of Health.

The first Board of Health was this year constituted, consisting of Dr. Rolls, R. S. Woods and George Young. The latter was a gentleman of a strong personality, masterful and many sided. For many years he was on the Grammar School Board of Trustees and on the Board of School Examiners. 19 years in the county council, two years its warden; from 1818 a Justice of the Peace; appointed clerk of the Fourth Division Court of Kent in 1851 he served in the office possibly till his death, as well as filling other public offices. While a member of the county council and school board, he built in 1854-5 the first grammar school. The only protection these corporations thought necessary to



Robert Ferguson, a native of Stirlingshire, Scotland, came to Kent county, settling at Ridgetown in 1857. He established in partnership with his brother John a lumbering business at Thamesville shortly afterwards and carried on an extensive and lucrative business in connection with that industry, becoming not only a leading citizen of Thamesville, but one of the most enterprising and successful business men of the county. He represented the township of Camden for a number of years as reeve, and became the first reeve of Thamesville, when incorporated. He was a member of the County Council for many years, warden in 1877, and elected a member of the Provincial Legislature for East Kent in 1887, which position he continued to hold until his death in 1901. In religion he was a Presbyterian; in politics, a Liberal. He was unmarried.



ROBERT FERGUSON,  
1832-1901.  
Warden of the County,  
1877.  
Member of Provincial  
Legislature, 1887-1901.

Those connected with this humiliating affair have never disclosed all they knew respecting it. Friendships were embittered when the lack of honor (?) in agents was suspected. There were many accusations and counter accusations. A councillor on the day the final vote was to be taken awoke to find himself over twenty miles from the court house with little knowledge of how he got so far away from home, and less of his means of returning in time to vote. The vote was taken before he reached the chamber and the by-law defeated. Fortunately such occurrences are exceedingly rare. We know of none similar. There were undoubtedly honest differences of opinion on the merits of the by-law. The great majority of the members were of unimpeachable integrity and felt keenly the misconduct of a few of their weaker brethren. The road was built but it passes six miles to the south of this city, and we are left to speculate what the result might have been had it run through Chatham. Since its construction a very large number of our people in the southerly and easterly portion of this county found St. Thomas more easy of access than their own county town.

In 1874, a by-law was passed granting \$155,000 by way of bonus to the Erie and Huron railway, the completion of which was delayed from various perplexing causes for

many years, and no doubt the county would have been largely benefitted both financially and otherwise had this railway been built and operated by the municipality itself.

Chatham city withdrew from County in 1879.

The membership of the County Council continued to increase with the growth in population and the incorporation of villages and towns, so that by the year 1879 there were thirty-one members, of whom Archibald Campbell, afterwards Senator Campbell, T. R. Jackson, Stephen White, Dr. Mitchell and John Dohbyn became subsequently candidates for parliamentary honors. During this year the town of Chatham withdrew from the County for Municipal purposes. We find in the minutes of that year a petition to the Legislature praying that the law might be so amended as to reduce the number of county councillors, and suggesting that the county be divided into ten or twelve districts with a representative from each who should be directly elected by the people and who should not be a member of the local councils.

Decrease since 1896 in the number of members in the County Council.

It was not until the year 1896, when the membership reached thirty-six, that the law was changed adopting this principle, and Kent was divided into seven districts with two

Daniel J. Van Velsor, M.D., was born in Elgin county, 1835, of German parentage. He received his public school education at Southwold, and his secondary at St. Thomas. After a period of eight years in the teaching profession, he attended Michigan and Toronto Universities, graduating from the latter in 1862. He settled that year at Blenheim, where he followed an active and successful practice until his death in 1889. In 1857, he married Mary Ellen Wallace of Louisville, and they had a family of three sons and one daughter. The three sons followed their father's profession. He was deputy-reeve of Harwich, 1868-1871; reeve, 1872-4; and first reeve of Blenheim at its separation from Harwich and incorporation in 1874.



DANIEL JAMES  
VAN VELSOR, M.D.  
1835-1889.  
Warden of the County,  
1873.



William Abraham, a native Canadian, of Irish descent, was born in Montreal in 1849. In 1849 his father moved to Kent, locating first in Chatham town, then Chatham township. William was educated in the public and grammar schools of Chatham, after which he farmed, purchasing for himself in 1879, lot four, concession four, Chatham township. In 1877, he was married to Clara M. Hay, a native of Bowmanville, Ontario, and Scotch descent, and they have reared a family of five children, Mary B., Robert H., William M., Esther E., and George M. In politics, Mr. Abraham was a Conservative and in religion, a Methodist.



Wm. ABRAHAM,  
Warden, 1890.

members from each. That law was a distinct improvement. The number might with advantage have been less, but it was found to work well and few who had a knowledge of its actual operation desired the change to the former plan which was returned to ten years late. Mr. Jonas Gosnell, the late Clerk, had the distinction of being the first Warden under the new regime. The membership is not as large as it formerly was owing to the fact that the unit of representation is one thousand instead of five hundred as at first, and therefore a municipality must have over one thousand ratepayers before it becomes entitled to a deputy reeve.

**T**he County Council has been a training school for subsequent members of Parliament.

It is sometimes said, and with truth, that the more persons engaged in the machinery of government the greater is the knowledge thereof, and the respect therefore, and, as the members of municipal councils are composed of those who bear a fair share of the burden of taxation, they are entitled to the benefit and knowledge to be derived from the experience of a few years' service. There is also the strength that numbers should offer. But looking at the question from a business standpoint and desiring the adoption of that method best designed to perform expeditiously, economically, intelligently and properly those responsible duties devolving upon county councillors, five practical business men would, it is submitted, prove, on the whole, the most satisfactory. There seems no

good reason why the county council might not be relieved of a considerable portion of its present duties by the local municipalities. Nevertheless, it must be admitted, that many of the very best men we have had in this county, have, at various times, been selected as county councillors. In the earlier years the period of service was considerably longer than at present. In addition to these already referred to, Stephen White served for twenty-two years, Arthur Anderson and G. W. Foot for fourteen and twelve years respectively, John Duck, John McMichael and Jos. Roberts eleven years each, Mr. (afterwards) Sheriff McKellar and Alex. Coutts, both afterwards members of the Legislature, ten years each. R. J. Morrison, John Lee and many others might be mentioned who gave years of good service on these Boards. Of the other gentlemen who received municipal training while members of the council of Kent and became members or candidates for parliament might be named Messrs. Larwell, John Smith, Henry Smyth, Robert Ferguson, Rufus Stephenson, James Clancey, George Langford, Alexander Mason, John S. Fraser, Alexander Clark, Walter Ferguson, John Davidson, Benjamin Wilson and T. L. Pardo. Few counties can show so commendable a record.

#### **T**endency towards short-term representations in township Councils.

There has recently grown up a feeling, encouraged and fostered by the desire of those

Benjamin W. Wilson was the son of John Wilson, of Howard, and belonged to one of the early and representative families of that township, who came to Kent from Elgin county in 1833. He followed the occupations, first of cheese-making, but later a grain-merchant of Ridgeway. He was a public-spirited citizen, elected to the office of Reeve of Howard four years, 1890-1893, and Mayor of Ridgeway for two terms of two years each, 1888-9 and 1902-3. He was also License Inspector for East Kent. In 1883, he was a candidate for parliamentary honors, but defeated by Daniel McCraney. The Wilsons were of English descent, Conservatives in politics and Presbyterian in religion.



WILSON,  
Warden, 1882.  
BENJAMIN W.





JONAS GOSNELL,  
Warden,  
and County Clerk.

Jonas Gosnell farmed lot three, concession five, Oxford township. He was born in Oxford township in 1850, the son of Henry Gosnell, native of County Cork, Ireland. Served as a member of Oxford township council many years, and a member of Kent county council in 1890, and 1902-1909, inclusive. He was elected Warden in 1897 and appointed county clerk in 1902, which office he held until his death in 1921, residing latterly in Chatham. He married in 1871, Mary Ann Gosnell, and to them have been born two children, Etta and Harry. The family were members of the Methodist, now the United Church.

electors who might be regarded as prospective representatives, that the office should "go around," so that at present the reeve does not receive the benefit of a long period of municipal training, and it is to be feared that he does not take his work so seriously as did his predecessors. Great breadth is not expected. There is a lack of any vital or important questions. Few, if any, come up for solution. None is sought for. The narrower limits of getting road or other grants for constituencies suffice. Good nature and good fellowship are important attributes. In the earlier years there were honest differences of opinion on a multitude of questions. Members were fearless and independent in their convictions. Rarely a day passed but the Yeas and Nays were recorded half a dozen times. That practice has almost become obsolete except during the complimentary votes for the wardenship.

**A** high standard of representation has been maintained in the membership of the County Council.

No dishonesty, jobbery or graft has ever dimmed the fair record of the County Council of Kent, with the single exception to which reference has already been made, and it is singularly free from any political or party influence. It not unfrequently happens that when the majority of the members are Liberals they elect a Conservative Warden and vice versa. The climax, the acme of the year, is of course the warden's supper, at which all members and officers, and at times

their wives, enjoy the luxury of a substantial and social meal. Each participant becomes vocal, good fellowship abounds, and he must be very undeserving indeed who is not the recipient of many generous encomiums. The practice is so ancient that the memory of man runneth not to the contrary.

As members of local municipal councils in the persons of the reeve and deputy-reeves are representatives in the county councils, should there be in the last named body a few intelligent, capable business men with sufficient energy and application to acquire a thorough knowledge of the conduct and procedure of municipal affairs, their executive ability and business habits must naturally influence for good their colleagues, who will carry back with them to the local councils correct business methods and better ideals, which will be of permanent value, not only to the members themselves, but to the whole electorate, and slip shod, indifferent and careless methods will soon find no place at municipal Boards. This is a consummation devoutly to be desired.

John Garner Kerr, a senior member of the law firm of Kerr, McNevin and Kerr, Chatham, was born in Chatham, November 20, 1867, the son of Hugh and Margaret Kerr, natives of Scotland. He was educated at the Chatham public school and Collegiate Institute, and at Osgoode Hall, Toronto. He graduated from this law school, a silver medallist of his class, in 1889, and was called to the Ontario bar in August of that year, since which time he has been practising his profession continuously in Chatham, associated as a partner with varying firms until the establishment of the above-named firm in 1912. He was appointed King's Counsel in 1921, and became a bencher of the law society of Upper Canada in 1923. He has served as a member of the city and county councils for several years, and was Mayor of Chatham in 1917. He was married to Margaret Louise, daughter of George S. McLean of Sarnia, in 1893, and has three sons, William George, a Barrister, John Beverly, and Douglas Garner, Barrister, and one daughter, Margaret Louise. In politics, he is a Liberal, and in religion a member of the United Church of Canada.



JOHN GARNER  
KERR,  
County Solicitor,  
Appointed December,  
1926.



# THE COUNTY'S DRAINAGE SYSTEM; ITS GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT,

## MALARIAL SWAMPS TRANSFORMED · INTO FERTILE FIELDS.



N the history of Kent there is no achievement that brings to it greater credit than does the construction of its drainage system. The salubrious climate and the variety of its soils give to the county a distinctive place among the agricultural districts of the province. Bounded by two lakes, Erie on the south and St. Clair on the north-west, it has all the advantages for drainage which proximity to these two large bodies of water supply. It is traversed by two rivers, the Thames and the Sydenham, both of which flow in the same direction from east to west, and both of which empty into the same lake, St. Clair. These have numerous creeks which empty into them, Bear and Little Bear, Big Creek and Arnold's, Jeannette and McGregor's Baptiste and Painscourt, all of which provide facilities for the drainage of the soil. Notwithstanding that Nature has supplied these numerous channels for draining off the surplus water from the soil, they are not sufficient to make the land cultivable. The flat and monotonously level nature of its superficial area and the absence of high banks for these two rivers towards their mouths makes the addition of many artificial drains a necessity.

There are no hills, practically speaking, in Kent. There is an elevation stretching along the lake Erie shore across the whole breadth of the county, an escarpment, which was doubtless a former shore of the lake. In some places this 'Ridge,' the name by which it is locally known, attains a height of more

than one hundred feet above the lake level. It makes its beginning on the western boundary of the county at the very shore of the lake, the blue waters of the Erie washing there its base as it once did in a previous era throughout its whole length. From this point it begins to get farther from the lake until at the eastern limit it is about five miles distant from the shore. South of it, there is thus formed a triangle, or gore, which gently slopes to the lake, comprising one of the most fertile sections of agricultural lands found in the county. The upland formed by this Ridge varies in width from a few rods in some places to a plateau of more than half a mile wide in others. Besides this Ridge, there are undulations and knolls at the eastern end of the county in the townships of Orford and Howard which give greater variety to the superficial appearance of the land in that sector, but all the rest of the county may be said to be one level area, unrelieved by anything other than the depressions made by the running channels of water, to which has been added since the artificial drains so laboriously and expensively constructed by the townships in order to make the fertile soil of the district fit for cultivation.

While all of this land is low-lying and with the exceptions mentioned, level, there are some parts lower than others. In the interior, before artificial drainage reached the stage of perfection now attained, considerable areas of swampy lands were distributed in many localities. From the Ridge,

*The Ridge  
and undulations  
are only hills &  
Kent*

*The plain  
or marsh  
lands were  
located  
as the western  
boundary of  
the County*



northward, the land falls rapidly towards the Thames, but when within a mile or so of the river it rises again to form a strip of high land adjoining, a feature which accounts for the first settlers of the county distributing themselves along the banks of the Thames instead of choosing the lowlands as did Lord Selkirk. Although McGregor's creek traverses this sector, there were depressions between it and the river on the one side and the Ridge on the other, where the water would lie on the surface all summer, protected from evaporation by the thick forest covering them. In Dover, a larger percentage of low-lying lands is found than in any of the other townships, though Raleigh and Tilbury have each their proportionate share. In these three townships are located the lands formerly known as "The Plains," an area of thirty thousand acres bordering on the Sydenham river, the Chenal Écarte, lake St. Clair and the lower Thames. This was a tract of treeless lands submerged every spring through the increased volume of water brought down by the Thames and Sydenham from the lands which they drained. When the lake level was low and the summer dry, they became prairie meadows, dotted with ponds, on which coarse grass grew in abundance. The land is so level towards the mouth of these two rivers that in normal times their currents are hardly perceptible as they pass through these plains towards the lake. But in the spring of the year, fed by the waters of the melting snow or by heavy rain falls, they are transformed into mighty torrents, overflowing their banks and submerging the surrounding areas with water several feet deep. In addition, when the ice on the upper reaches begins to move, with the increased volume and force of the water so rapidly supplied to them by their numerous tributary streams and creeks, this upper ice is carried down the stream only to find that the ice at the mouth of the river and the lake still remains intact. The result is the formation of a jam and the increased inundation of the

land on either side and a proportionate increase in the area covered. As parts of these lands are lower than the banks of the rivers they continued submerged until the waters were either absorbed by the soil or evaporated by the sun's summer heat.

As soon as they had built for themselves houses to dwell in, the initial task facing the first settlers was to get the soil ready to produce the grains and vegetables necessary for their living. The removal of the trees was usually all that was required in other sections of the province, for as soon as a clearance was made, the soil was then ready to produce its first crop. But not so was it in the major part of the county of Kent. The low-lying lands had to be drained and these submerged areas reclaimed before the soil could be made to yield its annual harvest of food products. At first the settlers confined themselves to the clearing and the cropping of the knolls and higher lands but as these were very limited in area, later settlers had no alternative other than the occupation of the lower areas, and the adoption of some system of drainage which would make the lower lands fit for cultivation. On porous soils and with a suitable season, profitable farming could be carried on even on the lower levels, but on non-porous and heavy soils, crops could not be grown without some system of drainage. Those who had natural outlets in the immediate neighborhood of their farms were able to make some successful effort in drainage by means of tiles and open ditches, but for those farms which required a drainage sometimes miles in length in order to obtain an eligible outlet, no system could be effective which was confined to the efforts of one individual farmer. The need could be met only by some scheme of provincial or municipal drainage.

The history of drainage has followed to a great extent, the history of road-building. The first drains were built, as were the first roads, by the voluntary labor of the settlers, each man working for the interests of his

at first the higher lands cleared and farmed.

the drainage of lands was voluntary. It became compulsory.



own particular farm. Later an element of compulsion was introduced to be followed still later by the work becoming a municipal undertaking, done under its supervision, the payment of which was made by assessing each of the farms benefitted their proportionate share of the cost. But it was a public undertaking concerning the carrying out of which there was room for much difference of opinion. The course which the proposed outlet should follow, the farms through which it would pass, the extent of the lands to be benefitted by the drain and what portion of the cost each farm should be assessed were questions concerning which there was not a unanimous and settled judgment. Seldom or ever was there a drain constructed in which there was not serious conflict of opinion, and appeals to higher courts followed by counter appeals. To establish a system which would produce satisfactory results, such as now obtains, required much legislation. The first statute, regulating drainage undertakings was passed in 1834, known as the Ditches and Watercourses Act. At that time, the only organisation yet established for the government of township affairs was the town meeting, of which pound-keepers and fence-viewers were the principal officers. By this Act of 1834, the fence-viewers were clothed with authority to settle all drainage disputes and from their decisions there was no appeal. Although legislation continued to be made regulating drainage works, it was not until 1866 that it was made possible for municipal drains to be undertaken on a large scale. A statute was passed that year, fathered by the late Hon. ~~John~~ McKellar, M.P.P., establishing the Debenture system, the raising of loans by the township councils, payment to be made in instalments spread over a number of years. This enabled large undertakings to be initiated by the municipalities and an annual payment to be added to the general taxes of the farmer benefitted, to whom payment of his share of the cost was by this means put within his easy reach. In fact, taking into

consideration the increased productiveness of wetland, not to say anything of waste, lands, nature would in this way be made to pay for the drain's construction. The system was further improved by the appointment of expert engineers, under whose charge the drainage undertakings of the municipalities were placed. The location of the drain was now no longer left to haphazard opinion or to the aggressiveness of local and selfish interests. Expert judgment estimated the benefit accruing to each farm lot, and made the assessment of cost based on its proportionate share of the benefit obtained. If any individual was dissatisfied with the engineer's findings, he had the right of appeal to the municipal council who would review the engineer's decisions, supporting or revising them. If still dissatisfied, he had the right of appeal to the county judge, and still further on until he reached the highest court in the land, the Privy Council. As municipal councils were not qualified, as a rule, to sit in judgment on the findings of an expert engineer, in course of time a Drainage Referee was appointed by the Provincial Government who acted in the double capacity of an expert engineer and judge, and in this way much litigious expense was saved both to the municipalities and the people served.

There was endless room, of course, for legitimate complaint. The interests involved were so intricate and extensive that avoidance of mistakes and miscalculations could hardly be possible. As an illustrative example, let us take the lands benefitted by one of the largest outlets. The system had to take care not only of the waters of the lower but also of the higher lands. In process of time, after the timber was taken off the higher lands and before sufficient outlets had been provided, open ditches and tile drains were introduced by upper-land farmers and their excess waters sent down to increase the volume of water on the lower lands. The people occupying the lower lands would see their fields covered after a heavy rainfall by the waters brought down from the lands

+ Great difficulty  
in distributing  
the just costs of  
a drainage system



above them. A man living on the plains of Raleigh would have his crops destroyed by waters which had come down to him from farm lands in the neighborhood of London, Middlesex county, or even still farther north, from farm lands in the township of North Easthope, Perth county, where one of the branches of the Thames takes its rise. To provide a sufficient outlet, so that the waters which came into it would, after even the heaviest rainfall, bring no damage to any lands or roads through which it passed, would be in itself a stupendous task; but, in addition, to sit down and estimate the benefits to be derived from such an outlet to each farm in so extensive an area, would be a greater. It would also be no easy task to convince the farmer of North Easthope that he had any right to assist the drainage of the lands of his brother farmer, who was so unfortunate as to be occupying the lower lands bordering on the shores of lake St. Clair, at the far off mouth of the river which drained his own lands.

A system, so far-reaching as the one now established, could be achieved only by the municipalities interested working in co-operation with one another and the Province working with them, and so, of necessity, drainage had to be carried out under the supervision of provincial enactments. After years of study and witness-bearing by legitimate complainants, defects in the system have been rectified, larger enterprises undertaken, enabling legislation put on the statute-books, until to-day, the drainage systems of this western district is not only an invaluable agricultural asset, but the greatest achievement in the realm of its municipal politics. The results have been really marvellous. One can hardly go down any concession in Dover without seeing a drain twenty or thirty feet wide along the side of the highway carrying off to its proper outlet on lake St. Clair the surplus water, which would otherwise flood the adjacent farms. Many thousand acres of land have been reclaimed where formerly the water stood two or three feet deep, miasmatic

pools for the breeding of mosquitoes, malarial fever and ague. To-day, these lands are producing all the ordinary farm products, and so far as the values are concerned, where the lands were originally worth nothing, these same lands are now worth from two hundred to five hundred dollars an acre.

The problem of draining the lowlands of Kent would have been less difficult if there had been a sufficient water-fall in the direction of its natural outlets. But when the land to be drained was lower than the water-level of the Thames, the Sydenham, or any of their tributaries, mere ditching or draining was not sufficient, and some supplemental method had to be adopted to get rid of the surplus waters. This consisted in a system of dykes, embankment and pumping after the manner in use in Holland. After drains had been constructed by means of large dredges, the soil taken from the excavation was used in making embankments, which enabled water to be held in the drain as many feet above the adjacent lands as the embankments were feet high. In this way an artificial waterfall was constructed and the waters to be carried away brought down to the embankment of the outlet, and there pumped over the embankment into the outlet and carried by it to St. Clair lake, the final outlet for all the waters of Kent county save that from the lands south of the Ridge, which drain into lake Erie. Such a pumping scheme is the Pike Drainage Works in the township of Raleigh which takes care of four thousand acres of these lower lands. This tract is traversed by four drains which lead to a reservoir, which is a big drain or basin about thirty feet wide and a mile and a half long running westward, where it connects with an outlet leading to the Thames river, the embankment of the outlet forming a dyke or dam across the mouth of the reservoir. Into this basin there is collected all the water brought down by these four drains, which is pushed by means of a wash-wheel through a pipe into the outlet which, in turn, carries

*a pumping & embankment system had to be adopted because of absence of water falls*



it to the Thames and from thence to lake St. Clair

The under-drainage of the farm-lot is essential to the success of this system. This is, in reality, the first and most important part of the system, although in the point of time, it is the last to be undertaken. The municipality provides an outlet, or system of outlets, clear through to lake St. Clair for each farm lot, and the farmer provides a system of tile-drains to carry off the surplus water of his own farm and connects it with the municipal outlet. This entails considerable expense, which is borne by the individual farm owner. Narrow trenches are dug across the farm by machines made for the purpose, called 'ditching machines,' and a line of four-inch tiles is laid at the bottom of these under the frost line, which connect with a larger tile-drain leading to the municipal outlet. On the farm, these tile-drains run parallel from three to eight rods apart according to the nature of the soil, the porous soils requiring less and the non-porous and heavy soils more drainage, and cover the whole superficial area of the farm. If the farm is not contiguous to the municipal outlet, then the tile-outlet of the farm is permitted to pass through the neighboring farms to reach it, free of charge, according to a provincial enactment governing the case.

In order to encourage the farmer to undertake this tile-draining of his farm, and also to put it within the reach of those who could not otherwise afford it, a system of loans by the provincial government to the farmer through the municipal councils, was introduced in 1894. The municipality receives the amount it requires from the provincial government, which in turn makes a loan to the individual farmer of a sum equal to seventy five per cent. of the cost of the work. The money, with interest at five per cent. is

returned to the municipality in payments made in annual instalments covering a period of ten or twenty years, collected with their yearly taxes. Large sums have already been borrowed for this purpose, the township of Raleigh alone having received up to date, the sum of \$135,000, which is estimated to be about one-third of the total expenditure made by the farmers of the township in constructing these tile-drains on their farms.

This part of the system alone is an enormous undertaking. The average requirement for each farm would be a tile drain from six to twenty miles in length. As the superficial area of Kent county is 574,210 acres, and subtracting such areas as may not require draining, twenty five thousand to seventy five thousand miles of drainage would be required, or a tile drain so long that it would lap from one to three times around the earth. If the farmers of Kent county were instructed to build a tile drain which would lap around the earth three times, there would be some demurring, but when each takes his own mileage to construct, a little each year, the work is done before he realises the enormity of the system with which his own farm system is connected. The cost of tile draining is about 70 cents a rod, so that the total cost of this system cannot be less than \$5,000,000, when it is completed, and may be as high or higher than \$15,000,000. When there is added to this, the outlets that must be provided for this tile system, the expense will be seen to stagger the imagination. Notwithstanding this great outlay, it is still a profitable expenditure which is shown in the increased production of all tile-drained lands and the transformation of waste lands into fertile farms, the need and profitableness of which has made the drainage system of the county, the greatest of its agricultural achievements.

tile-drains  
to farm lots  
connected to  
municipal outlet  
to complete the  
system.

It is extent  
and expenditure  
quite outside  
of a complete  
drainage system

loans to farmers  
to drain their  
lands authorized  
in 1894.

The drainage of Pioneer tile-draining on 74 McPherson homestead.



#### NOTE ON ARTICLE ON DRAINAGE.

"In or about the year 1883, my father, John B. Pike, procured a patent for a dash wheel which would pump or propel the water off these low-lying lands, on the principle of the Archimedes screw, gradually propelling the water ahead and at the same time lifting it up, and where the water did not have to be raised more than 3 or 4 feet, this proved to be very successful. The wheel was 28 feet in diameter. Power was applied by a row of cogs on the circumference of the wheel into which were attached further cogs revolving on a pinion driven by a steam engine of about the ordinary horse-power of a threshing-machine engine. In the result after large ditches had been constructed by means of large dredges anywhere from 25 to 30 feet or as much as 80 feet wide, the water being brought down to the lowest point on the low-lying lands, these waters were, by means of this dash wheel, pumped or propelled over the embankment which was thrown up by means of a dredge and into out-lying canals which conveyed the water to Lake St. Clair. In the result, many thousands of acres of land in the Counties of Kent and Essex were re-claimed and where formerly, the waters stood 2 and 3 feet deep over those lands, today the same lands will be found productive of all the ordinary farm products, including wheat, oats, barley, corn, buckwheat and other products of the farm.

My father in 1891 went to British Columbia and in that year inaugurated a system of drainage in the Pitt Meadows on the Fraser River, built a dredge and reclaimed large areas of land in the same manner. Also, he reclaimed Hog Island in Virginia on the James River for a man named Barney, of the Barney Car Works in Dayton, Ohio, building a dredge and reclaiming the land, in the manner described.

The Island of Pelee has also been reclaimed in so far as the greater part of it is marsh, in the same manner."—J. Milton Pike, Barrister, Chatham.



*Tell the people  
from the beginning*

## THE TIMBER ERA.

### A MAGNIFICENT FOREST DEPARTED AND BECAME NOW A REALITY OF THE STORIED PAST ONLY.



TRAVELLER passing through this county at the present time could hardly realize that only a short century ago a magnificent forest clothed the soil of this country with its glory and verdure, a forest which for the variety, quality and quantity of its timber could be surpassed in no other place in Ontario, perhaps not in the world.

"How savagely, how solemnly wild it was!" wrote Mrs. Jameson of this forest as she saw it when travelling through it in 1836. "So thick was the overhanging foliage, that it not only shut out the sunshine, but almost the daylight; and we travelled on through a perpetual gloom of vaulted boughs and intermingled shade. There were no flowers here.—no herbage. The earth beneath us was a black, rich vegetable mould, into which the cart-wheels sank a foot deep; a rank, reedy grass grew round the roots of the trees, and sheltered rattlesnakes and reptiles. The timber was all hard timber, walnut, beech, and bass-wood, and oak and maple of most luxuriant growth; here and here the lightning had struck and shivered one of the loftiest of these trees, riving the great trunk in two, and flinging it horizontally upon its companions. There it lay, in a strangely picturesque fashion, clasping with its huge boughs their out stretched arms as if for support.

No one who has a single atom of imagination, can travel through these forest roads of Canada without being strongly impressed and excited. The seemingly interminable line of trees before you; the boundless wilderness

around; the mysterious depths amid the multitudinous foliage, where foot of man hath never penetrated,—and which partial gleams of the noontide sun, now seen, now lost, lit up with a changeful, magical beauty—the wondrous splendor and novelty of the flowers—the silence, unbroken but by the low cry of a bird, or hum of insect, or the splash and croak of some huge bull-frog,—the solitude in which we proceeded mile after mile, no human being, no human dwelling within sight—, are all either exciting to the fancy, or oppressive to the spirits, according to the mood one may be in."

But the early settlers did not look upon these trees to admire them. Their removal constituted their first and most important problem. It was a source of satisfaction to them when the timber on their lands could be converted into money. Fifty years after this description of the county's forests was penned, another traveller, passing over the same ground, found very little of valuable timber left. When once the settlers were able to convert their woods into money, it did not take long to strip the forests of all their valuable trees. Saw-mills, like the taverns, sprung up numerous in the immediate neighborhood of every belt of good timber land. Every settler became a lumberman selling his timber to a neighboring saw-mill and spending his winter months in hauling the saw-logs to its yards. The ring of the woodman's axe and the crash of falling trees were then heard in every good piece of timber area as long as the daylight lasted,

→ *Hdg!*



July 3

and if the day was not long enough to do the amount of work to which they aspired, a slice taken from both ends of the night and added to it, increased the amount of work done in each calendar day. There were no idle moments for men, horses or oxen, as long as the season lasted, and the fact that, in addition to making money, they were also assisting the clearing of their lands by the hauling away of its magnificent trees, gave increased inspiration and cheerfulness to their toil. It took only a few short years of this co-operative effort to rid the county of its forest. With the coming in of the first railway in the early fifties the timber era began, and fifty years afterwards, an occasional tree, or clump of trees, or a small tract saved by accident, was all that was left of that magnificent gift of nature, which inspired the admiration of Charlevoix to designate it the finest forest in the world.

July 2  
The first variety of timber to be sold in any quantity was the oak, an export trade in the white-oak variety being established for ship-building purposes. Magnificent trees of this variety were largely distributed throughout the forests of this district, and it was not uncommon to see a stick of timber fifty feet in length and forty inches square, and some even seventy five feet in length procured from these trees. The timber for export was squared before taken out of the woods, and shipped thus to the Old Country. This was a very wasteful method as millions of feet of lumber, and that of the best timber in the tree, were hewn off to square the stick and left in the woods to rot. Later, the round trunk of the tree was only faced, and in this way some of the waste avoided. The immense size and weight of some of these export sticks of timber may be judged by the effort required to haul them to their shipping point. A white-oak stick, seventy-five feet long, and squaring forty-two by forty-four inches, took two teams of horses and seventeen yoke of oxen to handle, and to haul from the woods to the banks of the Sydenham river.

The first man to introduce a much more improved and economic method of handling the oak for export and ship-building purposes was Daniel R. Van Allen, a prominent and enterprising citizen of Chatham, who was identified for forty years with a lumber business at that place. Mr. Van Allen's family was of Holland ancestry, one of the very first of Ontario's pioneers. They settled at Burford where Daniel was born in 1823. In 1833, he came to Chatham with his uncle, by whom he was educated and trained for a business career. He established a saw-mill at Chatham in 1858, about the beginning of the period when timber came to be of commercial value in the county, and operated it until 1897. He was therefore identified with the lumber business during all the years in which it continued to be an industrial activity of importance in the district. During those years he exported large quantities of oak for ship-building purposes. Instead of handling square timber, he had the tree trunks hauled to his mill, in such lengths as could be obtained from the trees free from knots. These he sawed into planks, with a whip-saw, and shipped them in their full lengths to the Old Country, in this way saving a large wealth of timber from wastage. The whip-saw in this case was run by steam power instead of by hand, a method of manufacturing lumber frequently used by the first settlers.

4  
The waste of timber in squaring these sticks was less excusable from the fact that it was unnecessary. Another trade in oak timber was established about the same time, that of stave making, and these outer parts of the trees hewn off and thrown away, could have been utilised for making staves, but, timber was in that era estimated of so little value, that this was unthought of. Oak staves were used in making barrels for the West Indies trade in molasses, and for the domestic trade in the products of the distilleries and breweries. They were made by hand. When the tree was felled, it was cut up into the required lengths, split into bolts.



and these re-split with a frow into undressed staves about an inch in thickness. As the oak was free and straight in the grain, it split easily and a settler could prepare many thousands in a winter season, which he sold readily to resident coopers—or for export. The price varied from fifteen to twenty-five dollars a thousand according to length. When finished, they were hauled by the settler to a near-by creek or stream, and in the Spring of the year floated to their destined post.

5 — Basswood was also used to make barrel staves, but the timber most used for the purpose was the elm. The conversion of the elm timber into staves was done altogether by machinery. There were several stages in the process of doing this and expert men were required for each stage in the process. Logs of varying length were hauled to a lumber-mill where they were sawn into planks six inches in thickness. These were then cut into sections, the length of the staves required, placed in boxes where they went through a process of steaming until the wood became quite soft. In this condition, with the stove-cutter, a knife apparatus specially adapted for the work, the elm blocks were sliced rapidly up into staves of half an inch in thickness, after which they were piled up in sheds until they became thoroughly dried. Then came the last stage in the process. With a foot-treading machine they were trimmed on their edges to the required shape, after which they were packed in bundles and shipped to their destination.

6 — A supplementary occupation was the manufacturing of barrel hoops, which also were hand-made. "Wracking hoops," a process of splitting up the black ash trees into ribbons, an important hand industry of a century ago is one of the 'lost arts'. They were men, who were marvels of expertness in this occupation, both as to quantity and quality of work done, but they have passed out into an extinction as complete as that of the woodpigeon's. The wood of the ash grew in layers about one-quarter inch thick, a

feature which made it especially adapted for this work, and the task of the hoop maker was to separate these layers one from the other and divide them into ribbons about an inch in width, which was quickly and easily done by those accustomed to it. Later, a blight fell upon the ash trees, and they all died after which elm was used to make barrel hoops, but with machinery. → 7

The last of these stave mills operating in the county, was situated at Mull on the Canada Southern, now the Michigan Central railway. This industry was first operated as a saw-mill, under several owners, until 1887, when it was taken over by the Sutherland Innes Company interests, who erected two large stave mills and operated them with sixty men employed, all the year round. The immediate neighborhood at that time was mainly an elm forest and the firm had no difficulty in getting all the elm timber they needed to keep their two mills going from the settlers at three dollars a thousand feet, delivered at their yards, a price which kept steadily advancing until it reached fifteen dollars a thousand on the stump before the industry ceased its operations. 37

The land of the district was low-lying, a part of the Canada Company estate, who as late as 1866 had 27,000 acres of Kent county land in their possession—twenty-two hundred acres in Camden, sixteen hundred in Chatham, forty-seven hundred in Dover, twenty-three hundred in Harwich, forty-five hundred in Raleigh, twenty-seven hundred in Romney, sixty-four hundred in Tilbury, and twenty-six hundred in Zone, and this was only one of the many speculators holding large tracts of land in their possession. The holding of so much land from settlement, had one beneficial effect; it preserved many of the forest lands intact until the coming of the railways, and so kept up the industry of lumbering longer than it would otherwise have continued.

In 1896 the Sutherland Innes Company deeming that the scarcity of elm in the neighborhood made it no longer profitable to

Photo  
was here  
J. N. Watson



continue their stave business at Mull, sold out their interests consisting of two large stave mills, sheds for drying the staves, stables, ten dwelling houses and numerous outbuildings, to Neil Watson, a son of James Watson one of the pioneer settlers of the neighborhood. Mr. Watson, reducing the mill staff from sixty to twenty men, was enabled to procure from surrounding farmers and land owners sufficient material to keep his mills in operation for fifteen years longer. A disastrous fire, which destroyed all of his mill property, in 1911, brought this industry to a close, the last of the stave mills, as we have observed, to be operated within the bounds of the county.

8 — Another prominent lumberman of this era whose activities were all of an ambitious and extensive order, was an American, named Stoddard, who established at Blenheim one of the largest of the lumbering industries in South Kent. All kinds of timber were handled by him and the American cities which could be reached by lumber barges or schooners supplied for him a ready market. Oak, walnut and elm, were the main timbers exported, but beech, maple, and hickory were chopped up into cordwood, and hauled to railway stations, or shipped by boat for the use of railways, as wood, and not coal, was the fuel in use for steam engines in this era. He owned three tugs, each with its accompanying barge, and one schooner, all four of which ran regular trips from Rondeau to Detroit and Chicago, and other lake ports. He operated his saw-mill to manufacture his own timber into lumber, and also to do custom work, the sawing of logs brought in by the farmers into lumber. The men whom he employed were mainly American 'birds of passage,' known in the neighborhood as "skeedaddlers." The American War for the abolition of slavery was going on at this time, and these men fled to Canada to escape military service.

9 — They were met at Windsor by this enterprising industrialist, who employed them at a very low wage, which they, in turn, accepted

readily, glad to receive any employment which provided them a living until the war was over. Mr. Stoddard increased his activities as the supply of these Americans became more numerous. Hundreds he employed in the woods, cutting down trees for saw-logs, or chopping them up into cordwood. Scores more were required to drive his many oxen and horse teams, for he used both of these—the oxen for skidding the logs and the horses for hauling them to the mill. He also employed a large number of both men and women on his farm. Having purchased a thousand acres of land for the sake of its timber, when this was removed he proceeded immediately to clear and crop it. Six hundred acres of wheat were sowed by him in one year—the price of wheat being high because of the American War,—and this entailed much labor to harvest it. The cutting of the grain had to be done by the cradle and the binding by hand, and in this latter work women were as useful and expert as men. There were, beside all these, the men in charge of his lake vessels, and those required for loading and unloading them at the Rondeau dock. In addition, there were the artisans, attached to all of these various enterprises. Blacksmiths were required for mending broken chains, shoeing horses, and helping carpenters to make new sleighs and repair old ones. Carpenters were required for building houses, making yokes, ox-bows, sleighs, waggon, and the many other wooden equipments required for so extensive an industry.

These were boom days for the budding village of Blenheim. But apart from employment given in the winter months to some settlers and the purchase of the timber on their farms, this industry conferred no lasting benefit on the community. It was in the main an American concern. An American owned it; Americans cut the timber into logs; Americans manufactured these logs into lumber; and American citizens were the purchasers of their products. There was no export duties on these logs, neither was

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there any import duty on the goods purchased from the American cities. The resources of the country were at his disposal for a nominal price and he readily availed himself of the opportunity and built up an extensive business, which although it did not last many years, yet lasted as long as did the timber.

*Swartout's*  
This industry was duplicated at Troy or Fairfield under the firm name of—'Swartout and Stoddard,' who carried out a lumbering business along the same lines as at Blenheim.

Isaac Swartout, the senior member of the firm came from New York State. He was born there in 1822, and spent the early part of his life as an engineer there. In 1850, he came to Canada, and located at Troy, Harwich, where he engaged in lumbering and farming operations. He took an active part in the public affairs of the township, was for a number of years in the Municipal Council, a Justice of the Peace of long standing, and chairman of the Board of License Commissioners for East Kent.

10  
In Wallaceburg, the lumber era commenced in 1852 when a Mr. Bates established a mammoth saw-mill at the lower end of the village, adjudged to be the most complete of its kind in Western Ontario. This was followed by another, also of large size, built two or three years later, at the east end. Both of these handled large quantities of timber, and established an era of progressive activity which has not perhaps been since duplicated in the history of the town. "Booms of staves in the long reaches of the river, lay in millions, timber in stacks lay along the banks at every available point, and logs in thousands lined the highways and clearings." But this period of thrift and prosperity was of short duration. The winter of 1857-8 experienced a collapse in the industry, arising from the financial hard times of that year. After a few years the lumber industry again reared its head, but on a much more moderate scale, and continued a source of steady income and employment, until all the surrounding lands

were denuded of all their valuable timbers. The last of these timber industries was the stave and cooperage plant established by D. A. Gordon and James Steinhoff in 1883 under the firm name of the Wallaceburg Cooperage Company, which ran for a decade or more, and then ceased, as did all the others of the county, for lack of material.

Another firm, which requires special mention since it illustrates the ease with which a business in lumber could be established when the timber was plentiful and the market for it in good demand, was that of the Ferguson brothers, James, John and Robert, of Thamesville. They were natives of Paisley, Scotland, who came to this country in 1854. Although weavers in the Old Country, being handy men, they took up the occupation of carpenters in this country. At first they were employed in building houses for the settlers, but when Ridgetown began to be founded, they built houses there on their own account and sold them. Later they purchased a portable saw-mill, but the lumber manufactured was sold at very low prices, and little headway was made until a sudden change in the demand for walnut and curly maple took place, by the opening up of a market for it in the Old Country for the manufacture of household furniture. Learning that a lumber company of Montreal was anxious to secure large quantities of this species of lumber, John, the senior member of the firm took a train to Montreal and secured from them a large contract with an advance of sufficient capital to purchase a permanent mill and the timber required to commence operations. They then began to buy Canada Company and Clergy Reserve Land, especially those sections on which grew extensively the two kinds required by them. After stripping the land of its timber they sold it afterwards to farmers at enhanced prices. The firm continued in business until about 1890, the closing period of the timber era, having in the meantime amassed a large fortune from their venture.

Occasionally one hears at the present day

11  
- Photo  
of John  
Ferguson

12



39. a wail of sorrow that this timber was so quickly removed and sold by the settlers at comparatively nominal prices. If the timber was still on the land it would be worth more than is the cleared farm. This may be true, but in the meantime a living was provided for the settlers and their families and the sale of their timber was to many of them a boon without which the hardships of pioneer life would have been made more difficult, and advancement in the agricultural industry of the county retarded. As it was, in the short period of half a century the forest was removed, and it only remained now to drain these lands and make their fertile soil as highly productive as possible, an achievement which is now fast moving forward to its completion.



# THE HOME MADE PRODUCTS OF THE EARLY SETTLERS.

IONEER life is no respecter of persons. The jewelled hand that knew no toil in the Old Country had the same tasks, the same beds, the same kind of houses to dwell in, and the same conditions of life to face as had their hired help which they brought with them from across the ocean. "I had often made my bed of hemlock boughs and considered it no hard work," wrote Colonel Talbot in regard to his first years of experience as a settler in the woods of Canada. These pioneers came from every walk of life, but they found nothing ready for them but everything to be made by their own hands if they would build for themselves homes in Canada. Although Colonel Talbot considered it his duty to share his experience with others and to instruct all the new-comers to his settlement how to build houses, clear lands, plant corn and potatoes, and do other necessary work, the pioneers who first came to Kent county were not so well favored. Their only teacher was Experience and they learned to do by doing.

With only one tool, an axe, but with abundant material in the surrounding woods each pioneer undertook, with courage and patience, his initial task—the building of a house to dwell in. With eyes to see what others had done, he felled the trees that were adapted in size for the work, cut them in suitable lengths, and then commenced the laying of its foundations. This structure was usually a small one, a one-roomed building with a floor space of not more than ten by twelve feet in area. The timber selected for the walls was of a size such as could be handled by one man, working alone. On one of the sides, the front larger logs than the back wall were used, that by the time the last tier of logs were put in their place, there was a sufficient slope from the front backward, to make his roof. Poles were laid crosswise and on these was placed the bark, peeled off the trees in large sheets, opened out and laid two tier deep to make the roof. On the top of this bark were placed poles, tied down by basswood thongs, to those underneath, and thus a strong roof was obtained without the use of nail or bolt.

The lumber for the floor and door, was also self-made. Basswood logs were split as evenly as possible, and smoothed with an axe, on one side for the floor and on both sides for the door. The open spaces between the logs were filled, first with chinks, and then plastered over with mortar made of clay and

ashes, the ashes being used instead of lime. If any window at all was used, it had only one small pane of glass or at most two, but the most of the first cabins were devoid of even that size of light giving convenience. The completion of his shanty thus far, marked the pioneer's first achievement toward the establishment of himself and his family in their new home.

This primitive hut served the settler and his family for the first summer of their abode in the bush, or perhaps for several seasons, if he was more ambitious to clear his land, than to provide for himself a more comfortable home. The erection of a house large enough to fulfill the requirements of his Settlement Duties was a later undertaking and was usually the co-operative work of the whole settlement. The logs used to construct the walls were hewn with a broad-axe, they were hauled to the place where the house was being erected, by oxen, and in contrast to the rude 'notch and saddle' corners of the first shanty, expert axemen were employed to build up neat and perpendicular 'dove-tailed' corners.

Cornelius McBrayne, the first post master of Botany, and probably the first white child born in that section of Howard township, thus describes an old-time house-raising:

"The logs were cut and hauled on the ground, and about the middle of October they would have an old fashioned house raising. An invitation was given to about twenty men from the old settlement and with the help they had among themselves would have enough. The invitation was looked upon as general and some twenty five or thirty were ready and glad of a chance to assist. A good supply of handspikes, mulays and skids, with the bark peeled off were provided beforehand so that there would be no hitch when operations commenced in the raising.—It might be well here to explain what a "muly" is as a great many people had never seen them. The head is in the shape of a crescent, or exactly like a new moon put upon the end of a pole by which the men would push the logs up the skids. It answers the same purpose in raising a log building as the pike poles of today do in the frame. As soon as the log reached the top it was spotted—a chip taken off the heaviest end and turned over, this would keep it from rolling while the men on the corners prepared the ends to fit the logs below—. There would always be a race to see which party would get their end up first. The men on top would stand back a few feet and stick their axes



in the top of the log laid down and thus prevent the rolling log from crushing their toes. Sometimes the cutting at the corners would be rather deep and cause the log to 'ride' as it was called, then it would be turned up and some taken off so it would rest firmly on the corners, and at the same time have as small a crack as possible.

During the time the corners were being prepared those on the ground had a chance to discuss any matters of public or private interest, and such as the general news of the neighborhood was given and in a like manner received. After the walls were raised up to a height of about seven or eight feet the beam-plates were laid. The beam-plates are two side logs somewhat larger than the other logs of the building with grooves cut for placing the beams which support the floor above. Three or four rounds are placed above the beam-plate, the first rib, and then the roof is commenced. A straight grained oak is selected and cut in lengths for clap-boards which, when nailed together make a very good roof."

#### THE ERECTION OF THE BED.

As was the house, so also was mostly every article of its inside furnishings,—a home-made product of the settler's skill and workmanship, although both of these were not always of too high an order. The bed was a one-leg structure built into the corner of the house, the walls of the house doing duty for the other three legs. The "springs" were either poles or basswood planks; the "mattress," first, hemlock boughs, later, corn-husks, rye, or wheat straw; and still later, sewed up in a tick, the feathers of wild fowl, so easily obtained every autumn, especially those of duck and geese. Sometimes the skins of wild animals were used, both to lie upon and as an upper covering.

#### THE FIREPLACE.

The open fire-place was an indispensable part of the equipment of every pioneer dwelling. An opening was made in the far end of the wall of the cabin, and here was rudely erected the box-like structure of stone with open front which supplied a three-fold service—cooking, lighting and heating—for the first dwelling houses of the county. The fire-place was large enough to take a back-log four feet long and a foot through. A few stones would be used for aldirons and sometimes a round green stick was used. Every night in the cold weather a back-log would be 'walked in' and placed in the large

chimney, and this with a forelog and some split wood would make a rousing fire for all the night.

The chimney was built of clay and straw kneaded and rolled to such a consistency as to handle firmly and stay when placed between the poles that were put upright as the skeleton of the chimney. When building the chimney a rod of iron, if it could be procured, was put in on which to hang the pots. Quite an improvement was the 'crane' which set in the jam and could be turned out, the pots put on and then turned back over the fire.

The light from the fire-place was generally sufficient for the work being done after night. The men employed their evenings making axe handles, which were often broken in chopping and splitting wood and it was necessary to have a few extra on hand to replace them. Sometimes they devoted their evenings to mending their children's shoes or making hickory brooms for the house-wife, while she, in turn, spent her evenings in spinning, knitting, patching clothes, darning socks, or one of the many other duties which fell to her lot. As a heat distributor, when the weather was very cold, the fireplace was not very satisfactory as you would be burning on the one side while freezing on the other, but by turning around frequently this difficulty was remedied.

#### CLOTHES FOR THE FAMILY WARDROBE.

The clothes worn by the early pioneers were all home-made, usually woolen home-spun. Even if the settler could conveniently obtain from the trader the cloth required to stand the rough usage of the bush life, it was so dear that few could afford to buy. Many of the Old Country immigrants brought with them quantities of linen cloth, but the great majority were clothed with the product of their own toil. The manufacture of the wool into cloth was by the primitive means of the hand cards, spinning-wheel and the hand-loom. Spinning was a bye-occupation of the women of the household, but weaving was the occupation of weavers, either men or women, who had to take farm products in exchange for their work. As soon as the clearings were large enough to warrant the safety of keeping sheep, a few, at least, would be kept by each settler for the clothing of the family. After the wool was taken off the sheep, it was washed to free it from dirt and picked by hand, making it ready to be carded, which



was done with two hand cards working it into rolls, ready for the spinner. These rolls were spun into yarn by the old fashioned spinning-wheel. The elder women used a smaller wheel operated by foot, which enabled the work to be done sitting down. The younger women and girls used a large wheel which was spun around by the hand. The wool was stretched and twisted into yarn by walking backward away from the wheel the whole length of the room. Sometimes girls would be employed to do the spinning in homes which could afford it. Three skeins of yarn composed of fourteen knots of forty threads around the home made reel of a certain size, constituted what was termed a day's work. The wages paid a girl for spinning eighteen skeins, a week's work, was one dollar, board included. The distance travelled to spin three skeins would be something over six miles, half of the distance backward. Every thread was gone over with the fingers after being drawn out when the required even twist was given to it. A good spinner would complete four skeins a day, which materially added to the distance travelled, and then say she was not tired. For a fancy piece of dress goods, the wool was spun into a fine quality of yarn about three skeins to one pound of wool. The yarn was colored to suit the taste, and when woven in plaids, checks, or stripes, or any pattern selected, by the artistic selection of colors, a very fancy piece of cloth would be turned out for the wives and daughters of the most aristocratic families. The ladies vied with each other in making designs suitable to their fancy. For the use of the men the yarn was made coarser, in order to provide heavier cloth.

Sometimes the clothes would be made out of the cloth as it came from the weaver, but for the winter wear, the cloth was put through a process of fulling. This was done by placing it into a tub of luke-warm water, with plenty of soap, and tramped hour after hour by the boys and girls getting into the tub with their bare feet. By this means the cloth was shrunk up and made much thicker, a process which was called 'fulling'. Sometimes this work was done by 'fulling' bees. The web of cloth, previously soaked for some time in soapy, tepid water, was placed in a circle on a strong table provided for the occasion. The neighbors gathered to do the work took their places around this table picked up the web together with their hands and brought it down with a thud on the table. The pounding was continued for about two hours, the company stopping occasionally to take a rest while the web was treated with a fresh supply of soap and water. The cloth was passed round at intervals so that the strong might alternate with the weak, and in

the end the web receive an equal degree of pounding throughout its whole length. To produce an equal shrinkage in every square inch of its area, was an operation which required art and skill, and hence a better result followed from the 'bee' than from the 'tub and children' method. The web was then 'hung out to dry' after which it was made into clothes by the ever resourceful and capable mother of the home.

### STRAW HATS.

The making of straw hats for the family was the work too of the house-wife. She selected the straws by hand from either the wheat or rye fields of grain before they had quite ripened. These she cut with a scissors and spread out in the sun to bleach. When finished, they were tied up, and put carefully away until the leisure of the winter months would enable her to have the time to plait them into braids about one half inch in width. These, when the hat was to be made, she wetted and bent into the required shape as she sewed them together by hand. In this way, by the spring months she had a hat ready for each member of the family which often times meant a dozen or more hats made every winter.

### TALLOW CANDLES.

The first light used after the fire-place was simply a piece of rag set in a saucer of oil which had the advantage over the fire-place, in that it could be moved from place to place in the room. The oil used was principally coon oil, as the settlers kept a good supply on hand for the purpose. Tallow candles were the next in order. The method of making these was as simple as it was tedious. The wicks were dropped into melted tallow and withdrawn. The tallow adhering to the wicks soon cooled when withdrawn, and every time they were dipped added to the size of the candle. This was continued until the proper size was obtained. A block of wood with a hole to place the candle in, answered the place of candlesticks. Finally moulded candles came into general use. Moulds capable of making three, six, or eight candles at a time, came to be a part of every pioneer's house-hold furnishings, and the labor of making candles was thus greatly curtailed. These made a better appearance than the dipped candle though not giving any better light.



## PAPER, INK AND PENS.

Paper, ink, and pens were all manufactured by the early settlers for their own use. Bark was peeled from the birch tree, and the inner bark, divided and subdivided until it was as thin and pliable as paper, supplied a material which could be written on with ink very plain. Ink was sometimes made by dissolving gun powder in water, but the fluid mostly used by the settlers for many years was made by boiling soft-maple bark till it would be about the consistency of ink. Some copperas and a little sugar was then added making the cost of the fluid about one cent a gallon. This ink was used in the schools for many years and was considered a first class product. The pen was whittled out of a hickory stick, and about the size of a lead pencil sharpened four square, with grooves from the point running back and widening as the square increased in size. Quill pens also were used and could be made by anyone with a sharp knife.

## DYE STUFFS.

For the coloring of their cloth and yarn the early settlers had to provide their own dye stuffs. There were three of these most in common use. The one was the butternut brown which was made by boiling the bark of the butternut tree or the outer covering of the butternut in water which gave a very durable brown. Brown was also obtained by boiling sumac bobs in the same manner. Yellow was obtained from the blossoms of Golden Rod, and black by boiling the bark of the soft maple, which with the addition of copperas, gave a deep black.

## THE BLACK SALTS.

Black salts, or pearl ash, was manufactured from the ashes gathered from the fire-places or from the fallows where the log heaps had been burnt up. It was an ingredient contained in the ashes, principally of the hardwoods, but more especially of the elm. It was soluble in water and hence easily obtained by a simple method well known to all the early settlers. The ashes were gathered into leaches over which was poured water which after passing through the ashes and caught in vessels under the leach was known as lye. This lye was boiled in large kettles until it became a solid, or in other words until the water was evaporated, leaving the desired ingredient called by the well known name

among the early settlers as "Black Salts." The making of this black salts was the work usually of the house-wife and added one more to her many domestic duties. It was in great demand for the making of soap and was one of the first products for which the settlers could get money, all other articles being bartered for other commodities.

This product of the leached ashes of burnt logs and timber, rendered into pearl ash by this boiling process was humorously defined as "the father of potash, the grandfather of pearl ash, the great grandfather of saleratus, the great, great grandfather of soda and a distant relation of the baking powder of the present day."

Later this product was manufactured by asheries established throughout the county who purchased all the ashes not required by the settlers for the making of their own soap, an industry which continued as long as the timber lasted in the country and wood was the only fuel used for cooking and heating houses.



A pioneer's family of  
five children dressed in homespun.

The parents of these children came  
from Argyleshire, Scotland, and the clothes  
which they wear exhibit the resourcefulness  
of these early pioneers. The wool for the  
clothes was procured from their own sheep;  
carded and spun into yarn by their  
mother; woven into cloth by their father;  
fulled by the children themselves, tramping  
upon the web in a tub of soapy water;  
and then tailored by the mother. Everything  
entering into the making of the clothes was  
home-made, save the thread and buttons.  
Their shoes were provided by a neighboring  
cobbler.





*a pioneer family of  
five children, dressed  
in homespun.*



*Part 1  
with the chapters  
on Education*

THE BRITISH AND AMERICAN  
INSTITUTE OF DRESDEN.

An institution organized under the auspices of some philanthropic gentlemen—principally British—for the purpose of providing escaped slaves and colored people with an education.

— repeat of p. 107-108 [column]



HIS Institution owed its origin to the efforts of a Mr. Thomas Fuller, a Quaker gentleman who, having to traverse the country lying between London and Amherstburg, along the Tecumseh road, observed that the colored people whom he met with in the course of his journey—principally runaway slaves, who at that day were fleeing to a land of freedom in large numbers, were destitute not only of the ordinary necessities of life but of educational privileges of any kind. Mentioning this fact to some friends in England, which he visited shortly after, a small sum, \$1300, was subscribed by them—the list headed by a young girl—which he was to apply as he thought best. On his return to Canada, a meeting was called at Toronto to decide in what way the money should be applied, at which were present, amongst others, the Rev. Mr. Rolfe and Mr. Jas. C. Brown, of Chatham. It was agreed that the amount should be expended in the purchase of lands and the erection of a school house in which to provide education for colored people. The Rev. Josiah Henson was deputed to select the necessary lands, and after a tour through the western country he located at Dresden, purchased Lot No. 3, on the 4th Concession, Gore of Camden for the Institution and for himself secured the adjoining lot on the same concession, part of which he subsequently sold to the Institution. These lands now form the south-west portion of the town of Dresden.

Under a Board of Trustees, and with Mr.

Henson as agent or manager, operations commenced in due course of time, and a low long story-and-a-half building of hewn logs arose in a small confined clearing near the river bank, and which for some years, was used as a boarding school for refugee slaves. This school, partook largely of the character of an industrial institution, the slaves being set at work in the woods cutting logs, cordwood, or at the primitive farming operations on the Institution lands, a portion of their time being set aside and devoted to their education. The "Friends" in Boston and other places, on Mr. Henson's solicitations, furnished the needful funds; and clothing and provisions arrived in bulky consignments at Chatham from the different receiving depots—Cleveland, Sandusky, and Detroit. The agents at Detroit were the well known merchants, Messrs. Moore and Foot, and the goods were brought to Chatham by the steamboat "Brothers," and thence conveyed by friends of the Institution to Dresden. By Mr. Henson's efforts, during several successive winters, sufficient funds were raised in eastern cities in the States for the erection of a saw-mill, followed in 1846 by that of a grist-mill although for some reason the latter did not begin operations until 1849. The Institution was now flourishing; a large business was being done in lumber, walnut crotches and cordwood; the export of the latter commodity being so considerable as to require the use of a large scow. This traffic in lumber grew to large proportions. Mr. Henson took a Mr. Carey in partnership with



THE counties of Essex, Kent, Lambton and Elgin being the most southerly and forming a peninsula at one side of the province were for a long time more or less overlooked by those carrying on agricultural extension and educational work; the great development that had taken place was not fully recognized and the possibilities had been given no consideration compared to the great amount of thought and endeavor placed upon other sections and other industries. However, the great crops of corn, sugar beets, beans, tobacco, early vegetables and the large production of hogs called for attention and in 1921 the provincial government decided to purchase an Experimental Farm and have all its interests devoted to those phases of agriculture of prime importance in the southern portion of the province.

An experimental station for the solution of problems peculiar to this section of the country deemed a necessity.

Experimental farms were already in existence in many other places but the range of crops possible to grow upon them did not include several that are grown in Kent as staples; crops, such as corn and beans, were grown but not under ordinary commercial conditions. The agricultural possibilities of this south-west corner of the province had not been sufficiently explored, and it was therefore deemed a necessity to establish an



THE HOME OF THE SUPERINTENDENT,  
Experimental Farm, Ridgetown.

experimental station whose field of operation would include the solution of problems peculiar to this section of the country. The major undertakings in the first stages of its work were to include:—

- (1) A study of the production of bacon from corn.
- (2) The use of artificial fertilizers on the various crops.
- (3) The development of a strain of field beans immune to diseases but still retaining their power to yield satisfactory crops.
- (4) A study of plant diseases throughout the district and to carry on any experimental work necessary to ascertain methods of combatting them.
- (5) Experimental work with fruit and early and late vegetables.



5) A study of suitability of the various strains of tobacco and the best methods of growing and handling the crop.

(7) Testing field corn and selecting for high yielding strains maturing sufficiently early for the district.

(8) Distribution of seed grain.

(9) Distribution of foundation breeding hogs and poultry.

Experimental work with cattle and horses was not contemplated because investigations already carried on at the older stations would apply to any conditions throughout Ontario; unnecessary duplication was to be avoided.

**R**easons which led to the selection and purchase of farm.

The Government inspected many farms previous to purchase and gave very careful thought to soil and climatic conditions. The final decision of a farm, however, was left to the presidents of the various crop Associations throughout the peninsula. The farm owned by J. D. Brien, of Ridgetown, consisting of 187 acres was pur-



EXPERIMENTAL FARM, RIDGETOWN.

chased and possession obtained March 1st, 1922. The farm is situated partly within the town limits, and, fortunately, immediately adjacent to the High School. The soil ranges from heavy clay to sands and gravels with an area of black muck.

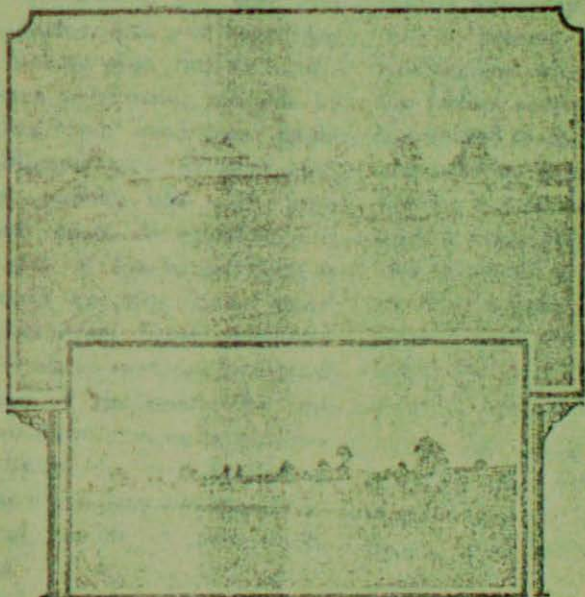
**R**easonable time required for preparation.

Before experimental work on a large scale can be carried on successfully, a farm must be worked until its capabilities and requirements are well understood; the soil must be uniform in fertility, in drainage and in its general character. Five years is considered a reasonable time to bring any place into condition. Up-to-date underdrainage, the completion of buildings and the preparation

of the soil for production has been undertaken and soon this preparatory stage will be passed, and labor and expenditure will be devoted wholly to the achievement of its aim.

**B**enefits which will accrue from successful experiments.

Kent and Essex are receiving less per hundred pounds for their hogs than are other counties principally because of the type



THE PIGGERIES, Experimental Farm, Ridgetown.

Where two hundred and fifty hogs were tested to ascertain if corn-fed swine could produce Wiltshire sides.



of hog raised; the producers maintained that no other type could be raised successfully when corn was the basic part of the food. The exporters were calling for bacon-hogs and were willing to pay the increased price. Someone had to experiment and see if bacon could not be produced from corn. One dollar per hundred pounds on the hogs throughout the southern counties would be a great gain in productive wealth. Large areas of grain, beans and corn are produced and annually the yields are effected

by the "Pull of Nature" towards the average of the strain and sufficient effort to counteract this natural influence had not been put forth. Five to ten bushels per acre over the wheat, oats, barley, corn and bean crop is worth while looking after and an institution was necessary to discover methods by which these improved conditions might be obtained. Diseases such as smut, rust, anthracnose and mosaic, and such pests as the corn-borer exact an appalling toll annually. The task of combatting them is one for experiment covering many years' work. The Experimental Farm constitutes a center of activity where work can be carried on for the benefit of the community and successful methods discovered by it, put into general practices by the farmers of the district cannot fail to do other than add greatly to the progress and wealth of this southwestern peninsula.

**A**n experiment made with progressive results.

Four definite aspects of the hog situation presented themselves;

Can the thick, fat hog be improved and fed and thereby produce Wiltshire sides which will meet the requirements of the British market?

Undoubtedly the thick, fat hog can be improved by selection and, perhaps, by the infusion of some outside blood, but it is questionable whether such pigs, regarded as a pure-bred breed, would be as satisfactory as other breeds for the production of bacon. They are, however, valuable for crossing purposes, and the improved types



**A CARLOAD OF WINTER-FED STEERS.**

Indicating a method adopted by many farmers, devoting their land for field-crops, by which they may be able to maintain or increase the fertility of their land.

now recognized by the breeders make excellent crosses with some of the larger more rangy breeds of hogs. They are also particularly well adapted for the system of farming at present followed in south-western Ontario, and, when crossed, no doubt some of the factors controlling this adaptability are transmitted to the offspring. It is questionable whether it would pay to endeavour to develop any of the so-called type of hogs to a point where they would be suitable for the British market in large numbers, when there are other breeds which are eminently suited for such trade, but it will be advantageous to faster; for some time to come, the improved types of lard breeds.

Can the so-called bacon breeds, and especially the Yorkshires, make gains as cheaply and as quickly as the thick, fat breeds, when fed under southwestern conditions?

The bacon breeds, if not of the very extreme type, when properly fed under southwestern conditions, will make gains as cheaply and as quickly as the thick, smooth



breeds and will use a large percentage of corn in the ration, and will produce a product carrying a higher actual value than will the thick, smooth carcass.

Will the bacon breeds, when fed upon at least seventy per cent. corn, produce Wiltshire sides?

The seventy per cent. corn can be used in the finishing rations of bacon hogs, and it does not have any detrimental effects, provided the ration is balanced. The quality of Wiltshires produced compares very favourably with that of those produced from hogs raised largely on dairy by-products.

Would it be advantageous to use crossbred hogs for general production?

The cross-bred hog which is the result of a cross of one pure-bred breed upon another pure-bred breed, has throughout the three years exhibited a thriftiness and a general tendency towards low cost of production, which

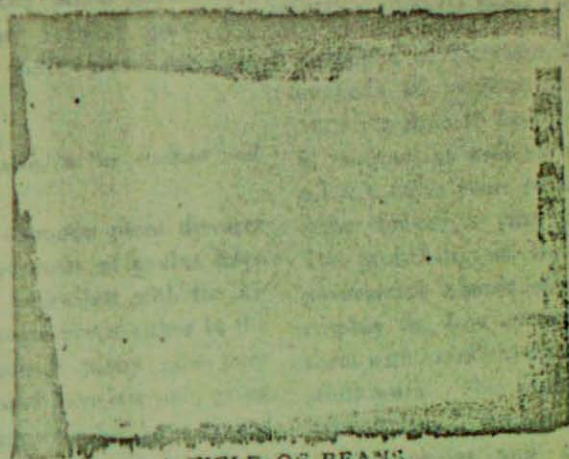
which would seem to indicate that such a practice would be valuable for raising ordinary commercial hogs, and such crosses as the York and Tam, York and Chester, Tam and Duroc, Berk and Team, Berk and York, and others, might well be considered. The principle of crossing two pure-bred breeds and the advantages to be gained thereby have long been well understood and recognized. By such crosses, the general quality of the finished product, where the thick smooth type prevails, can be improved and, in many cases, secure a percentage of selects, which would be impossible if thick smooth pigs were used exclusively.

Two hundred and fifty hogs were used in the experiment which led to these findings.

Artificial fertilizer are being tested with a view to increasing the fertility of the soil and their suitability to certain crops.

The growing increased acreage used for intensive crops and the natural shortage of phosphates in the soil have, during the past twenty years, very greatly stimulated the use of artificial fertilizers. All manner of mixtures are in use and no one up to the present has been able to safely advise, consequently a series of tests to cover a period of years were planned with the crops of

potatoes, sugar beets, beans, corn, onion, and tomatoes. Twenty-one mixtures were used at first and these have been reduced to fifteen and will be further selected until recommendations may be made for definite mixtures. The tests are made upon the growers' farms and duplicate tests are made at the Experi-



A FIELD OF BEANS.

An experiment which showed that the yield may be increased by following approved methods of culture.

mental Farm. When the general tests have been carried on, for a number of years throughout the country more intensive fertilizer work may be conducted at the Farm. These plots act not only as experiments but as demonstrations also.

The steady decline in the Yield of the Bean Crop to be studied and overcome.

The Experimental Farm is situated in the centre of the bean industry in Kent County. This has been, and is, one of the best cash crops, but of late years the yields have not been so satisfactory as thirty years ago. The crops are less resistant to disease attacks.



Undoubtedly the tendency of seed to revert to the average of the strain, or below in many cases, has had its effect upon the general bean crop and more especially when practically no definite work to counteract this influence had been done. So far several strains have been tested for yield and disease resistancy with satisfactory results; large yielding strains have been secured and while these have not been absolutely free from disease, they are practically so and form an excellent foundation from which to secure a strain absolutely immune to Anthracnose and Mosaic. Seed beans have been distributed to many farmers and in all cases reported have given excellent service.

Diseases and Pests, also, to be studied and combatted.

Many of the more common plant diseases such as the smuts and rusts of grains have been well known for years but with the introduction of the intensive crops either in the fields or the greenhouses many new ones presented themselves and have not only given much concern to the growers but have caused heavy monetary losses. Diseases of plants require scientific study by experts who are



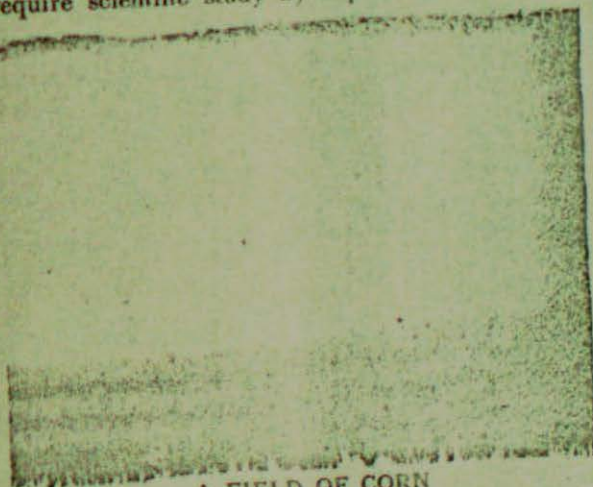
THE CORN CUT AND IN SHOCKS

Showing the remainder of the stalks left in the field, providing a winter home for the corn-borer.

equipped to ascertain the simplest and best methods of combatting them. This work requires time to be spent where the disease is rampant as well as in the laboratory and often it takes years to actually determine the cause before a cure can be recommended. The probability of loss is so great that the government cannot afford to do other than employ the best available men and provide them with excellent opportunities for research study work. This work covers cereals, beans, corn, tobacco, onions, early vegetables, all fruits, melons and all greenhouse crops. There is considerable work underway covering several of the diseases and where recommendations can be made growers are advised so that they may be able to avoid any unnecessary risk or loss.

Careful Selection and Distribution of Foundation Stock and Seed to be a part also, of the work of the farm.

Experience has taught that blood lines or strains with breeds or varieties through careful selection may be made of much greater value on the open market than the average. Many growers, however, may not appreciate such or may have been disappointed in some pure bred stock or may not be able to



A FIELD OF CORN

Whose promise of a generous yield was nipped early by the corn-borer.



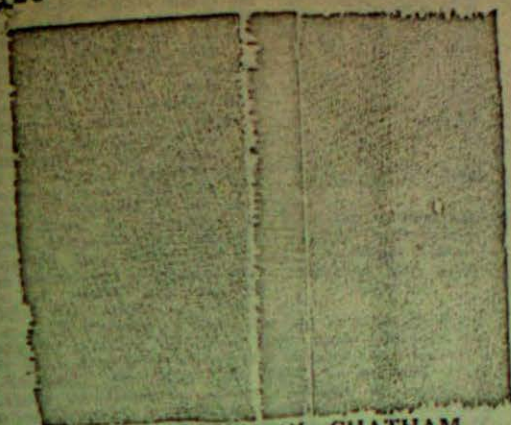
pay the higher prices to outstanding breeders and should be given a chance to start on an improved basis. The Farm sells all swine and poultry suitable for breeding purposes at reasonable prices, and as the foundation stock has been gradually improved all young stock suitable for breeding purposes finds a ready market. Seed beans, wheat, oats and barley are sold every year in large quantities and through this channel the average yields of general crops will be built up, which in the aggregate over a few years may represent large values.



A FIELD OF EARLY POTATOES, Experimental Farm, Ridgetown.

Showing the profitableness of this crop in certain soils in Kent County.





CENTRAL SCHOOL, CHATHAM

most of their children were compelled to face their future life handicapped by the lack of education.

**F**irst effort to start general school system for the province.

As early as 1795, there was a public movement made in the direction of establishing a system of general education for the province. In 1797 the Legislature memorialized the King, George III, with a view to establishing a grammar school in each district, and a University for the province. The King assented, and a grant of five hundred thousand acres of land was set apart for a grammar school in each district, "containing a school room capable of holding one hundred boys without danger to their health, for too many being crowded together,—and also a set of apartments for the Master large enough for his family and from ten to twenty boarders." York was selected as the place entitled to the University.

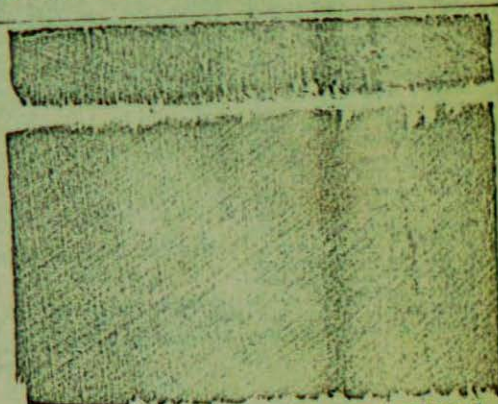
**W**eakness of this first attempt and its unpopularity.

No doubt the promoters of this first effort to establish an educational system for the province meant well enough, but they committed the unwise blunder of making provision for the higher education of the children of the country before doing anything whatever for their elementary education. The edifice to be constructed was to be built, not

from the foundation upwards, but from the roof downwards. The scheme in its initial effort failed for lack of funds, since even half a million acres of land, worth only a shilling an acre at the time, was hardly sufficient endowment for such an ambitious undertaking.

The folly of establishing a system of higher education before there was the first provision made for elementary training, produced a cleavage between two classes of citizens, both equally anxious to benefit their country which it took years to eliminate. The general public claimed that generous provision was being made for the children of the 'gentry' but no account was taken of the need of the children, of the common people, and, no doubt, class antagonisms were being worked out in a measure, in the systems of training which both sought to establish. Even yet some look upon higher education as somewhat antagonistic to the welfare of those who have to labor for a livelihood, and the Collegiate School and University the places of training for a favored few.

The unpopularity of the grammar schools was voiced by William Crooks, Esquire, of Grimsby, in letter written in 1818. "Although the liberality of the legislature had been great in support of the district schools," he said, "yet they have been productive of little or no good hitherto for this obvious cause, they are looked upon as seminaries exclusively instituted for the education of the children of the more wealthy classes of



QUEEN MARY SCHOOL, CHATHAM



Edmund Brailsford Harrison was born at sea off the coast of Sierra Leone, Africa, on board a British Man-of-War, called the "Brailsford," the son of an army surgeon on his way to India, on October 30th, 1820.

The first nine years of his life were spent in India where his father died. The mother then returned to London, England, with her son, and sent him to school until he was fifteen. At that age he tried employment in a counting house, but was dismissed on account of his poor handwriting. As a result, he devoted himself with diligence to correct this defect and became afterwards a splendid penman of which his existing writings bear ample testimony.

He came to Canada at about the age of eighteen years, settled on a farm at Crow May, near Cobourg, and while there became an officer in a cavalry corps stationed at Kingston. On May 15th, 1851, he married Mary Salisbury at Cobourg. From Cobourg, he moved to Howard Township on February 28th, 1846, and bought a farm at Buller's Corners, on the Thamesville Road, and on January 4th, 1855, he bought the south half of lot 13, concession 9, Howard, where his sole surviving son, Harry B. Harrison, now resides. He died on January 19th, 1907, in his 87th year.

He was a self-educated man. He taught school in London for four years, 1851 to 1855, and also at Morpeth and Ridgetown. He succeeded (the Honorable) David Mills as Inspector of Public Schools for Kent in 1865, and was also treasurer of Howard Township for twenty-eight years. He was a man of sane judgment and exerted a wide influence in the county during his lifetime. He was succeeded in the Inspectorship by Mr. Colles in 1885.



EDMUND BRAILSFORD HARRISON,  
Inspector Public  
Schools, East Kent,  
1865-1885.

society, and to which the poor man's child is considered as unfit to be admitted. From such causes, instead of their being a benefit to the province, they are sunk into obscurity, and the heads of most of them are at this moment enjoying their situations as comfortable sinecures. Another class of schools has, within a short time, been likewise founded by the liberality of the Legislative purse, denominated common or parish schools, but like the preceding, the anxiety of the teacher employed, seems more alive to his stipend than the advancement of the education of those placed under his care: for the pecuniary advantages thus held out, we have been inundated with the worthless scum, under the character of schoolmasters, not only of this, but of every other country where the knowledge has been promulgated of the easy means our laws afford of getting a living here by obtaining a parish school, which is done upon the recommendation of some few freeholders, getting his salary from the public, and making his employers contribute handsomely beside."

Provision for elementary education first made in 1816.

For years, after the first settlement of the county there was no provision made for a public support in behalf of the elementary education of the children of these first settlers. It was not until 1816 that the first attempt was made along these lines. That year legislation was passed, called "The Common School Act of 1816", whose principal provisions were that it authorized the inhabitants of any locality to convene a meeting at which provision might be made for building or providing a school house, securing the necessary number of scholars, (the requirement being twenty or more for one school), providing for the salaries of teachers, and electing three trustees for the management of the school.

This Common School Act of 1816 was only permissive, providing no scheme for free schools for all, simply allowing communities, upon their own initiative, to form something analogous to our present school section, levy a rate upon those only who desired to enter the scheme, and whose children alone had the right to attend the school. It was an effort to establish the parochial school of the Old Country in this new land. These schools were called district or parish schools, and



REV. W. H. G. COLLES,  
I. P. S.

The Rev. W. H. G. Colles, I. P. S., a native of Dublin, Ireland, and a pupil of the Blue Coat School, began teaching at Latona, County Grey, in 1869. Entered Toronto Normal School in 1877. Taught in Provincial Model School in 1878. Prin. Morrisburg Model School 1879. Prin. Chatham Model School 1880 to 1885. Appointed Inspector 1885. Represented the Public School Inspectors on the Ontario Educational Council, by election, for six successive years. Was instrumental during his term of office in having 42 modern brick school houses built, an average of one new school each year. After passing the Divinity Examinations at Huron College he was ordained and to the Priesthood in 1889, and served as Honorary Assistant Rector of Christ Church, Chatham, for nearly 40 years.



**McKEOUGH SCHOOL, CHATHAM**

had all the objections attached to them which were attached to the grammar schools in reference to those who should attend. The public or common school was yet a long way off. The Government was very generous in its grant to these schools. Twenty four thousand dollars was voted in 1816 but this was reduced to ten thousand in 1820. But the parish school was never popular since it did not provide a free education for all the children of the country.

**L**ack of qualified teachers and suitable text books, at first a service handicap.

When a community was found in which there was a requisite number of scholars, twenty or more, and the parents of these children interested enough to seek to provide them an education, and even after they had their school built, there were two handicaps met with, which if not overcome made it very difficult to obtain efficient teaching for the community. The first of these was the scarcity of properly qualified teachers and the second the lack of suitable text-books.

These difficulties faced all the rural communities in the county of Kent. Their schools were taught either by discharged soldiers or itinerant teachers from the United These. These latter used their own school books, and tintured the minds of their pupils with their own political views. The com-

plaint voiced by Mr. William Crooks was seconded by Dr. Thomas Rolph in 1833 who wrote, "It is really melancholy to traverse the province, and go into many of the common schools; you find a herd of children instructed by some anti-British adventurer, instilling into the young and tender mind, sentiments hostile to the parent state".

It was not until 1847 that any real effort was put forth to correct these abuses. Dr. Ryerson reported to the Legislature in 1847, "I think that less evil arises from the employment of American teachers than from the use of American text-books. Whatever may be thought of the wisdom or expediency of restricting legal certificates of qualification to natural born or naturalized British subjects, I believe public sentiment is against its repeal and in favor of having the youth of the country taught by our own fellow subjects, as well as out of our own books. In regard to the exclusion of American books from the schools, I have explained that it is not because they are foreign books simply that they are excluded, but because they are with few exceptions, anti-British, in every sense of the word. They are unlike the school books of any other enlightened nation, so far as I have the means of knowing. The school books of Germany, France and Great Britain contain nothing hostile to the institutions or derogatory to the character of any other nation. American school books, with very few excep-



**PUBLIC SCHOOL WITH CONTINUATION  
DEPARTMENT, BOTHWELL**





CHATHAM COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE

tions abound in statements and allusions prejudicial to the institutions of the British nation."

### **E**stablishment of free schools in 1850.

As a result of continuous agitation, but more especially through the efforts of Dr. Ryerson, in 1850 the whole system of popular education underwent a thorough revision and a law was passed that year which still forms the basis of the present common school system in Ontario. This gave free schools to all pupils between the ages of five and sixteen years. It provided an annual Government grant to properly conducted schools. The property of the school section was to be assessed to defray all the expenses of conducting the school above that supplied by the Legislative grant. The elected trustees were required to provide adequate accommodation. Parents could be fined if they did not send their children to school. None but legally qualified teachers could be employed and the schools were to be duly inspected before aid could be granted to them.

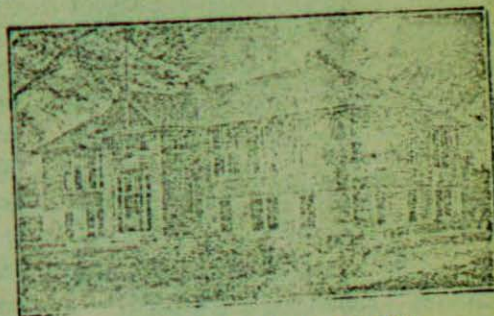
### **S**ources from which our education system came.

Much has been written concerning the unique place occupied by Rev. Dr. Ryerson in the establishment of our present-day public school system, and his work deservedly merits our warmest appreciation yet, it must not be forgotten that our school system is

the development of many years of struggling effort and not the fortunate discovery of any one man. It has been said also that it has been patterned, through United Empire Loyalist influence, after the New England system, that system, in short, transplanted to and becoming a part of our provincial system. This might be true of Nova Scotia where Loyalist influence was paramount, but not of Ontario. It would be nearer the truth, perhaps to say that it was a new birth in which elements from many old systems found a place, but itself a child of the times which the needs and the expanding desires of the people demanded. From very primitive beginnings it developed until it has become a system which supplies primary, intermediate and superior or higher education to all alike of the children of the province who are in a position to take advantage of it.

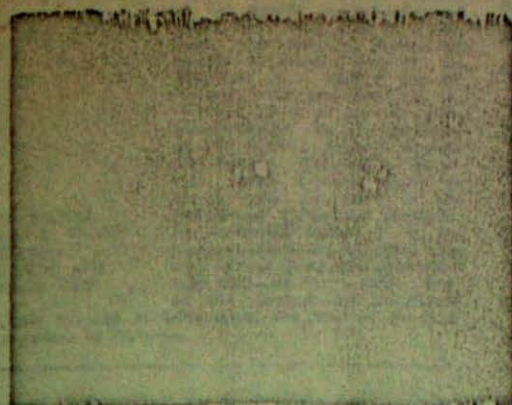
### **C**oncrete example of a pioneer school and its establishment.

We have in our possession the complete records of one of the pioneer schools established in the county, covering the period since the time when it was first established to the present day—the Creek Road school in the township of Harwich, section eight. Although this district was opened up for settlement, and the first pioneers located on their lands as early as 1833, it was not until seven years afterwards that any attempt was made for the establishment of a school in the community. Two men, deeply interested in education, came into this settlement, Cyrus



BLENHEIM HIGH SCHOOL





ST. JOSEPH'S SEPARATE SCHOOL,  
CHATHAM

McCully in 1840, and George Young in 1842. Both of these men, from their first arrival in the neighborhood took an active part in support of a general system of education and both of them were strong advocates of free schools. To the latter, at a public meeting held in Chatham, Dr. Ryerson acknowledged his indebtedness, affirming that he had received from him more assistance in initiating a general system of education for the province than from any other man in the Western District. As then, this school section profited by the services of these two master minds, and as a school was undertaken as expeditiously and the provisions made as ample as was in any other section in the county, the record of the pioneer effort of this district to provide an education for their children will be sufficient to illustrate the progress achieved and also provisions made for education throughout the whole county in the beginning days of its history.

#### **F**irst school house and its equipment.

There had been nothing done to establish a school in this district until the arrival of the afore mentioned, Cyrus McCully. He at once commenced to agitate for a school house giving the site at a yearly rental and donating most of the timber with which to build it. A small building of round logs, eighteen feet by twenty two feet in dimensions, was erected. It was partly floored be-

low, had no ceiling, and was heated by an open fire-place at one end. The writing desks for the scholars were made from split logs, smoothed on one side with a broad-axe, and fastened against the wall on either side of the school house, for its total length. Benches were made for seats from split basswood, smoothed on one side and with pegs for legs. These were without backs and were too high for the smaller children's feet to rest on the floor. The chimney was made of sticks plastered over with mud, but the mud must have been put on either too thin or had fallen off in places, for, after being in use only two seasons of three months each a fire, left burning by the teacher one late night after entertaining a friend, resulted in burning down this first venture of the settlement in the way of a school building.

#### **T**he history of its progress in respect to the building and its equipment.

This building was erected by the volunteer labor of the settlers, the only cost attached to it was for window glass and for nails, which were hand-made, provided by a blacksmith in the neighboring township of Howard, Philander Colby, the total cost for both being but seven dollars. After it was burned down the settlers commenced at once to replace it, which took them two years, however, to complete. This second building was improved both in size and appearance.



BLESSED SACRAMENT SCHOOL  
CHATHAM



J. H. SMITH,  
Inspector of Public  
Schools,  
West Kent and  
Chatham City.

school, now erected at Ridgetown, the first of its kind in the province of Ontario.

J. H. Smith, who has charge of the double inspectorship of West Kent and city of Chatham, was born in Wentworth county, of Scottish descent. He attended as a student the St. Thomas collegiate institute but received much of his education by self-study. He is a graduate of the Ottawa Normal School, and Queen's University, Kingston. After fourteen years as teacher on the staff of the Ridgetown Collegiate Institute, he succeeded Robert Park, the former inspector, in 1907. He was one of those who counselled and initiated the establishment of the agricultural vocational

school, now erected at Ridgetown, the first of its kind in the province of Ontario.

It was made twenty one feet wide and twenty six feet long, of hewn whitewood logs, floored and ceiled with lumber. The desks and seats were made after the same pattern as the first ones but more finished in style, being now made of planed lumber and the school heated with a stove instead of a fire-place. There was also added to the equipment of the building, a pail and cup for drinking water, and a shovel for removing the ashes from the stove.

As yet there does not seem to have been blackboards, maps or text-books supplied for the school, as none of these appear in the expense account of the treasurer's books until 1848, when a black-board was added to the other items of expense for that year. In 1852, four years afterwards, school maps were added to the equipment. The next year, 1853, text-books were amongst the items, a first and second book procured early in the year and a third, fourth, fifth and an arithmetic added later in that same year. There was also added a chair, for the convenience, we presume, of the teacher.

### Quality of the teachers provided in Kent county schools.

In reference to the teachers, there does not seem to be the same ground of complaint against these being Americans as there was in some other districts of the province. The men engaged were settlers, either in this or some other section of the county, and were either Irish or Scotch. They were men who

apparently could write, spell and figure a little better than the average and who were, on that account, considered as qualified to be school teachers. They were engaged for only three months each year, and that in the winter months, when the children apparently had leisure to attend. The first teacher was a Mr. Brown who was paid twelve dollars a month, (three pounds), with "bed, board and washing", these supplied by the scholars in proportion to the time each scholar attended school. In 1848, the school was kept open six months, and for this period the teacher received a salary of ninety six dollars but no provision was made for his boarding around amongst his pupils, this practise evidently ceasing from this time to be a part of our country's educational system. It was not until 1854, that a teacher was employed for the whole year. Hugh McSween, a married man, was engaged at a salary of seventy five pounds for this year and remained with them for two years at the same salary. He was their first certificated teacher, thus marking another stage of advance towards the time when the public school pupils should be taught by trained and qualified teachers only.

### School population, and the backwardness in making provision for their education.

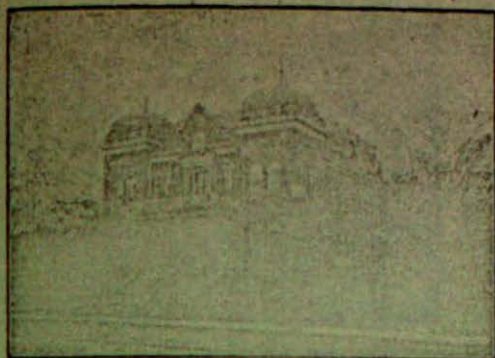
It will thus be seen that the children of the pioneer settlers of the county had much difficulty in obtaining the very beginnings of



ASAPH E. PUTNAM  
(1837-1905).

Teacher in the first school of Blenheim town, was born in Marlborough township, Carleton County, Ontario. He moved to Kent county about 1865, and became teacher of the public school at Blenheim. He taught also at different periods in Thamesville, Bothwell, Dresden, and for a short time in a High School in Michigan. Later he entered into business in Blenheim town as a lumber merchant. He married Charlotte Booth of Carleton and from this union had three daughters, Lena, (Mrs. William Saddington of Chaham), Maude and Cora, the latter the principal of the Blenheim Public School at the present time (1925).





CANADA BUSINESS COLLEGE,  
CHATHAM

elementary education and the majority of the very first ones must have grown up without any, whatsoever. There were more than fifty scholars in this school district before the first school house was erected, although the law gave them authority for erecting a school when there was a school population of twenty children. When the second school was built in 1844, there were sixty four scholars. In the next ten years the school population had increased to an attendance of ninety at the school of which one half of them were over fifteen years of age. In 1855, there were one hundred and twelve scholars on the roll and some days an attendance of over a hundred.

#### **T**eachers, their salaries and how obtained.

When the first school was erected, the teacher was paid wholly by the Legislative grant which was sufficient to pay for three months' service, and which accounts, doubtless, why his services were limited to three months each year. The only requirement from the scholars was "the bed, board, and washing", which was added to his salary of twelve dollars a month, cash. When the term of service was lengthened, a fee was required of each scholar according to the time he attended. Agitation for free schools had already taken some shape, but progress was slow, and their establishment was yet some

years distant in the future. A tax was levied on ratable property for the first time to meet the expense of the school in 1852, but even then an effort was made to continue the practise of charging the pupils for the services received above that paid by the Legislature. For this school, at least, this is the date of the establishment of a free school for the district.

#### **P**rogress in school building.

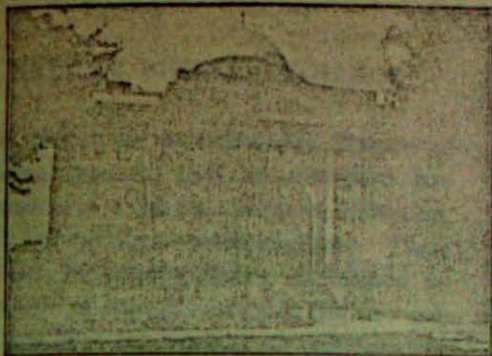
The progress of this school is illustrated also, by the cost of its successive buildings as well as by the number of scholars attending. The first school, as we have seen, cost seven dollars. The second cost one hundred dollars. The third, which was a frame erected in 1854, cost four hundred and fifty dollars. The present building, which is a brick structure of two rooms, an upper and lower, cost two thousand three hundred and fifty dollars.

For six years in its history, 1878—1883, two teachers were required for the school but to-day the number of scholars have decreased to an average attendance of 20 pupils, due to two causes—rural depopulation and the smallness of families.

#### **F**irst public school of Chatham.

In the urban centres the first public school to be erected was in the city of Chatham. In 1831, a frame school was erected on the site of the present Central School with Norman L. Freeman as the first teacher. The Rev. Thomas Morley, P. P. Lacroix and Claud Carter were the Trustees. This building continued to be used as a school until 1854, when it was removed and a brick structure erected in its place. There had been several private schools kept in Chatham previous to the establishment of this first Common School, one in Iredell's old house and another in Chrysler's as early as 1826, with James Chrysler as teacher. As the number





PUBLIC LIBRARY. CHATHAM

of settlers in Chatham at that time were very few, these served to educate the rural children of the surrounding district as well. These private schools were supported by contributions from the scholars, as was then the common custom. The charge against children making use of the Chatham Common School was two shillings and six pence, each, per quarter, which, if not paid, the teachers were not permitted to admit or enrol them as pupils of the school.

#### **E**ducational work under the direction of Commissioners.

The education bill of 1841, did not make provision for the compulsory education of children nor for the proper payment of teachers. The schools were put under the jurisdiction of Commissioners who were elected by the inhabitants of each township for their own district. Those appointed for the township of Howard were J. Jewitt, Christopher Wilson, Sr., Archibald McLarty, Hooper King, David Arnold, John Williams and Duncan McKinley. They were appointed to this commissionership on December the 5th, 1842. The Township of Harwich elected theirs the January preceding, the names of whom were J. F. Delmage, Dr. Robertson, William Nelson, Peter Walker, John Ridley, William Nicholls and Michael McGarvin. John Stewart, John Stone, George Henry, Archibald Walker and John Sinclair were elected for Orford February 5th, 1842. On

March 5th, 1842, the Harwich Commissioners met and defined the sections for the township, the number being ten. As there are only twenty sections in the township at the present time, this would seem to indicate that Harwich was fairly well supplied with schools at an early date.

#### **C**omparison of 1850 with present day.

After the passing of the Ryerson Act, of 1850, there were sixty teachers in the county of Kent, fifty six males, and four females, only two of which were trained at the Normal School. These represented all the different denominations, Roman Catholic, Church of England, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist and Congregational. Dr. Cross was the District Superintendent, succeeding Dr. Pegley, his immediate predecessor in that office.



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## CHATHAM BUSINESS COLLEGE

It is rather an extraordinary feature of educational system, that no provision has been made for a special business education, but this left wholly to private venture. There have been business colleges established in every centre of considerable size, but in every case it has been the work of an individual or corporation which received its maintenance income from the fees charged the students in attendance. They have been patronized steadily which goes to show the need of such schools in a community, though the efficiency of the school determined largely the size of the attendance. In many cases the students were made up of those who failed to measure up to the usual standard of attainment of the high schools. In other instances the students were made up of those who, leaving school before their education was finished took a course in a business college to make up for this lack. The great number however attended to get a special training to qualify them for positions in the business world. But, for whatever reasons, the business colleges have been able to attract enough of students to make possible the maintenance and continuance of their school, unaided except by the fees charged the students. One of the most efficient of these schools has been established in Chatham.

The Chatham Business College was founded by D. A. McLachlan in the autumn of 1876, who had four years previous experience as a teacher in a business college in Hamilton. It opened out in rented apartments on the third floor of the Scane block, but transferred shortly afterwards to larger quarters in the Urquhart block, which in turn had to be given up to take up still larger quarters in the Stephenson block. Here the school was conducted for twenty seven years, it advisable to erect the present commodious and commodious building situated on Queen street, a monument to his enterprising zeal and efficiency as a teacher.

This college is unique in that it is the first of its kind to be erected in Canada, and even yet, as a private institution, the only one. The High School of Commerce, erected by the city of Toronto, has the same object in view and devotes itself to the supply of a special training for business life, but this has been erected as a public, and not as the Chatham Business College, a private venture.

Mr. McLachlan's college has had now fifty years of continuous history in Chatham. It has made a specialty of training teachers for other colleges by giving a special course to former public school teachers. During the half century of service which it has given to education, it has excelled not only in the number of its students, but the high standard of results obtained through the efficiency of its teaching staff. Although Mr. McLachlan has made careful selection of his helpers, he has himself through all these years been the inspiring force by means of which his college has captured and kept up a standard of efficiency in comparison with other similar undertakings second to none in the province.



## THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

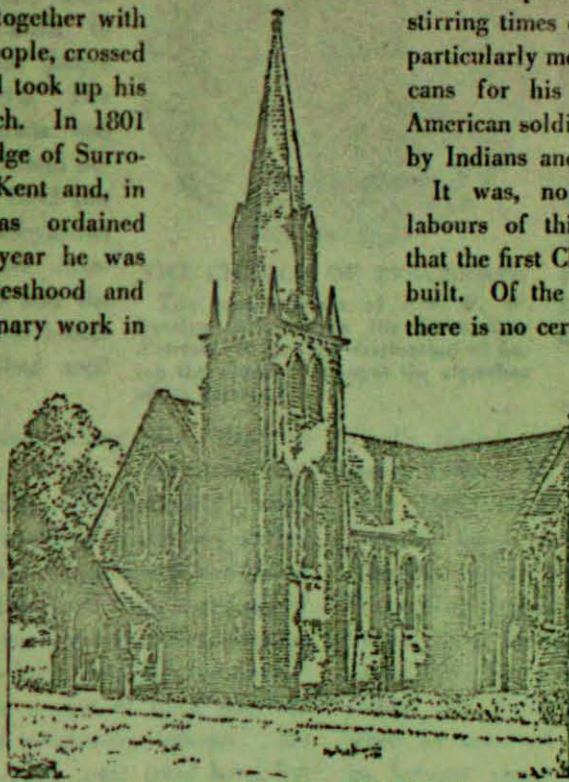
HE Reverend Richard Pollard was the first missionary of the Church of England in this district. Before his ordination he was sheriff of Essex and Kent with headquarters in Detroit, which was then part of Canada. In 1794 he was appointed Registrar of the Surrogate Court and two years later, when under Jay's treaty Detroit passed to the control of the United States, Mr. Pollard, together with many other British people, crossed the Detroit River and took up his residence in Sandwich. In 1801 he was appointed Judge of Surrogate for Essex and Kent and, in the same year, was ordained Deacon. The next year he was advanced to the Priesthood and carried on his missionary work in addition to his duties as Judge of Surrogate. His clerical and legal duties covered the same area, the Counties of Essex and Kent. We even read of him as officiating in the Protestant Episcopal Church in Detroit, his former home. His memory is still cherished there by a memorial window in St. Paul's Church. He continued as Rector of Sandwich until his death in 1824. There is a tablet to his memory in St.

John's Church, Sandwich, recording his faithful labors as a pioneer missionary of the Church of England in this Western district. He was a man of whom the Church and the Country may well be proud. In his active and varied career he did noble service for both Church and State. His patriotism and goodness are indicated by the fact that he was made a prisoner of war in the stirring times of 1812 and that he is particularly mentioned by the Americans for his kindly treatment of American soldiers who were captured by Indians and others in that war.

It was, no doubt, due to the labours of this devoted missionary that the first Church in Chatham was built. Of the date of that building there is no certain record, but, from

circumstantial evidence we conclude that it was in the spring of 1819.

The church is mentioned by a British traveller, Dr. John Howison, who came to Chatham in the winter of 1819—20. "About twelve miles above the mouth of the Thames, I passed a spot called the town of Chatham. It contains only one house and sort of church; but a portion of land there has been surveyed into building lots, and these being now offered for



CHRIST CHURCH, CHATHAM

The congregation housed by this edifice was the first Anglican Church established in Chatham. It was first known by the name of St. Paul's church, but received its present name, at the suggestion of Bishop Cronyn, when the present building was erected. Christ Church parish is therefore the forerunner of all the Church of England parishes in the county, and the parent also of many of them, as the minister of St. Paul's served in the early years the surrounding district as well as the town of Chatham. Christ Church was built during the rectorship of Archdeacon Sandys, and opened for divine service by Bishop Cronyn on the 26th of August, 1861.



sale; have given the place a claim to the appellation of a town." This statement bears out the supposition that the church for which subscriptions were made in January 1819 was actually in existence at the end of that same year. It was built on lots one, two, three and four on the river bank in what was known even at that early date as the town of Chatham. It continued to be the only Church in Chatham until the Methodists built in 1843. The Roman Catholics built in 1844. The United Presbyterians and the Church of Scotland began to build in 1842 but the United Presbyterian building was not completed until 1844 and the Church of Scotland building was not finished until 1846.

The first resident Clergyman was the Reverend Thomas Morley, who came here about the year 1827. He probably visited this place as a travelling missionary before that time. He was a missionary to the Grand River Indians in 1822 and from that field of labour, like other early missionaries, perhaps visited the settlers here from time to time.

Mr. Morley was a man of huge size, but very active, in his missionary labours. His wife and invalid child never lived here, but in a place called Hallowell in the State of Maine, where he was in the habit of spending a few weeks every summer. He died suddenly from heart failure in the house of a friend at Amherstburg in the year 1836.

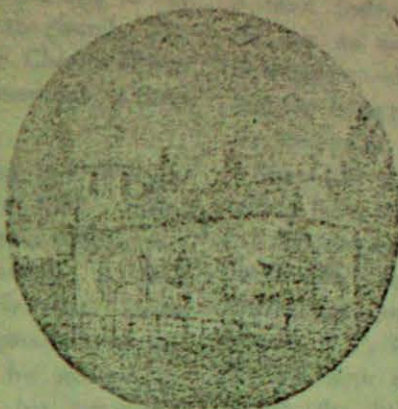
During Mr. Morley's ministry here, in 1823, the parish was visited by Dr. Strachan, probably in his capacity as Archdeacon, on a tour of inspection of the missions of the Church, for he had not yet become Bishop of Toronto. Of his visit Dr. Strachan says that he found the Church in a picturesque

situation in the midst of a thin grove of pines and "a decent country congregation." "The horses tied to the branches and the group of waggons and carts in different places pointed out the religious edifice." "Preaching in a wilderness," wrote the Archdeacon, "to a

congregation collected from a great extent of country, which on a cursory view, seems almost uninhabited, arriving one by one, two or three, from all sides, through paths almost undiscernable, thus assembled to worship God through the merits of a crucified Redeemer, we become sensible of the power of the Gospel. Several persons of colour composed part of the congregation."

Mr. Morley was succeeded as minister of St.

Paul's church, Chatham, by Rev. Thomas Brock Fuller, who took charge of the parish, June 19th, 1836. He was a native of Canada, being born in the Garrison at Kingston, where his father, a major in the Forty First Regiment was stationed. He belonged to a distinguished family and was called after General Brock who was his godfather. Mr. Fuller remained here until 1840, when he removed to Thorold. Afterwards he became rector of St. George's church, Toronto, and later, bishop of the diocese of Niagara. He was evidently a man of great ability with a genius for organization. During his incumbency, the church was consecrated by the bishop of Montreal, in whose diocese, Chatham then was; improvements were made in the church building and steps were begun looking to the erection of a new one; new lands were obtained for a church site and a patent issued for them. He was ably supported in the work by Duncan McGregor and Thomas McCrae as church-



THE CHURCH OF TYRCONNEL.

The headquarters of Rev. F. W. Sandys' Mission in the Lake Erie district. It has the distinction of being the pioneer amongst the churches of its district.



wardens, and I. T. Taylor, J. M. Taylor, John Waddell, E. Brereton, Joseph Woods, Daniel Forsythe, William Eberts, and H. Eberts as additional members of the vestry. Duncan McGregor was lay reader, a position which he filled for many years in the history of the church at this period. Many burials are recorded by him, who apparently did this work in the absence of the clergyman, or during a vacancy in the parish, and in any way in which he could serve the church. Mr. Fuller was succeeded by Rev. Charles Oliver Wiggins, in 1840, who remained only a little over a year.

The next incumbent was the Rev. William Henry Hobson, who came in 1842. Judge Woods says of him, "He was a refined and cultured gentleman, possessing a fine library"; and another chronicler says, "Those who remember him were impressed with his small but elegant physique, his scholarship and polished manners and his unvarying neatness of dress. This gentleman's mind became unhinged, and he was found dead on the 12th of October, 1846, on the plains near Windsor whither he had wandered and perished through an aberration of the mind."

The first clergyman to be appointed minister of Paul's with the title of rector was Rev. Francis William Sandys, who received the appointment in 1848. Before this he was a travelling missionary for four years in the townships of Dunwich and Mersea, with headquarters at Tyrconnel, his parish extending westward as far as Kingsville. Doctor Sandys was born at Ballyshannon, Ireland, in 1815, the son of a Captain Sandys, a military officer of the regular British Army. He received his education as a private pupil of Sydney Smith, and as a student in the universities of Dublin and Cambridge. He was ordained by

Bishop Sirrhenan in 1845, and received the degree of Doctor of Divinity from Cambridge University in 1860. In 1866, he was appointed Archdeacon of Huron by Bishop Cronyn. He was tall and military in appearance. Judge Woods says of him that he was of commanding presence, of popular manners, with a kind, genial fund of humour and anecdote, a sound evangelical preacher and a most instructive expositor of Scripture. He was an excellent reader and a smooth agreeable speaker in the pulpit, always leaving the hearer interested and instructed on the subject of his exposition.

About the year 1874, Archdeacon Sandys retired from the active work of the parish, but still retained his title as rector, until his death which took place March 5th, 1894. During this period Reverends G. C. MacKenzie, J. P. Lewis, N. H. Martin and R. McCosh were curates in succession of the parish, the latter succeeding him in the rectorship in 1894. The Rev. R. McCosh died suddenly on the day after Christmas 1907, after a ministry in which he was greatly beloved and in which he did splendid service for Christ and the Church.

The rectors since have been Rev. T. S. Boyle, Canon Howard and the present incumbent Canon Perkins.



## THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

LEAVING out of the account, the temporary visit of the French priests among the Neutral Indians of this western peninsula, in the middle of the Seventeenth century, the order of the coming of the religious denominations were, first, the United Brethren; second, the Roman Catholics; third, the Church of England; fourth, the Baptists; fifth, the Methodists; and sixth, the Presbyterians. In logical sequence, the Presbyterians should have been, at least, third, for among the disbanded British soldiers, the Baldoon settlers, and a goodly proportion of every other migration into the county, there was a large representation of persons of the Presbyterian faith.

There is a marked difference in the establishment of the churches in our land in contrast with the establishment of our

other institutions. Our governmental and educational institutions, whether provincial or municipal, are Canadian products. Differences of nationalities found no place in their establishment. Like the Marquis wheat, whatever substratum was received from other sources, in their final aspect, they could not be classified as anything other than native to our soil. They were made to take that form which the country and its circumstances

required. The religious institutions, on the other hand, were transplanted, came to our country ready-made, an inseparable part of the nationality of the migrant, who came to make Canada his future home. The strength of these varying denominations depended, therefore, on the proportion of the population

which the people of the country from which their membership came, bore to the whole population. Where the French predominated, the Roman Catholic church was strong. Where Highland and Lowland Scotch abounded, Presbyterianism flourished. So, too, the Church of England, which, in its army chaplains and disbanded soldiers had its constituency and workers awaiting it. The Methodist church came to us from the United States and from England, and there was no differ-



ZION PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,  
RIDGETOWN.

This church represents the first denomination to establish a congregation at Ridgetown. The above structure replaced the first building, erected in 1851.

ence in the method of its procedure or its constitution from that which was in vogue in England and the United States. As the population of Canada was made up of several distinct nationalities, the religious institutions became separate movements, dividing the people on national lines.

An illustrative example of the nationalistic character of these institutions is seen in the effect which the disruption that occurred in



the Presbyterian church in Scotland in 1843 had upon its membership in Canada. When it became disrupted ther, it became disrupted here, and that by reason of no conditions which existed in this country, but out of sympathy with conditions as they existed in Scotland. Since no Presbyterian organization was established in Kent prior to this disruption, when it came to be established, it was as one of three different organizations according to the three branches of it then existing in Scotland, the United Presbyterian, the Free and the Established church.

The reason that the Presbyterian church was sixth on the field was not from lack of a constituency. Their latness in coming was due to two causes. The church of that period lacked missionary initiative, and their system required the organizing of their membership into a congregation before a clergyman or missionary would be sent to them. When they would be able to supply a 'stipend' and issue a 'call', a minister would be sent, if available. In other denominations, the clergyman preceded the organization, and was the medium through which the organization was established, but in the Presbyterian church the order was inverted. There was in addition to this a scarcity of available men. In Scotland itself there were five hundred congregations without ministers. As long as these conditions prevailed in Scotland, the need of her people in Canada was not considered with any degree of urgency. It was

not until native-born ministers were available that the Presbyterian church awakened and commenced that missionary aggressiveness which brought about a flourishing condition that lifted it to a front rank among the protestant denominations of Canada.

The first of the three branches to erect a place of worship for itself in Kent county was the United Presbyterian. The initial step towards establishing a church of the Presbyterian demonination of any branch in Kent county appears to have been taken as late as



ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH,  
HARWICH TOWNSHIP.

This church, situated about four miles south of Chatham, on the Creek Road, was erected during the pastorate of Rev. Dr. Jamieson, the first incumbent. It was built under Presbyterian auspices for the convenience of those families who hitherto had been members and worshipped in one or other of the Chatham churches. Rev. R. M. Gale is the present pastor.

1837. At that time a site for a building was obtained in Chatham by the Church of Scotland, a grant of ten acres from the government, situated between William, wellington, Prince and Park Streets. Although a patent was granted to appointed trustees at this date, nothing was done in the way of building an edifice upon it before 1841. In that year Chatham was visited by a Reverend William Findlay, who came to organize a Presbyterian congregation and arrange for the erection of a building on the site, lying idle now four years. The meeting was held in the old Regimental Hospital on the first of September and a resolution was passed looking towards the organization of a congregation of the Church of Scotland in Chatham.

"That the presbyterian part of the community in this and the adjoining settlement, composing nearly half of the whole population, have long been and still are, subjected to many spiritual deprivations, being desti-



tute of a place for public worship and the regular administration of gospel ordinances. This meeting feels strongly desirous of remedying as far as in their power this destitution." As an outcome of this meeting, subscriptions were taken for the building of a church, and the erection of it was started shortly afterwards, but either from lack of funds, or the death of the contractor, John Northwood, it was not completed until 1844.

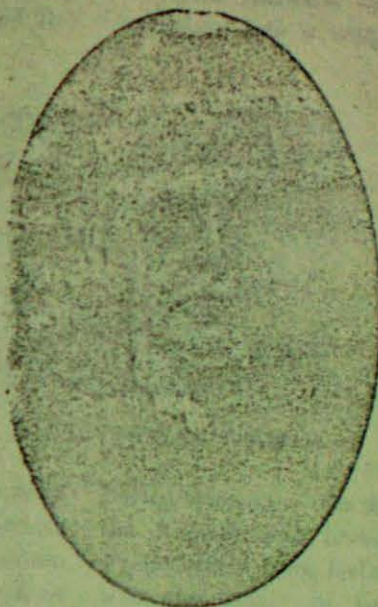
In the meantime, the United Presbyterian church, by occasional visits from their stationed ministers at London, began looking after the work in Kent county. A congregation was organized, and a site for a building on Wellington Street, Chatham, was purchased, and the erection of a building commenced in 1842. When completed in 1844, a minister, in the person of Reverend James McFayden was secured who was their first regularly ordained and settled minister in the county of Kent.

The Free church took the first steps towards organization in 1847. The privilege of using for their place of worship, the edifice of the Church of Scotland, now completed, was obtained and Rev. R. Peden, their stationed minister at Amherstburg, preached the first sermon to the congregation, made up of representatives of both the Free Church, and the Church of Scotland. But the real work of this branch of Presbyterianism did not commence until the following year upon the arrival of Reverend Angus McColl, their first stationed minister.

Mr. McColl was born in Argyleshire, Scotland, in 1818, and that year was brought to

Canada by his parents, John and Catharine McColl, who settled in Esquessing township. He was educated in the local school of his home district, the Grammar Schools, Toronto, and Dr. Rae's school at Hamilton, where for a short time he was assistant teacher. He became one of the first students of Queen's College, Kingston, but after the Disruption, moved to Toronto and became one of the first students of what afterwards became to be Knox College. He came to Chatham as a licensed preacher, and was there ordained the

first minister of the Free Church congregation of Chatham, and the first, therefore, of that branch of Presbyterianism in Kent county. He took an active part in educational matters, and was inspector of the public schools of Chatham for more than a quarter of a century. He was given the degree of Doctor of Divinity of Queen's College, Kingston, in 1877. He was married in 1849 to Alice, the second daughter of John Ross, Toronto, and they had five children, of whom one, Angus, was appointed to the distinguished position of Chief Justice in British Columbia, and a second, J. R. McColl, be-



REV. ANGUS MCCOLL, D.D.

First Free Church minister in Kent County and first Superintendent of Chatham Public Schools.

came a well-known barrister of Chatham. Mr. McColl though stationed at Chatham was in matter of fact a circuit minister. He established preaching in all of the surrounding townships. Harwich, Raleigh, Dover, Camden and Chatham, many of whom eventually became self-dependent and fully-equipped organized congregations.

For five years, Mr. McColl continued to minister to the both congregations in Chatham as the Church of Scotland by reason of the



Disruption, and the five hundred vacancies among its own congregations in Scotland, had no man available for Chatham, but in 1853 this disability was overcome and Rev.

J. Robb became that year the first minister of the Church of Scotland in Chatham.

This necessitated the building of a new church by the Free Church people, making now three Presbyterian church edifices in the town. These three kept on

in their own separate ways, growing with the growth of the town until in 1875 all branches of Presbyterians in Canada united to form one organization under the name *The Presbyterian Church in Canada*.

The following year a union between two of the local congregations, the United Presbyterian and the Free Church was mooted, which finally took place in 1879 under the name of *First Presbyterian Church*, Chatham, and Messrs. McColl and Walker became co-pastors of the newly-organized congregation. This continued for ten years, when both resigned, 1889, and that year Dr. McColl retired also from the active ministry. In the meantime, Rev. J. Rodd was succeeded by John Rannie as minister of the Church of Scotland, and he, in turn, in 1875, by Rev. J. R. Battisby, so that through the ministry of these five, the foundations of Presbyterianism were laid in Chatham and surrounding districts.

In the south end of the county, the pioneer work of Presbyterianism is associated with the names of Reverend Currie, Waddell and

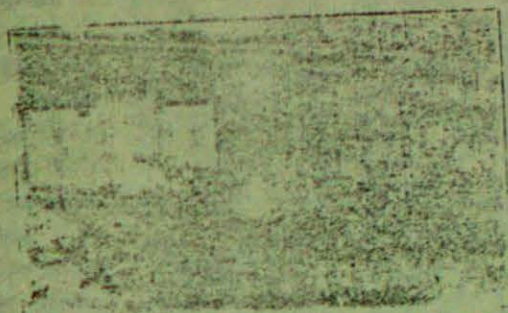
King. The work of Rev. William King has already been reviewed. As in Chatham, so in South Harwich, the first branch to be organized into a congregation was that of

the United Presbyterian. In the early thirties, the town-line-road between the townships of Harwich and Howard had been opened out and settlement began immediately on both sides of the road, and spread out also, eastward and westward into the neigh-

boring townships. On the Ridge, in Harwich, the English and Leslie families, staunch Presbyterians from Ireland, had settled, and with the family of George Young, sixth concession, had organized themselves into a congregation, and after some unsuccessful attempts, succeeded in obtaining a minister, in the person of Rev. Alexander Waddell, of Dunbarton, Ontario, in 1850. There were schoolhouses at Troy, then a busy lumber centre, Rushton's Corners, and English's, and these were used as places of worship. Later, Blenheim, Haggart's Settlement, and Bethel, Tenth Concession, Harwich, came

under Mr. Waddell's pastoral care. Rev. Mr. Currie made his headquarters at Duart, and from there he itinerated to different schoolhouses, looking after the work in that section of the county. As there were no pastoral changes in these days, the work was a life-service, so that the history of these congregations becomes in

essence the history of the activities of these men. By the time union was effected in 1875 practically all of the congregations



BOTHWELL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



KNOX Church, Wallaceburg.  
Established 1854.



since existent, were established and growth since has been mainly a matter of increase of population. The building of church edifices followed as soon after as the number of membership warranted it, and they could afford it.

The history of the Baptist, Disciple, and the churches of other denominations not reviewed, is the history of individual congregations, and follows the line of procedure taken by these others. The itinerant preacher met the congregation, first in a dwelling-house, then a school-house, and this, if continued long

enough to obtain a congregation, was followed by the erection of a church building and the settlement of a permanent minister. Sometimes the Sunday School preceded the itinerant minister, but more often it followed, and its organization was due to his labours. The Methodists had a point of advantage in their system of lay preachers, who maintained all the

any expense, and that at a time when there was no surplus of wealth in the country, and as all of these were zealous, and many of them sufficient, they forged ahead with greater rapidity than any other denomination. The United Church of Canada, called into existence on June 10th, 1925, by a union of all the Methodist and Congregational churches, and a goodly portion of the Presbyterians has opened out for that body a field of economic and evangelic opportunity, which cannot mean other than the writing out of a new chapter in Canadian Church History.



REV. ALEXANDER  
W. WADDELL,  
1814-1896.

Minister of English's  
United Presbyterian  
Schoolhouse.

Mr. Waddell was among the pioneers of the Presbyterian church in Kent county. He was settled as a United Presbyterian minister in 1854, in the newly-organized congregation of English's school-house and the associated charges of Rushton Corners and Troy, a congregation which was organized by Rev. Walter Scott of London in 1850. Later Haggart's Settlement, Blenheim and Bethel Congregations were attached

to this field, and under various re-arrangements. Mr. Waddell continued to minister to some of these preaching places until 1890, when he retired from the active ministry. He was ordained in Scotland, and settled first at Dunbarton, Ontario, where he was married to Janet Muir, both of them natives of Scotland. Their daughter, Ellen M., married T. R. Jackson, and after his death William H. H. Snow, both of Blenheim, Ontario.



## GAL ONE SIXTY EIGHT .....

### FOUNDING of religious institutions .....

### THE Methodist church 1804-1829 .....

## THE METHODIST CHURCH .....

Methodism began its career in Kent County in the year 1804. It was the expression of a religious revival which began in England in 1739 under the preaching of John Wesley, who, ordained a minister of the Anglican church in England in 1728, in the meantime came under the influences of the teaching of the Moravian Brethren, unto whom, under God, he owed that missionary zeal and religious fervor which characterised his subsequent labors and produced such great evangelistic results.

George Neal, a disbanded British soldier settled in the Niagara district, was the pioneer of Methodism in Upper Canada.

Philip Embury, an Irish local preacher, is the accredited pioneer of Methodism in the United States. In 1766, he preached his first sermon and formed a class in New York, twenty-seven years after John Wesley began his itinerant work in England. The work in Canada began as an overflow of that prosecuted in the United States. A local preacher named Tuffey, a soldier of the 41th Regiment stationed at Quebec, began preaching after his arrival in 1780, and although no organisation was established as the result of his efforts, he left several converts behind him, and is therefore considered the pioneer of Methodism in Canada. In Upper Canada, George Neal, an Irishman and a major of a British cavalry regiment in the United States, came to Canada as a disbanded soldier to take possession in 1786 of an officer's grant of land in the Niagara district. Here he exercised himself in the triple occupation of farmer, school-teacher and local preacher, and was successful in organising a society and class in his neighborhood. These local preachers were followed in 1789 by the appointment to Canada by the American Conference of the Methodist Episcopal church of the first regular

preacher to Canada, William Loser, a Royalist, who began the first regular circuit in the Bay of Quinte district. From these beginnings the Methodist church continued to grow, until it had become one of the largest Protestant churches in Canada at the time of its entrance into that larger organization, the United Church of Canada, on June 10th, 1925, closing a period of 145 years of history in Canada. Its membership had reached a total of 1750 in other sections of Canada by the time the work was first undertaken in Kent County.

Nathan Bangs, from the Methodist Episcopal church of the United States was the pioneer missionary of Kent County.

The missionary who began this work was Nathan Bangs. Of necessity, he began his

## GAL ONE SIXTY NINE .....

work in the Thames river settlement, as this was the only settlement in the county at that time. It will not be without interest to our readers if we quote verbatim his own description, of the manner in which Methodism was first introduced in Kent, written in his *History of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada*:

"This year also (1804), Nathan Bangs solicited and obtained the appointment of a missionary to a new settlement on the River Thames in Upper Canada. This place had long been on his mind as a promising field for missionary labour, and he had frequently offered to explore it in the name of the Lord, but his presiding elder objected, on account of the feeble state of his health and the unhealthiness of the climate.

is description of the annual epidemic of fever and ague.

Perhaps no part in our country is more subject to fever and ague, or "lake fever" as it was called, than along the banks of the River Thames, occasioned by the stagnant swamps which are formed a little distance from the river on each side, and the unwholesomeness of the water which the people were obliged to use. The missionary arrived there in the month of August and in the month of September the fever began to rage; and during its progress, in almost every family less or more were sick, and in some



instances every member of a family was prostrated at the same time, though it seldom proved fatal. When the missionary first visited their houses, he was generally presented with a bottle of whiskey, and urged to partake of it as a preventive against the fever; but he declined the beverage, and told them they might, if they chose, drink their whiskey, and he would drink water and tea, and see who would have the better health; and when the fever commenced its ravages, as above described, so that he could visit scarcely a house without seeing more or less sick, he constantly travelled the country in health until about the close of the sickly season, but by timely remedies he escaped with only three paroxysms.

The first service held—his own narrative of it.

While at the conference at New York that year Nathan Bangs made known his desires and impressions to Bishop Asbury, and he appointed him a missionary to that place. He accordingly left the city of New York in the latter part of the month of June, went into Upper Canada by way of Kingston, thence up the country along the north-western shore of Lake Ontario to the Long Point circuit, and then on through Oxford to the town of Delaware, on the River Thames. Here he lodged for the night in the last log hut of the settlement, and the next morning, as the day began to dawn, he arose and took his departure, and after travelling through a wilderness of forty-five miles, guided only by marked trees, he arrived at a solitary log-house about sunset, weary, hungry and thirsty, where he was entertained with the best the house could afford, which was some Indian pudding and milk for supper, and a bundle of straw for his bed. The next day, about twelve o'clock, he arrived at an Indian village on the north bank of the River Thames, the inhabitants of which were under the instruction of two Moravian missionaries. While there the

Indians were called to worship, which was performed in a very simple manner, by reading a short discourse, and singing a few verses of a hymn. The missionaries and the Indians treated him with great respect and affection, and seemed to rejoice in the prospect of having the gospel preached to the white settlements on the banks of the river below.

About three o'clock in the afternoon, he arrived at the first house in the settlement when the following conversation took place between the missionary and a man whom he saw in the yard before the house. After the introductory salutation, the missionary inquired, "Do you want the gospel preached here?"

After some deliberation, it was answered, "Yes, that we do. Do you preach the gospel?"

"That is my occupation."

"Alight from your horse, then, and come in, will you?"

"I have come a great distance to preach the gospel to the people here, and it is now Saturday afternoon, to-morrow is the Sabbath, and I must have a house to preach in before I get off from my horse."

After a few moments of consideration, he replied, "I have a house for you to preach in, provender for your horse, and food and lodging for yourself; and you shall be welcome to them all, if you will dismount and come in."

Thanking him for his kind offer, the missionary dismounted and entered the hospitable mansion in the name of the Lord, saying *Peace be to this house*. A young man mounted his horse and rode ten miles down the river, inviting the people to attend meeting at that house the next morning at ten o'clock.

At the time appointed the house was filled. When the missionary rose up, he told



the people that whenever a stranger makes his appearance in a place the people are generally anxious to know who he is, whence he came, where he is going, and what his errand is among them. "In these things" said he, "I will satisfy you in a few words."

He then gave them a short account of his birth, education, of his conversion and call to the ministry, and the motives which induced him to come amongst them, and concluded in the following manner:

"I am a Methodist preacher and my method of worship is to stand up and sing, and kneel in prayer; and then I stand up and take a text and preach, while the people sit on their seats. As many of you as see fit to join me in this method, you can do so; but if not, you can choose your own method."

When he gave out the hymn, they all rose, man, woman and child. When he knelt in prayer, they all, without exception, knelt down. They then took their seats, and he stood up and gave out the text,

"Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."

He preached as he thought, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Having concluded his discourse, he explained to the audience his manner of preaching, by itinerating through the country, his doctrine, and how supported, etc. He then said.—

"All you who wish to hear any more preaching, rise up."

Every man, woman and child stood up. He then told them they might expect preaching there again in two weeks.

he opposition met with by this first missionary.

Such a commencement in a strange place, he considered as a token for good. He then sent on appointments through the settlements along down the river, which he filled in a manner similar to the above, and was everywhere received with great cordiality. He continued among them about three months, when he left them for the Niagara circuit. He was succeeded the next

year by William Case, who was instrumental of great good to the souls of the people. Societies and a regular circuit was formed, which have continued to flourish and increase to the present time."

But it must not be supposed that Nathan Bangs, when laying the foundations of Methodism in south-western Ontario, met with but easy achievement and no reverses or failures. In his itineraries he visited not only the settlers along the Thames river, but those also on St. Clair and Erie lakes, and those also at Fort Malden, Sandwich and Detroit. In these places he found himself preceded by missionaries representing the Baptist and Congregational churches, from one of whom he seems to have received a glad welcome but from the other considerable opposition. The difficulties he faced have been described for us by one of their early church's historians:

Playter.

"The moral condition of the settlers was indeed lamentable. They had no means of grace, and little desire for any, loving drinking, dancing, horse-racing and other sports. A Baptist exhorter from the United States, used to have meetings occasionally, but was highly prejudiced against the Methodists, and brought the people to have similar feelings. On his first visits, a number of houses were opened for him to preach in; but, through the Baptist, they were soon closed again. A rich man had opened his house for preaching and afterwards turned the preacher out of doors, in the presence of the congregation,—when taking out his handkerchief, and lifting his feet, the preacher "wiped the dust off as a testimony against them." A few months after, the affairs of this man began to reverse. He learned to drink and became a drunkard. His wife went off with another man. His children ran to ruin. In years after, he wandered about as a vagrant, indebted to friends for daily food. In 1833, he was visited by the preacher on the Gosfield circuit, who found him on the verge of the grave with no preparation and no desire for



It. His mind was weak and his body enfeebled by disease. He lived in ignorance and disobedience to God, and so he died." \*

\* Playter.

he first circuit was established in 1809, and named the Detroit Circuit.

When an organization was first effected in this section of Ontario by the Methodist Episcopal church, it was established under the name of the *Detroit Circuit*, and included the settlements in that territory covered by the itinerancies of Nathan Bangs—Detroit, the settlements on the Thames river from Moraviantown to St. Clair lake and along Lake Erie especially in the townships of Gosfield and Colchester. This took place in 1809, Joseph Sawyer being the first presiding elder and under him William Case as the

#### CAL ONE SEVENTY ONE ....

missionary on the field. At the end of the first conference year of the circuit, the total enrolment recorded was seventy eight members, which had increased to one hundred and thirty-four at the time of the outbreak of the war in 1812. The effect of this war upon church progress may be gauged from the fact that for the next five years after this there was an increase of a total of only six members throughout the length and breadth of the whole field. From that time forward, however, progress was steadily made.

he Thames river separated from the Detroit an independent circuit, 1817, Henry Ryan, presiding elder.

In 1817, the settlements on the Thames river was established an independent circuit, and reported in that conference year, an enrolment of one hundred and sixty members, or twenty-four more than there were in the whole Western District, including Detroit, at the outbreak of the war. Henry Ryan was now the presiding elder with Elijah Warren as the missionary in charge of the field.

remarkable Religious Revival followed the first Canadian Conference in 1817.

The next step in advance which concerned the Thames river circuit in conjunction with all the rest in Canada, was the establishment of a Canadian Conference in 1824. Hitherto the different circuits in Canada were a part of the Genesee Conference which in 1817 was made up of eighty-two ministers of whom sixty were in the United States and twenty-two in Canada. Twice this conference had met in Canada, once at Elizabethtown in 1817, and again at Niagara in 1820. A remarkable event occurred at this first conference, a great revival of religion, awakened by the sermon—preached by the chairman of the conference, Bishop George, and which eventually spread throughout the whole of the Methodist circuits especially in western Canada. It is thus described by one of the members:

"Throughout the whole sitting of five days, the word was delivered with much freedom and power; and so great was the revival which followed, that it is believed more than one hundred persons were awakened at the conference. Conversions now became frequent. The power of God was displayed at most of the meetings. The deist and the drunkard, as well as the moralist and children of ten years, found one common place at the altar of penitence; and calling on the Lord for mercy, were made to rejoice with joy unspeakable. Whole families were made the subjects of saving grace; and not a few who had declined in their religion, were reclaimed and restored to their first love. The neighbouring townships now took flame. From attending the preaching at the conference, the people returned to their homes with great seriousness and earnest prayer for the divine blessing."

The total increase of membership resulting from the revival initiated at the conference meeting has been estimated as being not less than fourteen hundred. The Thames circuit was travelled that year by Elijah Warren and he reported a mighty impetus, resulting in a large increase of the membership of that circuit, created by this conference revival.



the general effect of this Revival described.

Writers have not been wanting who have given us a description of its general effect on the communities in which it made headway. "A great impression was made on the public mind," one \* has said, "by the strange, some-

\* Playter.

times wonderful, change of character and of life in so many persons, and in so short a time. The young had forsaken their frivolities, and were now serious, fond of the Bible, and seeking knowledge to make them useful. Those indifferent to religion, lovers of pleasure and not lovers of God, were now zealous for the truth, and lovers of the Sabbath. The quarrelsome had learned, in meekness and love, to bear with civil ones and to forgive. Many drunkards had substituted a resort to the house of God for the tavern, the psalm and the hymn for the song of Bacchus, and cleanliness and sobriety and strong drink. Rude companies and neighbourhoods loved the devout assembly of the saints, spent their Sabbaths in the house of God, and became orderly, civil, and hospitable."

"The awakening and converting power of God has appeared frequently at these sessions, but at none, of which there is any record, where the divine power was so greatly manifested, and with such great results. The Gospel received now a mighty impetus, and from the year 1817, for a number of years, there is scarcely ought to record in the Methodist annals but progress and increase." "The most favored last year (1819) were the back settlements of Augusta, Rideau and the settlement on the River Thames." \*

\* Report of the presiding elders, Henry Ryan and William Case, to the General Con-

ON. SEVEN TWO

1812-1815  
ence, May, 1820.

period of controversy followed resulting in the establishment of two independent branches of Methodism in Canada.

Unfortunately, this season of revival and progress was followed by the outbreak of controversies, rivalries and disunion arising from two sources—the one, from the movement to establish an independent Canadian church, and the other from the presence on the same field of two Methodist missionaries representing two different conferences—the one the English and the other, the American. The evils arising from this dual work was overcome by amicable settlement between the two conferences whereby the territory covered was divided, the American Conference having supervision over the work in Upper Canada and the English, Lower Canada. But the other movement was not so easily brought to an amicable solution. The American Conference in 1824 established all the circuits in Canada into a new Conference, giving the Methodists in Canada the direction of their own work, yet under the superintendency of the American Methodist Episcopal Church. This, it was thought, would be a satisfactory solution to those who were looking towards an independent Canadian Methodist church. But it was not to procure greater efficiency in the prosecution of the church's distinctive work wherein lay the motive behind this movement towards independency. The movement was political, rather than spiritual. There began to grow an increasing dislike among Canadian Methodists to the rule of an organization situated in and a part of the United States of America, a spirit which was increased by the war of 1812-1815. Murmurings of discontent began to be circulated that the preachers sent to them were not only Americans by birth but American in sentiment. It was in vain that the officials in the United States pleaded for unity, pointing out that the Methodists were not only one body as between Canada and the United States but one body throughout the whole world. The demand for separation increased. The leader



in the separatist movement in Canada was Henry Ryan, the presiding elder over the western district which included the Thames river circuit. Mr. Ryan was a man of amazing physical strength and of a courage and alertness equal to his strength. Although born in Connecticut, of Scotch and Irish parentage, he was an ardent Britisher, especially after the war and the invasion of Canada by the American army. With characteristic vehemence he threw himself into the movement, and after a considerable period of controversy, he withdrew himself from fellowship with the brethren in the United States in 1827, and proceeded with others to organise the *Canadian Wesleyan Church*. In the meantime, to offset this movement and to prevent a schism in the Canadian church, the American General Conference granted independence to the Canadian Conference, so that from this time forth, any official connection of the American and Canadian conferences ceased. Yet, notwithstanding this concession, Elder Ryan continued his work of organizing a new branch of Methodism in Canada, the establishment of which was finally effected in 1829.



# THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE COUNTY OF KENT TO CANADIAN LITERATURE.

## OUR POETS AND PROSE-WRITERS.

THE county of  
Kent has the  
honor of being  
the birthplace

of several poets and prose-writers who have commanded a wide circle of readers in our own country, and some of them a still wider circle outside of our own, especially the county south of us. Among the poets, Archibald Lampman easily occupies the first place in the county, and as a nature-poet a similar place of priority is accorded him for the whole of the Dominion. "The greatest poet that Canada has produced, greatest as a nature-poet, and as an interpreter of the essential mind and heart of the Canadian people and country, is Archibald Lampman. He is a consummate artist. He is par excellence the poet of Canadian Nature and Nationality." This estimate of his place and work by Dr. Logan and D. R. French in the "*Highways of Canadian Literature*," has not been challenged. "Lampman is superb; supreme, unmatched and even unrivalled by any other poet that Canada has yet produced." A native of the county of whom such statements could be made by outstanding men of literary merit, is surely a personage towards whom local citizens of Kent may entertain sentiments of admiration and pride. Though born in the county, Lampman spent

A. LAMPMAN

only six years of his life within its bounds. His father was Rev. Archibald Lampman, appointed rector of Trinity church, Morpeth, and missionary at large for the Lake Erie district in 1853. The Lampmans were Pennsylvania Dutch, and United Empire Loyalists, who had moved north and settled in the Niagara Peninsula at the close of the American Revolutionary War. The poet's father married Susannah Gesner on May 29th, 1860, fifth

child of David Henry Gesner and his wife, a Stewart from the county of Tyrone, Ireland. The Gesners were also Pennsylvania Dutch, and Loyalists. David Henry settled on the Talbot road about seven miles distant from Morpeth, where the homestead still stands. He was a prominent citizen in the early history of this settlement and one may find his name on the county records as a Crown Lands Agent for the county. They were an intellectual family; one of them, Abraham Gesner, a grand-uncle of the poet, being a well known writer and scientist of Nova Scotia.

Archibald Lampman, the poet, was born at Morpeth, on Sunday morning the 17th of November, 1861. When he was six years of age his father removed to a small town on the shore of Rice Lake, where the family remained for seven years.



The rectory here was damp, and Archibald contracted rheumatic fever, and lay suffering acutely for months. For four years he was lame and part of the time compelled to use crutches. His physique was never powerful, nor was his health robust, and it may be that the cause of both lay in his long illness. "But despite his crutches," as one has said, "he was active and interested in life, for his spirit was always great and courageous to triumph over any ills of body or estate which he had to bear."

The poet, notwithstanding his father's limited means, received a liberal education. Until he was nine years of age, he was instructed at home under his father's direction. After this, and until he was thirteen, he attended the school of Mr. F. W. Barron, a Master of Arts of Cambridge, and formerly a principal of Upper Canada College, by whom he was thoroughly grounded in Latin and Greek and "taught to write beautifully." A year in the Cobourg Collegiate Institute, and a course in Trinity College school, Port Hope, prepared him for entrance into Trinity University, Toronto. He graduated from this seat of learning in 1882, with second class honors in Classics. He could easily have obtained first, had he applied himself but he spent much of his time in his last year in general reading and social intercourse, which perhaps aided his intellectual development as much as the additional study of his textbooks for examination would have done. Throughout his course he was hampered for want of means, but through the obtaining of prizes and scholarships both at Port Hope and Toronto, together with what his father was able to do for him, there was given him an opportunity, on the foundation of which he built a worthy monument for himself, an enduring place among the great writers of Canadian Literature. In the schools it was said of him, that "he was probably the poorest man, in a worldly sense, and physically the least powerful, yet he had a greater influence than any of his fellows." This limited means and narrow income followed him throughout his life. In his last sickness, the ability to obtain a forced rest for travel

and change of scene was made possible only through the generosity of his intimate friends, and well-wishers. Of him, it therefore could be truly said, he snatched achievement from adversity.

Archibald Lampman owes his reputation, both in this country and others, not only to the exquisite felicity of his art, but because he, as none others like him, interprets for us the sentiments of the Canadian heart in communion with its native woods and streams and hills. This is evidenced in the "Three Flower Petals" one of his first two contributions to the public, journals which appeared in 1884 in the "Week", a Canadian periodical which has since ceased publication.



## THREE FLOWER PETALS.

What saw I yesterday walking apart  
 In a leafy place where the cattle wait?  
 Something to keep for a charm in my heart—  
 A little sweet girl in a garden gate.  
 Laughing she lay in the gold sun's might,  
 And held for a target to shelter her,  
 In her little soft fingers, round and white,  
 The gold-rimmed face of a sunflower.

Laughing she lay on the stone that stands  
 From a rough-hewn step in that sunny place,  
 And her yellow hair hung down to her hands,  
 Shadowing over her dimpled face.  
 Her eyes like the blue of the sky, made dim  
 With the might of the sun that looked at her,  
 Shone laughing over the serried rim,  
 Golden set, of the sunflower.

Laughing, for token she gave to me  
 Three petals out of the sunflower.  
 When the petals are withered and gone shall be  
 Three verses of mine for praise of her,  
 That a tender dream of her face may rise,  
 And lighten me yet in another hour,  
 Of her sunny hair and her beautiful eyes,  
 Laughing over the gold sunflower.

—A. LAMPSON

"*Bird Voices*" appeared in the *Century Magazine*, but the greater number of his contributions to periodicals appeared in *Scribner's Magazine*, a monthly which greatly encouraged him to persevere in the production of his poems.

In 1888, he published his first book, which he entitled "*Among the Millet*" named after the first poem of the volume, a private venture followed five years later by his second, entitled "*Lyrics of Earth*", a collection of poems following the sequence of the seasons. His third "*Alcyone*" was on the Press, when he was stricken by the brief illness, which resulted in his death. In 1900, his three books with additional poems, and a Memoir by Duncan Campbell Scott were published in one large volume of five hundred pages, an enduring monument embodying the great achievement of one of Canada's greatest sons.



Clothed in splendour, beautifully sad and silent,  
Comes the autumn over the woods and highlands,  
Golden, rose-red, full of divine remembrance,  
Full of foreboding.

Soon the maples, soon will be glowing birches,  
Stripped of all that summer and love had dowered them,  
Dream, sad-limbed, beholding their pomp and treasure  
Ruthlessly scattered:

Yet they quail not: Winter with wind and iron  
Comes and finds them silent and uncomplaining,  
Finds them tameless, beautiful still and gracious,  
Gravely enduring.

Me too changes, bitter and full of evil,  
Dream by dream have plundered and left me naked,  
Gray with sorrow. Even the days before me  
Fade into twilight,

Mute and barren. Yet will I keep my spirit  
Clear and valiant, brother to these my noble  
Elms and maples, utterly grave and fearless,  
Grandly ungrieving.

Brief the span is, counting the years of mortals,  
Strange and sad; it passes, and then the bright earth,  
careless mother, gleaming with gold and azure,  
Lovely with blossoms—

Shining white anemones, mixed with roses,  
Daisies mild-eyed, grasses and honeyed clover—  
You and me, and all of us, met and equal,  
Softly shall cover.

—A. LAMPMAN.

The first employment that offered itself to him after his graduation was uncongenial. He was appointed an assistant in the High School at Orangeville, but although a good teacher he could not enforce discipline, and was forced to relinquish this on the first occasion which presented itself. Through the influence of a college friend he obtained a clerkship in the civil service at Ottawa, to which there was attached a small salary, but at this post he remained for the rest of his days doing his work with thorough care and fidelity. His leisure, he devoted to his writings. In 1887, he married Maud, the youngest daughter of Dr. Edward Playter of Toronto, a happy marriage, enhanced by the birth of several children, two sons and a daughter. Never robust, his health became undermined by the hardships of a holiday trip to lake Temagami, inducing a sickness from which he died February 10th, 1899.



THE neighborhood of Morpeth has the honor of being the birthplace of two other writers, both of whom have made worthy contributions to Canadian literature. Archibald P. McKishnie and his sister Jean, better known since her marriage as Jean

JEAN BLEWETT Blewett, while a younger sister has won success as a journalist in Detroit, Michigan. Their father was John McKishnie, and their mother, Janet McIntyre, a relative of Duncan MacIntyre, a Gaelic poet of considerable note. Both of them were natives of Argyllshire, Scotland and pioneer settlers of the Lake Erie district where they reared their family consisting of eight children.—three sons and five daughters.

Jean Blewett was born at the old farm homestead in New Scotland, in 1871, receiving her education at the local public school, and at the St. Thomas Collegiate Institute. She was married in 1889 to Mr. Basset Blewett, a native of Cornwall, England. Her first public venture was a poem, which appeared in Leslie's Magazine when she was sixteen years of age, followed by another in the *Toronto Daily Globe*, which was favorably commented upon by the editor in the columns of his paper, to which journal she has been many years a steady contributor. She has also written for such magazines as the *Christian Guardian*, *Collier's Weekly*, *The Canadian Ladies' Home Journal* and *Youth's Companion*.

Her first volume of poems, *Heart Songs*, appeared in 1897 and immediately won a wide popularity. Her second volume, *The Cornflower and Other Poems*, published in 1906 added still further to her prestige. Her collected poems were published in 1922. She is also well-known as a prose-writer and lecturer, but it is as a poet that she has won her distinct and fixed place in the hearts and imagination of her Canadian readers. 'She appeals to the abiding human emotion', one has said, 'and with sure but gentle hand touches chords that vibrate either pleasantly or painfully to the memories which her art awakens in individual human hearts.' Another has said, 'Jean Blewett is essentially a woman's poet. By this is meant that she appeals to the domestic heart and the imagination, that she sings of the joys of home, the ways of children, the love of husband and wife. But Jean Blewett does this in an extraordinary way. She treats homely sub-

jects indeed, but while she treats them in a homely or rather homelike way she does it with a simple and ingratiating sincerity and charm of sentiment and artistry which are quite her own, and in the employment of which she is alone in Canada.' She is loved by her readers', this same writer adds, for 'her sincere, simple singing of true love and faith, of childhood, and the field flowers, and the joys of the Canadian Spring and Winter.' A humorous poem, '*For He was Scotch and so was She*' is frequently in use by elocutionists for the entertainment of Canadian audiences. Of necessity she lives in Toronto, where she occupies a permanent position as a member of the *Daily Globe* staff.

Archibald P. McKishnie, her brother, is known to Canadian readers as a novelist or prose-writer. His first novel *Gaff Linkum* appeared in 1907, which has since been followed by four others, *Love of the Wild*, *Willo' the Wisp*, *A Son of Courage* and *Openway*. This last, published in 1923, is perhaps the best example of the style and material of his writings. He has found a place among the writers singled out by the authors of *Highways of Canadian Literature* as examples of Canadian literary art and authorship: "Archie McKishnie impresses us with a sense of his comradeship with the creatures of the marsh, the wood, and the stream. He is their interpreter, but not as an outside observer. He lives with them, loves them, protects them. Thus when he writes animal stories he rises to his best literary style and achieves a beauty and smoothness that is not always found in his other writing." All of his writings are colored by the memory of his boyhood days, and the impressions made upon his youthful mind by the associations connected with lake Erie and his home district and as such Kent can truly claim him always as one of her own.



## "THE LONE SHEILING."

The author of "The Lone Sheiling" is unknown. The poem, sometimes called "The Canadian Boat Song," is a Highland dirge that used to be sung by Highland boatmen as they paddled or pulled their oars in unison over Canadian lakes and streams, their only method of transport in the beginning days of the Nineteenth Century. It is here reproduced as it gives a vivid picture of the turning of the lonely heart of exiles,—like the Baldoon settlers, suffering the hardships of coming to a country undeveloped and unprepared to receive them, to their far-away homes in Old Scotia, from which they were banished forever to make way for their landlord's sheep.

Listen to me, as when ye heard our father  
Sing, long ago, the song of other shores;  
Listen to me, and then in chorus gather  
All your deep voices, as ye pull your oars.

### Chorus:

Fair these broad meads, these hoary woods are grand,  
But we are exiles from our fathers' land.

From the lone sheiling of the misty island  
Mountains divide us, and the waste of seas,  
Yet still the blood is strong, the heart is Highland,  
And we, in dreams, behold the Hebrides.

We never shall tread the fancy-haunted valley  
Where 'tween the dark hills creeps the small, clear stream,  
In arms around the patriarch banner rally,  
Nor see the moon on royal tombstones gleam.

When the bold kindred, in the time long vanish'd,  
Conquered the soil, and fortified the keep,  
No seer foretold the children would be banished,  
That a degenerate lord might boast his sheep.

Cruel, foreign raid! Let discord burst in slaughter!  
Oh, then, for clansmen true, and stern claymore,  
The hearts that would have given their blood like water  
Beat heavily beyond the Atlantic roar.



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ARTHUR STRINGER

ANOTHER Canadian poet and novelist, who has made an international reputation for himself, is Arthur Stringer, known for his lyric verses, no less than for his popular works of fiction. He was born in Chatham in 1874, and received

a thorough education in the public and Collegiate schools where he lived and the University of Toronto. After a post-graduate course at Oxford University, he returned to Canada and engaged in journalism first in Montreal and later in New York. Thereafter he became literary editor of *Success*, a magazine with which he was associated for several years.

His first literary works were in verse. In 1901, he gave up journalism and devoted his whole time to writing and since that time his productions of short stories and works of fiction have been very numerous. Some of his books are, *The Silver Pony*, *The Wire Trapper*, *The Loom of Destiny*, *Lone O'Malley* and *Shadow and Irish Poems*. A series of novels, *The Prairie Wife*, *Prairie Mother*, and *Prairie Child*, were well received and obtained a wide circulation both in Canada and the United States.

He writes in a vigorous style and on a wide variety of themes, city life, prairie life, adventure, et cetera. His prose has the quality of skilful direct utterance that cuts straight home to the heart of a matter. 'He writes poetry', one has said, 'as full of beauty as a garden.' His interests are broad and he has found food for his active thought in the many regions where he has travelled. He has a powerful, constructive imagination and the ability to treat his themes in such a way as to arrest the attention and carry the interest of his readers with him, though he has never captured the Canadian heart in the same way as Lampman and Jean Blewett have done.

His mother was a Delmage, and his father, Hugh Stringer, a member of the well-known family of that name at Chatham. Captain George Stringer, the novelist's uncle, was master of a steamer on the Great Lakes for many years. Kate Lyell, Hugh's sister, married George Stephens, a prominent hardware merchant of Chatham, and member of the House of Commons for several terms. After her decease in 1879, he married her sister

Jean Mather. The Stringers were originally of English ancestry but by inter-marriages, the present generation are full Britishers with English, Irish and Scotch blood in their veins.

For a number of years, Arthur Stringer made his summer home on a farm by the side of Lake Erie, south of Chatham, but of late years he has lived in the United States, having transferred his interests to that country.



HOME THOUGHTS.

I am tired of the dust  
And the fever and noise  
And the meaningless faces of men;  
And I want to go home!  
Oh, day after day I get thinking of home  
Where the black firs fringe the skyline,  
And the birds wheel down the silence,  
And the hemlocks whisper peace,  
And the hill-winds cool the blood,  
And the dusk is crowned with glory,  
And the lone horizon softens,  
And the world's at home with God!  
Oh, I want to go there!  
I want to go home!

—ARTHUR STRINGER.

THE WILD GEESE.

Over my home-sick head,  
High in the paling light  
And touched with sunset's glow,  
Soaring and strong and free,  
The unswerving phalanx sweeps,  
The honking wild geese go,—  
Go with a flurry of wings  
Home to their norland lakes  
And the sedge-fringed tarns of peace  
And the pinelands soft with Spring!

I cannot go as the geese go,  
But into the steadfast North,  
The North that is dark and tender,  
My home-sick spirit wings,—  
Wings with flurry of longing thoughts  
And nests in the tarns of youth.

—ARTHUR STRINGER.



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# THE JUDICATURE

## THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MACHINERY FOR ADMINISTERING THE LAW AND MAINTAIN- ING ORDER IN THE LAND

HAVING established its govern-  
ments, national, provincial and  
municipal, and through these,  
made provision for law-making,  
the next thing required to be established  
was the machinery by which the laws of the  
county should be administered. There are  
two branches of the law, the  
civil, which has to do mainly  
with property rights; and the  
criminal, which has to do with  
intentional breaches of the law  
and the administering of  
punishment to those who in-  
tentionally ignore or transgress  
law. The setting up of that  
machinery necessitates the  
establishment of courts, court-  
houses and gaols.

**T**he variety of Courts which  
have been established.

The Court consists of a  
Judge, his Clerk and the  
Sheriff. The Judge is a govern-  
ment appointee, who holds his  
office for life, and before whom  
cases in reference to the administration of  
law, its execution, or its breach is appealed  
for a decision. He appoints a day and place  
to hear the case, if such is not appointed by  
statute. The Clerk is the one who prepares  
the case and is there to record the evidence,

while the Sheriff is there to execute the order  
of the Judge. These courts are graded, the  
lowest being that presided over by a Police  
Magistrate or a Justice of the Peace, before  
whom come only minor breaches of the law,  
until we reach the Imperial Privy Council,  
the highest court both for Great Britain and

Canada. Between these we  
have the County Court, the  
Court of Assize, the Surrogate  
Court and the Court of  
Chancery. The matters to be  
adjudicated upon are classified,  
usually on the basis of their  
importance, and to each court  
is assigned its own particular  
field. Before these courts come  
the complainant, and the de-  
fendant, with their witnesses.  
The Judge hears the complaint  
and the defence, weighs the  
reality of the offence and its  
magnitude and the validity of  
the defence, and gives a judg-  
ment according to what the law  
demands or what his reason

ROBT. STUART WOODS  
1819-???

Called to the Bar, 1842.  
Located at Chatham, 1850.  
Made a Queen's Counsel,  
1872.

Appointed a Junior Judge  
of the County Court, 1885.

adjudges to be the nearest to justice. The  
more impartial his judgments and the nearer  
they are to justice by common consent the  
more respect and weight does his judgments  
carry.



**C**ounsel are appointed to examine and cross-examine witnesses to assist the Judge in a right decision.

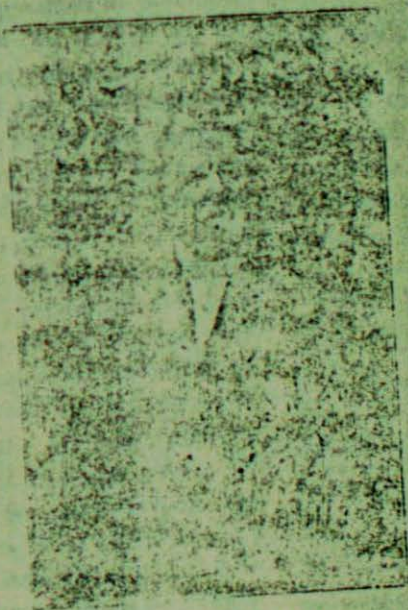
In order that the Judge may be more able to decide rightly in the matter brought before him, or in the way that will best meet the ends of justice and maintain respect for law, Counsel are appointed to examine the evidence, discover the law bearing on the matter, examine and cross-examine witnesses, both parties to the suit, the complainant and defendant having each its own counsel, so that no undue advantage may accrue to either side. So confident is our legal system that this will be an assistance to a right judgment, and so carefully does it guard the liberty and right of the subject that the person on trial for the crime, if he has not the means to engage a lawyer, the Crown, through the judge, will appoint one for him, and will also discharge the cost of obtaining the required witnesses to support his defence. 'Of course no human mechanism is perfect', as one has said, 'and no part of the world has ever arrived at a perfect system for the administration of justice. Mistakes will be made, the wrong parties believed, erroneous inferences will be drawn from suspicious circumstances; yet on the whole, miscarriages of justice are, I believe, less frequent in Canada, than in any other



**J. M. PIKE**  
Called to the Bar 1893.  
Practised before the Imperial  
Privy Council.

**T**he first government enactment regulating the qualifications required for Counsel.

It is obvious that the persons who will be entrusted to assist a Judge in this way, in helping him to administer and interpret the law rightly, must have a training which will qualify him for such an important responsibility and task. The government from time to time, have passed enactments to safeguard the public and the administration of the law by licensing only properly qualified persons to do this work. From the very first great care has been exercised in the matter. In 1773 an Act for making more effectual provision for the government of the Province of Quebec in North America was passed, and the Governor and his Council had power to make ordinances which had the same effect as general laws. Under this authority in 1775 an ordinance was



**C. R. ATKINSON**  
Called to the Bar 1895.

\*Matthew Wilson in Historical Society Reports.





OSCAR LEANDER LEWIS.  
Called to the Bar, 1886.

ly elected at the quinquennial election in 1921. He served as an alderman in the city of Chatham in 1897 and from 1907 until the date of his death was City Solicitor. He took an active interest in military affairs and served a term as commanding officer of the 24th Kent Regiment. He was prominent in Oddfellowship and Masonry and was a Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Ontario, of the Independent Order of Oddfellows. He died at Chatham, April 20th, 1923.

passed concerning advocates, attorneys, solicitors and notaries; and it provided that no person should be appointed or permitted to practice in any of the Courts in the Province as a barrister, advocate, solicitor, attorney or proctor at law who should not have bona fide served a regular and continued clerkship for five years under a contract in writing with some advocate or attorney practicing in the courts of the Province or in some other part of his Majesty's Dominions, nor until after such person should have been examined by some of the first and most able barristers, advocates and attorneys of the courts of the Province in the presence of the Chief Justice or two or more judges of some of the courts of Common Pleas, (of which there was one for each district), and approved and certified to be of fit capacity and character to be admitted to practice in the courts of the Province. It was then found most difficult to procure men of sufficient knowledge of the law to enter upon the legal profession.\*

\*Matthew Wilson.

Oscar Leander Lewis was born in Simcoe county, 1862. He received his education at the public and high schools in the city of Chatham. He completed his course at Osgoode Hall and was called to the Bar and admitted as a solicitor in 1886. For some years he practised in Chatham in partnership with the late D. M. Christie and in 1894 he entered into partnership with W. G. Richards under the firm name of Lewis and Richards, which partnership continued until the date of his death. In 1908 he was appointed a King's counsel and in 1920, on the death of Wilson, K.C., was elected a benchler by Convocation of the Law Society of Upper Canada, being subsequently

A second enactment respecting these qualifications was passed in 1791.

When, in 1791, the province of Quebec was divided into Upper and Lower Canada, each was made a distinct Province, and in each province the Governor in Council and Assembly were empowered to make laws for the peace, welfare and good government thereof; and in the third session under the new constitution of Upper Canada an Act passed suspending the Quebec Ordinance above referred to and enabling the Governor to authorize by license liege subjects not exceeding sixteen in number who should be deemed from their probity, education and condition in life, best qualified to act as advocates and attorneys in the conduct of all legal proceedings in the Province. Only seven gentlemen from a then population of 40,000 were found capable and willing for appointment.

"The Law Society of Upper Canada" was also formed to maintain the standard of the Profession.

In 1797, the government passed an Act, enabling the practising lawyers of that time to form themselves into an Association for the maintenance of a worthy standard in their profession. Although there were only fifteen practitioners at that time in the whole of the province, the association was duly formed

William Douglas, a native of Callithness, Scotland, was the son of George Douglas and Jeannette Gunn, who came out to Canada in 1831, and settled in Northumberland county. William Douglas was graduated from Toronto University in 1851, with the degree of LL.B. Called to the Bar that year, he located at Chatham, forming a partnership with O'Hara, in 1856, which continued until Mr. O'Hara's appointment as Master of Chancery in 1863. The year previous Mr. Douglas had been appointed Crown Attorney, an office he served with distinction for thirty-four years. In 1885, he was appointed Queen's Counsel and elected Benchler of the Upper Canada Law Society. He was married to Anne Emily Hudson of Toronto, in 1853, and to them were born nine children, five daughters and four sons, one of whom, Donald Eric, is the county court clerk for Kent.

WM. DOUGLAS  
1851-1902  
Called to the Bar,  
1851.  
County Crown  
Attorney, 1863-1902.



E. W. Scane was born in Howard township, the son of John Scane and Elizabeth Milton, both natives of England, but their parents among the first settlers of that township. He was educated in the local and Victoria College, of which he was a graduate in 1853. His training for law was obtained in the office of C. R. Atkinson, with whom he remained five years. He took an active part in municipal affairs; served in the Council for six years, for two of which he was Mayor; served also on the Collegiate Institute Board; and took his part in other ways also in furthering the progress and development of the city. In 1863, he was married to Mary A. Spencer, and they had four children, Walter W., barrister of Chatham; Adelaide, (Mrs. William J. Taylor); John Wallace, physician in Montreal; and Bessie C., (Mrs. Joseph Hadley). In politics, Mr. Scane was a Conservative; in religion, a Methodist.

E. W. SCANE,  
1838-1902.

Called to the Bar,  
Mayor of Chatham,  
1882-1883.

under the name of "The Law Society of Upper Canada."

This Society was made a statutory corporation in 1822 and has continued from that time to the present under the name originally given in 1797, and it has been so careful of the honour and good standing of its members whom it has power to discipline, suspend or expel, that few, if any, governing bodies of any profession or society should have held so completely the respect and good opinion of the public at large, as is accorded to the legal profession. And it is essential that a high standard should be maintained. The Counsel, must not only be well-versed in law but he must also be esteemed for his sagacity, probity and sincerity. He is the appointed trustee of much property and the private concerns of his clients. When men come to him in a litigious mood, he can get the parties in dispute in conference, discover to them the law in the matter, show them the weakness of their respective sides, and obtain from them a settlement by compromise and thus save to both of them the expense of a needless lawsuit instead of exploiting their unwisdom to obtain for himself a generous fee. Moreover Judges are chosen from amongst the members of the profession, and these not only administer but by their decisions and general demeanor help to maintain or destroy respect for law in the minds of the

general public. the day that respect for law and confidence in its administrations ceases in our country, that day the country falls down, too, in the high standard of citizenship unto which we, as a Canadian people, have attained, and by other nations have been highly reputed. It is of inestimable value that our governmental institutions maintain a high standard of excellence, but our judicial institutions must be above reproach. Towards this end, the Law Society of Upper Canada has done, and still is doing a useful service.

**T**he establishment of a Kent Bar did not take place until the late fifties.

The first record of a Court sitting in Chatham was when Mr. Justice Sullivan held the Assize there in 1851. Up to that time there was probably no permanent Bar in Kent, but in 1857 there were six practitioners located in Chatham, George Duck, Jr. and Henry F., his brother, Charles F. Eliot, Alexander D. McLean, Walter McCrea and Robert Stuart Woods. There were no professional men in the County outside of Chatham. His Honour William Benjamin Wells was the Judge of the County Court and Mr. Duck was Clerk of the Peace. John Mercer was Sheriff, Thomas A. Ireland was



William Edward McKeough, born in 1859, at Chatham, is the son of William McKeough, Chatham, and Betsey Ann Stone, Orford. He was educated in public and collegiate schools of Chatham, the Wesleyan College, Dundas, and the French Canadian seminary at Ste. Therese de Blainville. His training for law was obtained in the offices of Wilson and Robinson, Chatham, and Moss, Hayles and Aylesworth, Toronto. He has taken an active interest in the affairs of the city and was Mayor in 1903-1904. In 1882, he married Mahel Annie Stewart of

W. E. McKEOUGH,  
Called to the Bar,  
Mayor of Chatham,  
1903-1904.

Toronto, second daughter of Charles E. Stewart, a former proprietor of the "Granville Express," the "Hamilton Times," and the "Ottawa Post," and a great-granddaughter of Hon. Alexander Grant, one of the five members of Governor Simcoe's Executive Council, 1782. They have had two sons, William Stewart, killed overseas, 15th September, 1914, a third-year student of Toronto when he enlisted, and George Grant, now president of the McKeough & Trotter firm of Chatham.

Clerk of the County Court and Deputy Clerk of the Crown; George Williams was Registrar of the Surrogate Court and Deputy Registrar of the Court of Chancery, and T. Glendenning was the Clerk of the Division Court in Chatham.

From a personal but reliable source I have learned that the Judge and Counsel who came from Toronto the first Assize at Chatham came by boat to Niagara, thence to Buffalo, thence to Detroit and thence up the Thames to Chatham; and that the late Judge Woods, as a practicing barrister admitted in 1842, acted for the Plaintiff in the only case that was decided in that first Court of May 1851 at Chatham. By the records of 1860, I find that the late Charles Richard Atkinson who was admitted to the bar in 1859, was added to the list of practitioners in Chatham.\* This brought up the total at the end of that decade to seven, but with the increase of population, there was a proportionate increase in the demand for the services of Court and Counsel, and the numbers entering this profession steadily increase until not only Chatham but every surrounding urban centre maintains an adequate representation.\*\*

\*Matthew Wilson.

\*\*A complete list of all the lawyers who have practised in Kent since its establishment as a county is appended in this volume.

The establishment of a Court at Chatham dates from the passing of Baldwin's Municipal Act, 1849 and 1850.

The establishment of a Court in Kent did not take place until after district government was abolished and county government took its place. Before this the meeting place of the Court was first at Detroit, but when Michigan became ceded to the Americans in 1796, Sandwich was chosen, and continued to be the place where the legal affairs of the county were transacted for over half a century. To the handicap of distance there was added the further circumstances of bad roads and no conveniences for travel, so that the first settlers had no other alternative but to trudge to Sandwich on foot when legal business had to be transacted. By the Municipal Act of 1849, which gave to us Municipal Government for counties, townships, cities, towns and villages, districts were abolished and counties substituted in their place. Chatham was selected as the County Town, and the erection of a gaol and court-house authorized. From this time forward the machinery of government and courts has been carried on practically as we have it to-day, a system which has given and continues to give pre-eminent satisfaction.

Richard L. Gosnell was born in Orford township in 1863, fifth son of James Gosnell and Elizabeth Salter, natives of Ireland. He was educated in the local public school and the Ridgetown Collegiate Institute, and spent a few years in the teaching profession. His training for the law profession, commenced in 1884, was obtained in the offices of N. Mills, Ridgetown, and Foy and Kelly, Toronto. He located in Blenheim, January, 1890, where he practised until his death. He married in 1892, Lillie Tape, of Howard, and left no issue. In politics, Mr. Gosnell was a Liberal; in religion, a Methodist.

R. L. GOSNELL,  
Called to the Bar,  
1889.  
Police Magistrate,  
Blenheim, 1891-1902.



1842. A. D. McLEAN.  
1842. R. S. WOODS.  
1843. WALTER McCREA.  
1852. JOHN P. ALMA.  
1852. J. A. WILKINSON.  
1857. GEORGE DUCK, JR.  
1857. CHARLES F. ELIOT.  
1855. P. M. CAMPBELL.  
1855. H. F. DUCK.  
1853. R. O'HARA.  
1858. A. McDOUGALL.  
1858. H. WHITTROCK.  
1852. C. R. ATKINSON.  
1852. J. WARREN.  
1853. W. FRASER.  
1857. C. E. PEGLEY.  
1851. W. DOUGLAS.  
1853. E. ROBINSON.  
1861. J. ROLLS.  
1855. G. O. FREEMAN.  
1865. E. W. SCANZ.  
1853. A. BELL.  
1855. G. O. FREEMAN.  
1862. S. JARVIS.  
1870. M. HOUSTON.  
1875. J. S. FRASER.  
1876. J. WARREN.  
1877. C. J. O'NEIL.  
1878. J. M. CARTHEW.  
1878. D. M. CHRISTIE.  
1872. MATTHEW WILSON.  
1873. NATHANIEL MILLS.  
1873. W. R. HICKEY.  
1853. J. R. McCOLL.  
1853. J. B. O'FLYNN.  
1851. A. CRADDOCK.  
1852. J. D. RANKIN.  
1852. G. D. DOUGLAS.  
1852. E. BELL.  
1833. W. J. MARTIN.  
1834. GEO. E. WEIR.  
1834. J. A. WALKER.  
1853. A. M. LAFFERTY.  
1855. THOMAS LOFFAT.  
1856. C. L. LEWIS.  
1855. W. E. McKEOUGH.  
1853. C. R. ATKINSON, JR.  
1853. C. B. JACKSON.  
1853. FRED STONE.  
1853. J. F. WILLIAMSON.  
1853. J. W. WHITE.  
1857. W. H. ROBINSON.  
1857. J. M. McWHINNEY.  
1853. JOHN COUTTS.  
1853. THOMAS SCULLARD.  
1853. H. D. COWAN.  
1853. R. L. GOSNELL.  
1853. J. C. KERR.  
1853. G. G. MARTIN.  
1853. S. B. ARNOLD.  
1857. W. A. THRASHER.  
1853. W. G. GREENE.  
1853. J. D. MONT.  
1853. J. REEVE.  
1850. W. G. RICHARDS.  
1852. C. S. COATSWORTH.

1842. A. D. McLEAN.  
1842. R. S. WOODS.  
1843. WALTER McCREA.  
1852. JOHN P. ALMA.  
1852. J. A. WILKINSON.  
1857. GEORGE DUCK, JR.  
1857. CHARLES F. ELIOT.  
1855. P. M. CAMPBELL.  
1855. H. F. DUCK.  
1853. R. O'HARA.  
1858. A. McDOUGALL.  
1858. H. WHITTROCK.  
1852. C. R. ATKINSON.  
1852. J. WARREN.  
1853. W. FRASER.  
1857. C. E. PEGLEY.  
1851. W. DOUGLAS.  
1853. E. ROBINSON.  
1861. J. ROLLS.  
1855. G. O. FREEMAN.  
1865. E. W. SCANZ.  
1853. A. BELL.  
1855. G. O. FREEMAN.  
1862. S. JARVIS.  
1870. M. HOUSTON.  
1875. J. S. FRASER.  
1876. J. WARREN.  
1877. C. J. O'NEIL.  
1878. J. M. CARTHEW.  
1878. D. M. CHRISTIE.  
1872. MATTHEW WILSON.  
1873. NATHANIEL MILLS.  
1873. W. R. HICKEY.  
1853. J. R. McCOLL.  
1853. J. B. O'FLYNN.  
1851. A. CRADDOCK.  
1852. J. D. RANKIN.  
1852. G. D. DOUGLAS.  
1852. E. BELL.  
1833. W. J. MARTIN.  
1834. GEO. E. WEIR.  
1834. J. A. WALKER.  
1853. A. M. LAFFERTY.  
1865. THOMAS LOFFAT.  
1856. C. L. LEWIS.  
1865. W. E. McKEOUGH.  
1853. C. R. ATKINSON, JR.  
1853. C. B. JACKSON.  
1853. FRED STONE.  
1853. J. F. WILLIAMSON.  
1853. J. W. WHITE.  
1857. W. H. ROBINSON.  
1857. J. M. McWHINNEY.  
1853. JOHN COUTTS.  
1853. THOMAS SCULLARD.  
1853. H. D. COWAN.  
1853. R. L. GOSNELL.  
1853. J. C. KERR.  
1853. G. G. MARTIN.  
1853. S. B. ARNOLD.  
1857. W. A. THRASHER.  
1853. W. G. GREENE.  
1853. J. D. MONT.  
1853. J. REEVE.  
1853. W. G. RICHARDS.  
1852. C. S. COATSWORTH.

- Alexander Bain, proprietor of a blacksmith shop and gasoline station, Thamesville, is a native of Caithnessshire, Scotland. Enlisted in the transport service of the Imperial Army in the Great World War, and did service for his unit in Salonika, Bulgaria and Egypt. Discharged in May 1919, he came to Canada the following year, since which he has been a resident of Kent. He was married in Scotland to Joan McKenzie, and they have one child, Barbara.

J. J. Zink, hardware merchant of Chatham, is a native of Harwich, the son of Joseph Zink, a family belonging to one of the earliest of what is known as the German settlement. He was reared on his father's farm, and came to Chatham, where he established his present business on King Street in 1920.

Donald L. Shaw, the son of the Reverend Neil Shaw, Presbyterian Minister of Egmontville, Ontario, was born in Scaforth, and became a resident of Ridgetown in 1912. He was educated in the schools of Scaforth and Ridgetown and received his legal training at Osgoode Hall, Toronto, and in the office of J. W. Murphy, Ridgetown. He was called to the Bar and began practising at Ridgetown in 1921. He married Mildred Brewer of Bothwell, and they have one child, a son, Neil.

John C. Locke, a native of Haldimand county, came to Ridgetown in 1879, and established with J. L. Bradshaw the furniture and undertaking establishment situated on Main street, now under the name Locke & Co. He married Jane Leach of Ridgetown and their children are, C. J. Locke, a barrister in Saskatoon, Mrs. B. J. Smith, Ridgetown and Greta Locke.



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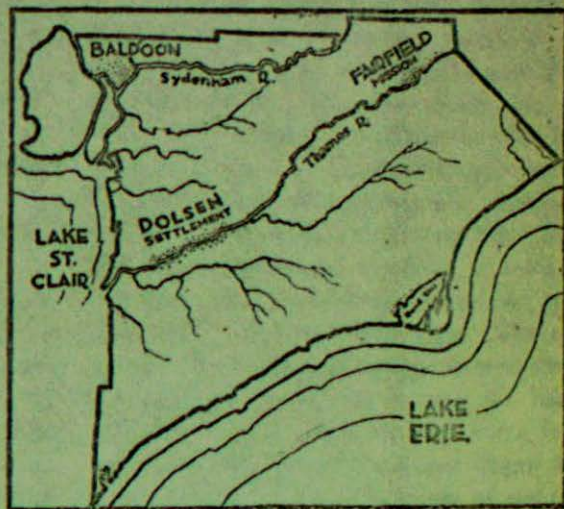
# CLEARING THE LAND

## THE EARLY SETTLER'S BATTLE TO GET RID OF THE FORESTS

### I.

#### KENT COUNTY IN A STATE OF NATURE

KNOWLEDGE of the physical conditions and the extent of the woodlands and marshes of Kent as they were when the first pioneers came to the county is of the first importance in interest to us, since thereby we come to know something of the natural wealth and the attractions which induced them to settle here in order to make permanent and comfortable homes for themselves and their children. We have descriptions of the country written by early travellers and explorers; we have the reports of the surveyors who delimited every section of the county into farm lots; and we have the stories which have been handed down to us from the earliest settlers, telling of the conditions which they found here and faced. These supply sufficient data from which we can, with an intelligent use of our constructive imaginations, reproduce the past, and, in mental picture, see its woodlands and the possibilities for future wealth which lay in its timbers and soil. The face of the country continued little unchanged from its first settlement a little before 1790 until after the middle of the past century, a period which goes back only seventy five years, so that



MAP OF THE FIRST SETTLEMENTS IN THE COUNTY

from most reliable sources we can get an intelligible appreciation of the physical conditions met with and subdued by the first settlers to their advantage.

**T**he Thames river, the first highway into the County.

The first surveyor came into the county by way of lake St. Clair and the Thames river, as did also the first settlers. The two branches of this river take their rise in the highlands of Central Ontario, flowing in a south-westerly direction until they meet and



form one stream at London, after which it continues its westerly course until it reaches lake St. Clair, into which it empties the body of water which it has gathered from the territory through which it has passed. It was called by the French and the first settlers, La Tranche, until, in 1793, Governor Simcoe gave to it, its present name. It afforded to the early fur-traders and explorers opportunity to reach the centre of the province by means of that greatest of Indian inventions, the birch-bark canoe. It traversed a rich and fertile country with a magnificent forest on each side of it, a part of that sea of green stretching from the north shore of lake Erie to the Georgian bay and still farther northward, an area of woodland which Charlevoix described as 'the finest forest in the world!'

"In every place where I landed, I was enchanted with the beauty and variety of landscape bounded by the finest forest in the world; beside this water-fowl swarmed everywhere."

This Frenchman did not enter into the interior of the country but skirted along its outward fringe on the shore of lake Erie, yet saw, notwithstanding, something of the variety of trees and landscape, and the wild life abounding in the solitudes of its waterways and forests, an attractive scene, which compelled his compatriot, Galinee, to designate the district of which Kent was a central part, 'The Paradise of Canada.'

**M**arsh lands on which sported the Wild Life of the District.

When Patrick McNiff, the pioneer surveyor of the county, entered the river from lake St. Clair, he did not come at first into sight of the woods except as the background of a tract of thirty thousand acres of marsh, or prairie lands, lying on the shore of the lake at the mouths and between the two rivers, the Thames and the Sydenham. Here among the tall grass he saw elk grazing, and wild fowl of every description sporting on its numerous ponds. But apart from the

attraction of this wild life on the marshes, the river presented to him no great scene of beauty or splendour. "There is little in its appearance," he wrote, as he described how it presented itself to him when he first saw it, "to call forth enthusiastic comment from the observer, though its aspect is in no place repulsive, and in many localities presents many features of attractiveness." This description embodied fairly what was the appearance of the stream from the first impression made upon him as he paddled up its sluggish waters through the plains and required no revision save when he came to the forests and undulating lands of central Ontario, where its beauty was second to no other in the country. For six miles, as they ascended up the river, the plains lay on either side of them extending on the left (N.N.E.) as far as the eye could see, but on the right the woods were visible approaching nearer the farther they ascended. Here and there grew copses of elms, willows or ash trees, but on the whole it was one treeless meadow that met their view. The current of the stream was hardly perceptible as they paddled up against it, and the banks were little higher than its own water level until after they passed the plains where they began to rise, reaching the height of eighteen or twenty feet above the water level towards the eastern end of the county.

**T**he first of the Nineteen Squatters' homes came within sight of the Surveyor eight miles up from the River's mouth.

Eight miles up the river he came to a log cabin with its little clearance surrounding it, the abode of the first of the settlers now scattered along the bank from here to the mouth of McGregor creek. The land here, in contrast to the low and wetland which they had passed, was sufficiently elevated to enable them to cultivate the soil without drainage. These, though some of them were French and English, were chiefly German settlers from the United States who came to Canada immediately after the close of the



Revolutionary War. Which of them was the first to arrive, or the date of his coming, of this we have no record but the amount of clearances and improvements which they had already accomplished indicated several years' settlement, probably commencing the next year after the close of the war.

**A** different aspect of Physical Conditions on the South, or Lake Erie side, of the County.

If entrance into the county had been made by the surveyor from the south and lake Erie side, instead of the western and lake St. Clair side, a different aspect of its physical conditions would have been met with. Except for a narrow strip of marshland along the shore, the woodland commenced immediately and stretched northward for the full length of the county and much farther. This was indeed a magnificent forest and deserved the praises bestowed upon it by the early travellers. A great variety of trees were distributed throughout the county corresponding to the elevation of the land and the nature of the soil. On the low-lying lands and heavier soils, white oak, ash, elm and hickory were found while on the higher and lighter soils, black walnut, hard maple, cherry and whitewood were the varieties mostly met with. Beech, basswood, sycamore or buttonwood and balm, though not so numerous, were also found distributed throughout the county. Beside these, there was a small tract of pine on the shore of Lake Erie, an area which the French named Point aux Pins, a favorite nesting place for thousands of wood pigeons, birds once so numerous in the country, now wholly become extinct. Some of these varieties grew to an immense size. It was not uncommon to find a whitewood tree with a trunk seven feet in diameter at the stump, and stretching



COMING TO KENT ON THE SOUTH OR LAKE ERIE SIDE.

up as straight as a gun barrel for eighty feet before reaching the beginning of its top or limbs. White oak grew to an almost equal size. Numerous examples of this variety have been taken out of the woods in tree lengths seventy five feet long and six feet in diameter at the butt for export to the Old Country. The elm trees, the variety distributed most largely on the lowlands, grew to a size equal to the white oak and so thickly as to jostle each other for existence. The black walnuts grew just as thickly in their area but not to so great a size.

**T**he Early uses and the Later value of the Timber Wealth of the County.

To the early travellers and explorers, those trees, so magnificent in their size and the splendour of their appearance, stood out each one an illustration of the great wonders of Nature, but to the first settlers they were only parasites on a soil which they wished to convert into a grower of potatoes, corn, tobacco and other farm products. Later, this timber had a marketable value, but for the first years in the history of the county, they added nothing to the value of the lands nor to the wealth of the owners.

From the standpoint of the market of today, what a vast wealth these trees repre-



sented, but to the early settlers they were worse than valueless, save such as would be required for building their houses and their fences. The hard maple was used for sugar-making purposes and for house fuel. The hickory was used for making ox-bows and sleigh-runners. The whitewood, after saw-mills came into the settlements, was used for making lumber to erect their houses. The white oak became the first marketable tree followed by the black walnut, both of which became exportable, and shipped from the county by water transportation. The elm followed with increasing demand for the manufacture of barrel staves. After the

building of railways, the maple and other hardwoods found a market for fuel, but the prices were so low that small wages were received for the labor involved in cutting it into cordwood and hauling it to the station and nothing for the timber. But all this was in a later era in the history of the county. Apart then, from the fencing of their fields and the building of their houses, to the first pioneers of the county, the trees of this 'finest forest in the world' had no value, and were destined if touched at all to be hewn down by the woodman's axe and reduced to ashes.

## II.

### THE FOREST ATTACKED WITH AXE, FIRE AND A YOKE OF OXEN

"DO you live here?" asked Mrs. Jameson, a noted English traveller and writer, of a new settler in Harwich on the occasion of her passing through the township on her way from Talbotville to Chatham, and from thence to Detroit in the year 1836.

"Yes, I have a farm hard by—in the bush here," was his answer.

"How large is it?"

"One hundred and forty acres."

"How much cleared?"

"Five or six acres—thereabout."

"How long have you been on it?"

"Five years."

"And only five acres cleared? That is very little in five years. I have seen people who have cleared twice that quantity of land in half that time."

"Then they had money or friends or hands to help them . . . Set a man with only a pair of hands at one of them big trees there—see what he'll make of it. You may swing the axe from morning to night here for a week before you let the daylight in on you."



MRS. WILLIAM  
RICHARDSON,  
Creek Road, Harwich.

Mrs. William Richardson came to Harwich, a newly-married woman, in 1832, when the township was an uncleared forest. Her husband became the victim of pioneer conditions and died during an epidemic of typhoid fever when he was 29 years of age, leaving his young wife with four little children. The brave woman faced the future with indomitable courage, and toiled laboriously indoors and outdoors until her farm

was cleared, good buildings erected, and her family grown up and educated. She lived to a serene old age and died on the homestead, then in possession of her only son, the infant babe, who shared with her the joys and sorrows of her widowed life, unparted until by death.

Five acres cleared in five years! What a meagre achievement for one able-bodied man! So might think a transient traveller in the country, but when we consider the number of times the axe had to ascend, and then descend with force upon the trunk of a large tree before it was sufficiently notched to fall, not to say anything of the trimming, piling



and burning up of the parts afterwards, an opening of five acres in the midst of the eternal bush, was without doubt, a creditable record for one pair of hands even in five years. This Harwich settler, if he had been married would have had two pairs of hands help clear the farm, instead of one, for of this work, as of all others, the pioneer woman took her share. True, she did not chop down the trees, but she went out to help pile up the brush and the limbs, and later did her share of the burning and logging of the fallen trees, for without help, the clearance of the heavily timbered land of Kent was difficult, if not impossible for one alone.

The vision of a field of wheat kept encouraged the pioneer's heart as he chopped down the forest, tree by tree.

#### **M**aking a clearance for the First Potato, or Corn crop.

In the pioneer conditions of the county, there were two stages of land clearing—the first and most difficult, without oxen, and the second with the assistance of these useful animals. To get a patch cleared large enough to grow their first crop of potatoes and corn was the initial undertaking of every new settler. This was the first stage of land-clearing and was undertaken one tree at a time, the felling of the trees and the burning up of them going on at the same time. The early Spring was the more favorable time for settling on his lot, which gave to the pioneer two months, April and May, for the clearing of the first patch of land. A rude and temporary log-hut with bark for a covering was erected and supplied the family shelter until replaced later by a more permanent cabin. Then began the work of preparing the potato patch. Usually a spot was chosen where the woods were more open and the trees not too big. A fire was started with such fallen down timber and dry sticks for fuel as could be procured for the purpose. A tree was then felled, and the limbs trimmed off and thrown on this fire, and when once it 'got going good' would burn up quite

readily even although the wood was green and the sap still undried in it. The body of the tree, if suitable was made into rails, or into lengths, if it was not too large, for the new log cabin. With the assistance of his wife and half grown up boys and girls, if such there were in the family, a considerable patch of cleared land was secured before the season had passed for the planting of corn potatoes and other garden vegetables. If he succeeded in the first year of getting one acre ready, the pioneer settler considered himself fortunate.

Potatoes and corn were the staple foods of the first settlers and an acre of ground would grow sufficient for their first year's requirements, even if there should be some children in the family, for, a yield of two hundred bushels of potatoes, or of seventy five of corn, was not an extravagant harvest. An acre cleared and cropped and an average harvest would mean, then, the achievement of their living for a year. When this was done they faced serenely their combat with fever and ague, mosquitoes and blackflies, for, supporting them, was the pleasant assurance there would be no famine of food the following winter. The woods supplied them



with deer, wild turkeys, racoons and porcupines, and even the wild boar was said to have roamed the forests in the days of the first settlements in the county. But with increasing years their ambitions and aspirations expanded. The next year they were not satisfied unless they had enough clearance and crop grown to keep themselves, a cow, some poultry and one or two swine for the filling of the winter's pork barrel. The next aim was to add to these a yoke of oxen. When the pioneer had reached this stage he considered himself as having solved the problem of living for his family for all time to come,

**O**xen introduced the Second stage in clearing the land.

The possession of these useful animals introduced the settler into the second stage of clearing the land. No great headway could be made in his battle with the bush until he had reached this stage of prosperity. These indispensable pioneer animals were well suited for the rough work of clearing the land, more suited than horses. They were easily kept as in the summer they roved through the woods and provided for themselves their own fodder. The cost of fitting up a team was trifling, consisting only in the provision of a yoke and chain—and the yoke, nearly every pioneer was able to make one for himself, and if not, he could easily find a neighbor who could. The chain was made by the settlement blacksmith or brought from Detroit. The oxen consisted of broken in or trained to work, steers. From calves they roamed the woods until they were taught to bear the yoke. "Whoa," "Haw," and "Gee," which sounds mean they were to stop, turn left, or turn right, as they were bidden by the driver. The more intelligent of these steers learned the meaning of these three English words quite readily. Having mastered the meaning of this much of our

The ox, let loose from the yoke, is ready to enjoy a rest after the day's toil.

language, they were then ready to take their share in the clearing of the farm.

**C**hopping the Fallow, and Browsing the Cattle, the Winter's work of the Early Settler.

The winter's work of the settler was the chopping of the fallow. First of all the underbrush was grubbed out in the Fall, or before the snow lay too deeply on the ground. The work of chopping down the trees in winter served a second purpose, that commonly known as 'browsing the stock.' When the trees were felled, the limbs were cut off and thrown together in neat piles forming a straight row the full length of the fallow. The trunks of the smaller trees were cut up in lengths suitable for the oxen to haul at the logging, not too long so that they might be pulled through among the stumps handily, nor too heavy to be beyond the oxen's strength in hauling them. Cattle liked to eat and would thrive on the tops of the small limbs, especially those topped with a bud, and with a couple of ears of corn added to this fodder daily, the chopper fed his cattle as he cleared the land and brought his stock through in good shape until the following Spring which he could not otherwise have done without larger clearances.



**B**urning the Brushwood off the Fallow in the early Summer.

Having chopped his fallow of five or ten acres, the next step in the clearing process was the burning of the brushwood of the fallow. This took place in the Spring after the sun had somewhat dried up the fallen and piled up limbs. The settler waited for the opportunity of a fair and high enough wind, when all the piles on the windward side were set on fire, and with the wind blowing a good gale, the other piles would catch fire until the whole fallow was one furnace of flame, heat and smoke. If this burning off occurred in a dry season, the fire might get out of control and do damage to crops, fences, buildings or neighboring woods, but there was little likelihood of this in the county of Kent as the nature of the woods precluded it, but in lands where cedar, spruce and other evergreen trees abounded, there was danger of the fallow fires getting out of control and doing damage. In this respect, the history of Kent has been happily free from this danger in marked contrast with the devastating fires so frequently occurring in the Temiscaming and other northern districts.

**'Niggering'** the trunks of the large trees, a Process of dividing them up into logs by Fire.

When the brush was thus burned away, the next step in the operation of the clearing of the land was the 'niggering' of the body lengths of the larger trees into logs. In Kent, the largeness of the timber was a great obstacle to the clearing of the land owing to the time it would take to fall the trees and then to chop the trunks into the desired length of logs. This work was done by means of fires, a method which the settlers called 'niggering.' Sticks were laid cross-wise on the trunk at the spot where it was desired to make a cutting through the tree, set on fire and kept up until the fire had burned its way through the underlying trunk. This method served the same pur-

pose and was a much easier way of reaching the desired end than chopping, and where fifty or a hundred 'niggers' were kept going at once, and well attended to, the work of a great number of men would be done in a very short time, and by it much hard labor and time saved. This was a work in which all of the family, even the smaller children could take a part, and thus hastened the coming of the time when the great social event of pioneer life, the logging bee, should take place.

**L**ogging the Fallow, the co-operative effort of the whole Neighborhood.

When the brush heaps were burnt off the fallow, and the trunks of the trees cut up into logs, the settler sent out an invitation to his neighbours to come and help him in the next and most important process in the operation of clearing, those of them who could provide oxen were invited to bring them with them. For every yoke of oxen five men would be required, the teamster and four handspike men, and five or six such gangs would be required for a good logging bee. The logging consisted in hauling a number of logs to one place and rolling them up in heaps, the handspikes used for that purpose, the larger logs at the bottom and the smaller ones at the top. The fallow was measured off into strips equal to the number of teams so that each gang would have an equal portion of the fallow to do, and a friendly rivalry was started as to which of them would be the first through with their allotment, a test of the quickness of the team and teamster as well as of the individual men attached to the gang. As soon as the log was drawn up to the place, the larger ones were rolled together with handspikes, the next smaller ones on the top of these, and that as fast as the team brought them in, Any timber small enough to be handled by two or four men was picked up bodily and thrown on the heap. Friendly jibes were passed by one gang at the other and the



work went on with vim and enthusiasm, inspired very often by a mild stimulant from a neighbouring distillery, although the hard work seemed to act as an antidote and drunkenness seldom followed. The gang first through announced their victory with shouts and waving of hats in the air, which all the gangs acknowledged by drinking with them some more of the glass that thrills but does not inebriate, except to the unreasonably intemperate, of which, unhappily every settlement could supply too many examples. This finished, the victors went to the assistance of the gang farthest back in order that the whole fallow might be logged before darkness made it impossible for them to do further work, and that the burning of the log-heaps might take place that same night. The method of lighting these was the very opposite of the brush fallow. The far heaps from the windward side were the first to be started, and back from this, heap by heap, until the last was fired, this, in order that the smoke and heat might not interfere with the work of firing, as each heap had to be started separately. These fires created an intense heat, and it would be difficult and dangerous for anyone to pass through the fallow when all were burning on account of the heat and smoke created. By attending well to the fires and keeping the logs rolled close together, in twenty four hours the log-heaps of the fallow would be pretty well burned up.

**T**he Bee followed by the Dance, the Branding, and finally, the Snake Fence.

If young people abounded in the neighborhood, or the unmarried of both sexes, as they did in the later settlements, the bee had its logical ending in a dance. While their elders were attending to the burning of the fallow, the younger ones made merry to the sound of the rustic violin, the cheerful blaze of a thousand fires adding to the gayety of the occasion, oftentimes a great date in the family calendar, for more than once it registered the beginning of a new family

history in the bush, as some married swain received the assent of another to join with him in the toils and expectations of a future home won out of the walnut and elm swamps of Kent county.

The logging bee ended, and the burning of the fallow successful, then came the branding which was done by the owner alone. Bringing out his oxen, the unburnt logs and brands were hauled together and made into heaps, and kept on fire until the last vestige of what had once been a great forest of trees was reduced to ashes.

Of necessity, the stumps were left in the ground for a few years until the former roots of the trees rotted. They were then easily pulled out by the oxen, hauled together and made into heaps, and the same process of burning them up followed as with the logs.

But the clearance of the fallow was not complete until it was fenced. This was necessary in order that the stock of the pioneer might be allowed to roam at large and feed themselves with such fodder as the woods supplied, and in the very early days, to protect their crops from deer and other intruders. The walnut, whitewood and oak timbers of the fallow were split up into rails, and a snake fence built soon after, if not before, the crop was put in. These fences were very durable. It has not been unusual to find, even fifty years after their erection, many of these standing intact, their rails sound and affording the field crops the same protection as they did the first day they were built.

Thus, tree by tree, before the indomitable will, the persevering courage, and the un-failing industry of the first settlers of the county, the 'finest forest in the world' passed out into history, and in the place where once it stood, fertile fields now are found, yielding their annual harvests, reaped by a perhaps less industrious but a more progressive and scientific race of agriculturists. One generation achieveth, but another obtaineth the profit.



The Wilson creek crosses the Middle road at lot number twenty and thence proceeds northerly to the river Thames, providing in its passage an outlet for the super-surface waters of the westerly section of The Plains.

It will thus been seen that, for the time at least, the extension southerly, of the River Settlement was an utter impossibility.

Scarcely less difficult should have then been the extension northward of the settlement on the lots fronting on Lake Erie. It will be remembered that the lots fronting on the Lake are a mile in length and that the fall northerly from the Lake front is about three feet to the mile. Against that fall the drainage, southerly, of the lands still further north was, then at least, impracticable. Northwards there was no natural creek or channel of capacity sufficient for use as an outlet,—the feeble trickling of the precipitated waters so near the head having proved inadequate to the formation of such a channel. To construct drainage works northwards was, for lack of means, out of the question.

The only hope of settling the interior of the township was therefore the advent of a settler or community brave enough to dare, on the margin of one or other of the creeks above named, the solitude, the hardships and the dangers, known and unknown, that lurked in the depths of the primeval forest. There the night was made hideous by the eerie hooting of the owl. From its unsunned recesses at time would come to the settler's ears the baying of the wolf and thence, at any time might emerge the figure of the Indian savage. Added to the terrors that were real as well as those—the creatures of the imagination—born in the gloom of the forest, were the practical difficulties never experienced or theretofore imagined by the new settler. In spring, the whole territory was an unbroken swamp, its watery contents oozing slowly towards the natural creeks which, at that season, overflowed the deeper central channel to which their waters were usually confined, filling to repletion the shallower reaches of the deepened area which extended some distance laterally on either side. As the season advanced, the country generally dried out, and by mid-summer, in ordinary seasons at least, the whole land became so dry that nowhere—not even in the creek bottom or its margin could be secured,

by digging or otherwise, a drop of water for man or beast. With the exception of a spring on north half lot number four, concession nine which was eventually owned and occupied by Mr. James Campbell, which came to be known as "The Deer Lake," and two others in the same locality of less repute, there is not a living water spring in the whole township. The only possible method then known, of securing a water supply available at all times for man and beast was to make an excavation in the soil of sufficient storage capacity for all requirements.

#### EARLY SETTLEMENT.

To the eye of the new comer, the prospect was indeed dreary in the extreme. Almost everything in Nature seemed hostile. Night and day through the gloom of the woods his body was tormented by mosquitoes and every tree of the forest, in form however magnificent or in beauty however dressed, for him had little attraction, for in each he saw a barrier to his progress and an enemy to be overcome. Around him stood representatives of forest development from the first feeble sprout to the graceful elm, the gorgeous maple or the giant oak. There stood also the skeleton remains of the king of the forest, gaunt and grim, extending to heaven his whitened truncated limbs awaiting dumbly the fiat of the storm that should, with thundering crash, lay him low with his mouldering ancestors which, here and there, around him lay prone on the floor of the forest. Some whose fall had been recent, lay stripped and naked. Others, encased in Nature's green winding sheet, of living moss, had already begun to yield their substance for the sustenance of plants and infant trees which, finding rootage in his decaying surface, flauntingly, in the face of death, up-reared the flag of triumphant life. But whether dead or alive, erect or prone, rigid in death or decomposed so as to collapse under the passing foot, to him, every tree was an enemy that stood or lay in the way of his progress.

Into such a possession had the early settler come. A fertile soil indeed awaited his skill and industry and gave promise of future reward, but what of the present? Before the soil could become hospitable to plant or seed, the original crop must first be cut down and burned off, root and branch. To most of the immigrants the work was new and arduous, the climate, in its extremes of heat and cold, was trying, and few indeed were fortunate enough to escape the chills and fevers produced by the malarial exhalations from the limitless field of decomposing timber and vegetation or by the poisoned bites of the swarms of mosquitoes from which there was no escape.

The first to dare the solitude of the forest



seems to have been John Reaume, who with his wife Ann Trudell, about 1784, settled on the bank of the Thames and proceeded to prepare for himself and family a home in the forest. They were rapidly followed by others, and soon, a prosperous community was formed. Mr. Reaume, it would seem, was the first white man to die in the Township, becoming in 1829, the first victim of an epidemic of smallpox which in that year is said to have borne to their last resting-place a large proportion of the population of the little colony.

By 1803, the settlement had progressed sufficiently to suggest the need of a common place of worship, and accordingly, in that year, was erected on the river bank, three miles below the site of the present St. Peter's, the first Roman Catholic Church in the Township. In 1822, according to the late Judge Woods, in his "Harrison Hall", that old church was abandoned and, in its place erected a new church on the site now occupied by the present structure. That church continued to be a land-mark over the treeless plains for miles around, as well as a place of worship until 1896 when it was accidentally burned. Soon afterwards was erected, on the same site, the Church now existing.

### THE LAKE ERIE SETTLEMENT.

The Lake Erie Settlement originated in 1819 with the arrival, by way of the Talbot Road, of Peter Simpson, Thomas Askew and Robert Shanks driving an ox cart which is said to have been the first wheeled conveyance to have reached the township. Mr. Shanks took up land and settled in the Township of Romney, then united municipally, with Tilbury East, to become the founder of the Shanks family in that township, still so well and favorably known. Messrs. Askew and Simpson both settled on the Talbot Road in the township of Tilbury East. Up to 1825 they had shared together in brotherly fashion, the joys and toils, the hopes and discouragements of pioneer life, but, in that year, they became brothers in a more real sense by marrying, each a daughter of Mr. Thomas Willan, who, by that time had become their neighbour. Mr. Simpson's bride was Miss Ann, aged 18, while Mr. Askew's choice was Miss Mary, aged 16. Arrangements for a double wedding having been completed, the two couples set out together in

quest of a magistrate to perform the double ceremony. On their way they encountered a bridgeless stream, but Love,—as ever, undaunted by a pad-lock or flood, overcame the difficulty by bearing safely to the other side the fair-brides in the arms of their respective grooms.

It was not till seven years after the date of the celebration of this double marriage that the sleeping echoes of the interior of the township were first awakened by the stroke of a settler's axe. In 1832, two brothers, Thomas and Robert Smith—both widowers—hailing from Dumfries-shire, Scotland, accompanied by their respective families, set their faces towards Canada and at last landed at Montreal during the time of a cholera epidemic. There they were detained for two weeks waiting for a Durham boat to carry them westward to what was then known as "Canada West". Unable to obtain lodgings elsewhere, they were compelled to camp in tents on the commons and to supply themselves with the necessaries of life, including water which they purchased at the price of ten cents a pail. At last the eagerly awaited Durham boat arrived and immediately they struck camp and took passage for the West. Those freight-carrying Durham boats seem to have been constructed with flat bottoms and to have been otherwise specially adapted for use in shallow water, their usual motive power being poles operated by the hands and muscles of the boatmen. Besides the crew, this particular boat, at least, is said to have carried on board five yoke of oxen which were kept in reserve for traction purposes in propelling the boat against the current in the rapids encountered in Western passages. In this way they were carried to Kingston, whence they proceeded to Toronto, then known by the less euphonious name of York. From York they went to Niagara by boat and thence, by wagon to Chippawa, where they secured passage on a schooner from which they were landed at Port Stanley. In search of a desirable situation or locality in which to settle, they made a visit to St. Thomas, but failing to find a suitable location, they returned to Port Stanley. There they found awaiting them an invitation from Colonel Talbot to visit him at his residence. At the meeting thence resulting Col. Talbot advised them to visit the Township of Tilbury East, giving them permission to look through the township and to select for each of themselves



and for each of their boys over twenty-one years of age, a 100-acre lot. The brother Robert had, however, been meantime offered a position as foreman in a saw-mill at London (then known as "The Forks") which it was deemed advisable that he should accept. It was therefore resolved that Thomas and his family, consisting of Robert, James, David and Eliza, together with Robert's sons Edward and Robert should proceed to Tilbury as instructed by Colonel

#### GAL ONE HUNDRED & THREE.....

Talbot and that Robert, the elder, should go to London with his youngest son John, in fulfilment of his engagement and rejoin the others in Tilbury as soon as found advisable.

The party thus designated for Tilbury East therefore took passage in a little sloop, from which they were, in due time landed at Cedar Springs, whence they found their way (probably along the blazed trail of the Middle Road Survey) twelve miles into the bush, landing at lot number ten, at which is situated the present Stewart P.O. Miss Eliza, the only woman of the party, when leaving Cedar Springs, parted with woman kind, nevermore for the space of eighteen months, to see the face of a member of her own sex.

The lots were "all before them which to choose", and they finally selected south half lot number 10 M.R.N. as the site of their future residence. Through it meanders the channel of what became thenceforth known as The Ten, or Smith's Creek. Their nearest accessible neighbour being then on the Talbot Road, about six miles distant, they were completely thrown upon their own resources. The time of their settlement was the month of August and the creek was dry—so dry that, in their ignorance of its habits, they had begun to build their shanty in its flats, which, in spring and other flood times were completely overflowed. Fortunately, a visitor from the Lake settlement had given warning of their mistake and the structure was moved to higher ground. For the present, however, their trouble was not the over abundance but the famine scarcity of water. None was to be had short of the Lake, distant as already stated, about six miles. It was therefore necessary to detail two of their strongest young men for the purpose of bearing through the woods in pails, sometimes suspended from a pole resting on the shoulders of the bearers, the precious liquid. For the first season, at least, supplies of

wheat or flour must have been borne in, in the same fashion. Indeed it is on record that supplies of flour were, for years afterwards carried all the way from Amherstburg in fifty pound sacks on the shoulders of newcomers, as they successively arrived. Soon, however, the Smith families would have wheat of their own production and then, if not before, Mr. Smith's eldest son Robert constructed a hand grist-mill or machine, said to have been his own invention by which the household grists and those of neighbours were for some time ground. This feeble device, with its deer-skin bolt, punctured and fitted for service by the use of a red-hot wire was soon superseded by an ox-driven mill which, in turn gave place to steam driven machinery equal to the ordinary standard of its day.

The Smiths were not long left in their condition of loneliness and solitude, although as to who were their first successors in the procession in which they were, themselves, the leaders, there is some uncertainty. It is certain, however, that among, if not the first, to become their neighbours were Matthew Martin and his wife with their family, then consisting only of girls. Immediately following Mr. Martin, came Alexander Stevenson and his wife with their family consisting of both boys and girls. Mr. Martin settled on south half lot number four, concession nine and Mr. Stevenson on north half lot number four, concession ten, just across the Road allowance. Mr. Martin had had experience as grieve or farm manager on a large farm or estate in the south of Scotland and immediately set to work to clear a field, on which he succeeded in sowing fall wheat the same year. From the time that the produce of that sowing was reaped, he never left his home in search of work, purchased a pound of flour, or, other than for change of seed, bought a bushel of wheat. That was perhaps, an achievement unparalleled in the community. In all his work he was neat, forceful and successful, becoming eventually one of the wealthiest farmers in the County.

Mr. Stevenson, who also came from the south of Scotland, had, in his native land, been a blacksmith. In disposition, he was kind and generous—ever ready to help a neighbour by service at the forge or on the farm, while in sickness (no doctor being available) he would give wisest lay prescription for man or beast and would, in case of accident, with tenderness and wonderful skill, set a bone or dress a wound. He was, however, less forceful and industrious than was his neighbour across the road and



consequently found it necessary to make frequent withdrawals to the United States to earn the means of supplying the needs of his household.

Soon after the advent of the Stevensons the little colony on the Smith's Creek was cheered by the arrival from the north of Ireland of Charles Campbell and his family, consisting of his wife and six boys and three girls. Mr. Campbell settled on north half lot nine M.R.N. Four, at least, of his six sons became, each the owner of half a lot of 100 acres, but James, alone, settled permanently in the Township. His location was north half lot number four in the ninth concession. His career was honourable and

#### GAL ONE HUNDRED & FOUR.....

prosperous, but only one of his four sons has seen fit to settle down permanently in his native Township.

From that time on, the different settlements were year by year reinforced by fresh arrivals to each of whom was given hospitable and enthusiastic welcome without question as to country, clan or creed. Without an hour's unnecessary delay, a raising bee would be called and in the morning of the first available day, would assemble on the designated lot, every able-bodied man, axe in hand, to clear a site for, and out of the standing timber in the surrounding woods, before the setting of the sun, to construct for the accommodation of their new neighbours a primitive shanty. Such structures, rough and rude as they were, afforded shelter and a degree of comfort commensurate, at least, with the modest expectation of their prospective occupants who had come determined to do and endure what might be necessary to provide for themselves and families a home that they might yet be able to call their own.

Slight as was the obstruction which the erection of a structure so rude could possibly put in the way of Hymen's activities, a still easier pathway was afforded him in the case of a young couple, one of whom belonged to the Campbell family who are said to have commenced house-keeping and to have made their home for a year in the hollow interior of a monster buttonwood, or sycamore tree whose open door and capacious interior, as it lay prone on their farm on north half lot number six (or seven) M.R.N. on rent free terms involving no increase in the assessment value of their estate.

In 1833 arrived in the Township John Coutts, who, a year earlier had left his farm in the parish of Glengairn, Scotland, bearing

the imposing name of Tullochmecharrick to make for himself, his wife and four stalwart sons and two daughters who accompanied him a home in the wild woods of Canada West. Landing first at Ancaster in the County of Wentworth, Mr. Coutts took a year to look around for a suitable location and, at last, attracted by the wide range of treeless pasture lands on the margin of the Thames, then less flooded than they subsequently became, he settled on the north half lot number nine in the fifth concession. That lot, adjacent to the Wilson Creek, wooded on a level sufficiently high for drainage purposes was in the immediate vicinity of the coveted pasturage and, in contrast with the land dearth and dearness prevailing in Scotland which had made him hopeless of being able to provide there at any possible rental, farms for his boys, here, all around stretched thousands of acres of fertile lands eagerly inviting occupation by the stout heart and the willing hand.

It is interesting to note that Mrs. Coutts was a cousin of Mary Robertson, the poet Byron's boyhood love.

Three years later, John Fletcher, who, in early boyhood, had through accident or other cause, lost entirely the use of one of his lower limbs, had been educated for a school teacher. In that capacity he had found for some years employment in the Parish of Glengairn, near what had been his boyhood home. Influenced by the example of his friends, the Coutts family, he resolved to follow them to Canada and accordingly, in 1836, with his young wife, set sail for Quebec, and found his way to Port Stanley. There he obtained employment in his chosen profession for one year, receiving at the end of the period of his engagement, as compensation for his services a yoke of oxen, partially trained, and a horse. With these and a rude cart to which the oxen were hitched and behind which the horse was led, he made his way through woods and partial clearances to Chatham, then an insignificant village or hamlet. Two or three mile down the river Thames, in the Township of Dover, he was fortunate enough to obtain employment as school teacher. In 1840, he purchased from Robert Smith (who, later, became a successful farmer in the Township of Harwich) the south half of lot number two, concession 8, Tilbury East, agreeing to pay therefore \$50.00 in cash and to deliver to the vendor, a year later, eight three-year-old steers and one heifer. On the property, of which ten acres had been cleared of timber, was a log house and barn. There,



with an interruption of two years during which he taught school in the Township of Romney, he made his home till the time of his death in 1873. His career as a farmer, notwithstanding his physical handicap, was most prosperous. For several years he taught school within the Township near his home, remuneration for his services being chiefly, if not entirely confined to school fees. Money being in those days extremely scarce, cash payments except for taxes were seldom made or expected. For that reason the collection of even trifling sums such as school fees should have been then probably impracticable. Mr. Fletcher was, however, always willing to accept and his patrons were equally willing to make settlement of such accounts in the shape of manual labour either in land clearing or on the farm in lieu of cash. By such means, together with his own spare-time

#### GAL. ONE HUNDRED & FIVE .....

industry, a considerable portion of his farm soon became fit for cultivation and meantime his stock of cattle, hogs and horses began to assume considerable proportions. For seventeen years prior to his death (1856-1873) he held the position of Township Clerk, coupled for several years with that of Treasurer as well. By the time of his death he had acquired and, with the exceptions of portions theretofore deeded over to some members of his family, still owned about 800 acres of land.

Meantime, the advent of fresh settlers was being maintained with increasing rapidity. On the Middle Road, in the vicinity of the Wilson Creek, soon after the arrival of the Smiths, originated a prosperous settlement of which one of the first members was John Wilson, a native of the north of Ireland who was destined to take an active part in the initiation, locally, of Municipal government.

In a section of the south easterly part of the township which is drained by the Hickey Creek a settlement was commenced in comparatively early times. The settlers were mostly all of English descent. From one of these, named Badder, the settlement early derived and still bears the name of Baddertown. Being for the most part adherents of the Methodist Church, the settlers were at an early period in the history of the township able to erect for themselves a place of worship, which, to their credit, has been ever since maintained.

The centre of the township was settled largely by people of Scottish descent with a considerable mixture of immigrants from the north of Ireland. Most of these were, members or adherents of the Presbyterian Church, though, for some time unorganized and destitute of religious ordinances of any kind. In 1846, through the instrumentality of Rev. Mr. Sutherland of Eckfrid, a congregation was organized, and in a short time thereafter a log church was erected for their accommodation on south east part lot number sixteen, M.R.N. That structure was replaced in 1862 by a substantial frame building on the same site, which fittingly served its purpose until superseded, in 1904, by the present handsome structure.

The south west part of the township was, at first, settled by a mixed population, of whom were a large proportion of people of Irish descent. Those adhering to the Roman Catholic faith had access to a place of worship on the Middle Road in the Township of Tilbury West, but no Protestant Church was, for some years, established. Help came, however, about, or possibly a year or two after 1860, by the arrival of the Rev. Wm. Burgess who came as a missionary of the English Congregational Church. Mr. Burgess was a zealous and effective Minister and the beneficent effects of his labours soon became, and still are manifest in the locality.

#### DISCOURAGEMENTS.

In spite of the industry of the early settlers and the gradual improvements thence resulting, conditions continued to be extremely trying and consequently many became discouraged and some left the country in disgust. Indeed many that remained readily confessed that they remained only because of inability to leave. One settler on a lot on the Middle Road near Merlin is said to have sold out his farm, with all improvements, for a pair of boots. In these he was able to get out with dry feet and utterly vanished from the scene of his tribulation. Another name-forgotten man who settled on north half lot number thirteen, M.R.S., is said to have sold out his property for a barrel of whiskey and preferring apparently, a small sample of goods that were wet to a hundred acres of land in the same condition, passed, otherwise from sight and memory.

#### DAWN.

Over the scene of discouragement, however, in a few years began to show on the horizon the first streaks of dawn. The tree stumps



that for years after the toilsome removal of the standing timber impeded sorely the progress of the plough began at last to yield to decay in the earlier clearances, and as the emancipated area increased from year to year, a corresponding increase in the acreage devoted to wheat production took place. In those early days the crops were peculiarly abundant and in consequence a moderate prosperity soon began to throw its radiance over the community.

With improved conditions, however, the compelling hand of necessity which had theretofore stirred to utmost capacity the physical and mental energies of the settlers was withdrawn and a short period of reduced activity appears to have set in. During that period, the early settlers, finding from their fruitful fields produce sufficient for the supply of their frugal needs, ceased to exert themselves as formerly, for the extension of their clearances. The result was that, for a time, only slight increase in the arable area of their farms took place. Nature, however, has her own way of correcting her children

#### **CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED & SIX** .....

and her correcting hand was soon felt by the youthful settlement. Some time in the fifties of the century appeared the wheat midge or weevil and the wheat crop was by its ravages so reduced from year to year that at last enough wheat was not produced within the Township to supply its own necessities. In 1866, the year in which the present writer, as a young man arrived with his father and family, our supply of flour was purchased at the rate of ten dollars a barrel. Not much of it was used by our household, a cheaper substitute being found in corn meal which, as mush and johnny cake, became our staple diet in common with most of our neighbors.

(About, or perhaps a little before the time of the arrival of the midge pest, several families from the neighborhood of Montreal made their home in Tilbury East, bringing with them a knowledge of the manufacture of potash. Amongst these were the Richardson, Stewart, Laing and Ainslie families. Perhaps the most enterprising amongst these was John Richardson, who came with his own family and also accompanied by his own parents and the other members of his father's family. Mr. Richardson purchased from Messrs. John and Daniel Kerr the south half lot number fifteen, M.R.N., a lot well wooded with elm timber which, though then of no merchantable value, was the king of potash producers. Commencing with his

usual energy, Mr. Richardson not only had his farm speedily cleared, but demonstrated to his neighbors that he could, during the clearing process, make wages, at least. The result was that soon the woods all around were resounding anew the stroke of the woodman's axe, which soon produced a large increase of the area of deforested land.

In 1866 the hopes of the community were revived by reports that began to be circulated that a variety of wheat had been produced or discovered that was proof against the ravages of the midge. That same fall, a number of the Tilbury farmers had been supplied with the seed-wheat of the new variety, and in the fall of the next succeeding year wheat was sold at seventy five cents per bushel. Since that time there seems to have been no return of that particular midge and the fields extended in area, as they were by the clearance made for potash production, became available for more extensive sowing and more abundant harvests.

#### **MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT.**

Prior to the year 1850, when came into force an Act of the Province of Canada for the erection of Municipal Corporations, et cetera, the Province of Canada was, for Municipal purposes, divided into several large districts, as the divisions were called, each comprising more than one County. One of these, known as the Western District comprised the Counties of Kent, Essex and Lambton. The Council for each District was composed of Commissioners or councillors elected annually by the legally qualified electors resident within the district, each Township being entitled to return annually one such representative and no more. The Western District held their meetings in the Town of Sandwich, to reach which, over the roads or trails then existing must have been, indeed, for the more distant members, a most serious undertaking.

Prior to the first Township meeting held in Tilbury East (which was held in January 1836) it would appear that statutory provision had been made, not only for the election of District Councillors, but also for the election in each Township of certain officers for the management of purely local affairs. Such meetings were held on the first Monday of January in each year under the Statute, provision being made for holding interim or extra meetings under magisterial warrant. All appointments seem to have been formally made (after being moved and



seconded) by a show of hands. The local management Board consisted of three men who seem to have been known as "Commissioners" or "Wardens". Other local officers so appointed were Clerk, Treasurer, Pathmaster, Pound-keeper, Auditor, Fence-Viewer and several others, all appointments being for one year only.

Judging from the records still extant, these elections would appear to have been taken rather seriously. In 1842, for instance, Peter Simpson, already named, was duly elected as representative in the District Council. For some reason not disclosed, he had been found ineligible for the office and therefore, by virtue of a warrant under the hand of J. W. Little, Esq., J.P., a special meeting of the Electors convened on the 27th day of January of the same year for the election of a fit and proper person to take his place. The Candidates at this meeting were Mr. Francis Trudell from the river and Mr. Duncan McDonald from the lake district. At the close of the first day, the majority of the votes polled were in favour of Mr. Trudell. At the request of Messrs. James Smith, John Willan and Thos. Smith, the poll was continued next day, at the close of which Mr. Trudell was still ahead. Still unsatisfied,

#### GAL ONE HUNDRED & SEVEN .....

Messrs. Thos. Smith, W. F. Robertson and James Smith demanded and obtained an extension of the poll for next following day. At the close of that day, Mr. McDonald was declared duly elected.

Mr. McDonald, however, did not take his seat at the Council, though no explanation of his failure so to do is recorded. From the record it appears that a third meeting was held on the 18th day of April of the same year, in pursuance of a warrant under the hand of John Dolsen, Esquire, Warden of the District "For the purpose of choosing and nominating one fit and proper person to serve as a Councillor on the Municipality of the Western District". The Candidates were H. W. McNeil, nominated by Mr. Robert Syers, Mr. James Smith and Mr. Reuben Hall; and Mr. Francis Trudell, on motion of Mr. Wm. Houton, seconded by Mr. John Wilson and Mr. Alex. McGregor. The result was the election of Mr. McNeil by a majority of seven votes.

In 1839 no Town Meeting was held, as appears from the following recorded minute:

"Account of the Township of East Tilbury for the year 1839—Owing to the disturbances

in the Province last winter and all the settlers being out in the militia service, there was no Township Meeting held, and of course the officers for the preceding year were bound to serve as if they had been elected in January meeting past."

In 1841 a like failure of the Town Meeting had occurred as shown by the following minute under the hand of John Coutts, Town Clerk:

"Tilbury East, 9th January, 1841.

"There has been no Town Meeting held in this Township this year owing to the Magistrates not issuing a warrant for the purpose, and, of course, the officers of the preceding year have to continue."

On Monday the 7th day of January, 1850, was held the first meeting under The Municipal Act, Twelfth Victoria, Chapter 81, under which, for the first time, the business of the meeting was restricted to the election of five Councillors for service in the Township as a Local Municipality. The Councillors so elected were John Smith, John Coutts, John Wilson, Francis Wharram and John Fletcher for whom were polled, respectively, 81, 76, 72, 70 and 59 votes.

This Council, at their first meeting on Monday, 21st January, 1850, by unanimous vote, appointed as their president, Mr. John Wilson, under the old Saxon Title of Reeve, as by law provided. The only other recorded transaction being a resolution descriptive of the shape, size and device chosen for their corporate seal which is thus described:—"One and a half inches long by one and a quarter inches wide, of an elliptical shape, the device to be an acorn in the centre, entwined by the rose, thistle and shamrock; on the upper side the word "Municipality", on the lower, "Tilbury East". At the next Session, held on the 11th of February of the same year, the seal was produced by the Reeve for inspection and approved. That session must have been an arduous one. It was continued by adjournment, from day to day, for four successive days during which, along with other business, six by-laws were passed, providing for the appointment of officers and other purposes. Some time during the fourth day, Mr. Smith was, by resolution, allowed to withdraw, for amendment, a by-law by him introduced and immediately follows on the record a resolution passed for adjournment until ten o'clock P.M. when (as the record shows) Council resumed and passed as number six, Mr. Smith's by-law.

At this meeting were appointed under by-



law, the following amongst other officers:—James Smith, Clerk; Robert Sloan, Assessor; Andrew Wilson, Collector; Angus Grant, Treasurer; and Richard Carr and Robert Smith, Auditors.

On the first day of January, 1853, the Township of Romney, which up to the end of the next previous year had continued to be united municipally with Tilbury East, acquired the full status of an independent municipality.

For many years no professional land-surveyor was employed. Probably none such was available. So long as the original surveyors' stakes remained, little difficulty in ascertaining the true boundaries of lots and highways would be experienced, but as these began to yield to the tooth of time, it became absolutely necessary that some one capable of running lines should be employed officially. Fortunately was found at hand, a man for the purpose, both reliable and capable, in the person of Robert Smith, who was officially appointed to the position of Township Surveyor, his fee for services being fixed at ten shillings (presumably York) per diem. Equipped with a primitive compass (now in the possession of the present writer) he did his work, running lines for the municipality, and for individuals as well, to the entire satisfaction of all concerned.

## DRAINAGE.

Because of the extreme flatness of Tilbury

### GAL ONE HUNDRED & EIGHT .....

East, artificial drainage was indispensable.

Without it not only was road construction impossible, but no crops could be raised. The first settlers, being located on the lands immediately adjoining the creeks found it possible, individually, to effect the drainage of their small clearances, but if the rest of the Township was to become fit for settlement, drainage would, necessarily have to be accomplished by the united efforts of all the community. The imperative of necessity for such co-operation, therefore, soon laid its hand upon the growing settlements and the compulsory powers, first of the annual Town Meeting and subsequently of the Municipal Council, by Legislative authority conferred, were eagerly hailed and enforced for impressing upon every settler the performance of Statute Labour and the application of every spare dollar of

municipal funds for highway drainage and construction. Fortunately ditches made for road construction were usually available as outlets for the drainage of the adjacent lands, and to this fact is largely due the eagerness, as shown by the records from 1836 to recent times, with which applications had been made to Town meeting and Council for leave to commute for statute labour liability for a number of years for the immediate construction of road ditches, ostensibly for road construction or improvements solely, but in reality to obtain drainage for their own lands.

From the time of the earliest settlement, it seems to have been well understood that under the provisions of Common, if not Municipal Law, the occupier of lands on a higher level was restrained from constructing drainage works which should have the effect of causing injury to lands on a level lower than that of his own, but for years there seems to have been no realization of responsibility, legal or otherwise, for damages arising to lower lands through flooding of the natural creeks through the artificial drainage of lands on a higher level. In the course of time, however, as drainage improvements went on and as the artificially drained area increased, it eventually became evident that the creeks themselves were becoming inadequate to bear their increased burden without encroaching more and more upon the lands immediately adjoining that had, in a state of Nature, been free from inundation and that something should be done for the relief of the lands so injured. This conviction found first expression practically in connection with the McDougall Creek which about 1863 was deepened and enlarged under the provisions of The Municipal Act on the petition of the owners of lands to be thereby benefitted or which could use said creek as an outlet.

Soon after, followed the deepening and enlarging of the Smith's and Wilson Creeks, under the provisions of The Ontario Drainage Act, and under Government supervision, on the petition of the Council without reference to the land-owners immediately interested.

In 1873 was passed a by-law, under which was afterwards deepened and enlarged the Burgess Creek, and in 1874 was passed a by-law under which was similarly enlarged the Hickey Creek.

Soon followed the construction of the King and Whittle Drain which was the last of the more important works for drainage by gravitation. There followed, however, from year to year, numerous drains of less magni-



tude, nearly all of which formed tributaries of one or other of the larger works above referred to.

For some time it seemed that all the drainage difficulties had vanished and that the time had come to rest and be thankful. Such a time never comes, however, to a community that is alive.

Again trouble more serious than ever arose and this time from a new and unexpected quarter. In 1878, Mr. Harry Forbes landed in Canada and in the following year took up his residence on south half lot number four, concession seven in Tilbury East. For some years he quietly pursued his calling as agriculturist, living in friendly social relations with all his neighbours, many of whom he had known—some of them as relatives, and all of them as friends, on the upper reaches of the Don and the Dee in Aberdeenshire, Scotland, of which he was a native. By some means he had become possessor of a hundred acres of land within the southerly margin of the marshy Plains a short distance from his original farm the southerly part of which he had hoped to be able to cultivate and from the rest of it to find rough pasturage for his cattle, if not to cut from its plains, hay for them as an additional, or emergency ration in time of need. To his disappointment, he found that no part was sufficiently dry in spring for cultivation and that if it was to be of any use, it would be necessary to enclose a section of it for protection from the surrounding waters and to install a pumping outfit for discharging from the enclosure such waters as might therein accumulate. Accordingly he set to work and carried out his scheme, which proved, in some degree successful. His

## GAL ONE HUNDRED & NINE

bank, however, being composed, mostly, of the surface peaty mould, proved too light to make sufficient compression of the surface soil to prevent leakage, and it became apparent that to be successful, the redemption of such lands would require to be undertaken on a more extensive scale. In the course of his investigation of the surrounding plains, he satisfied himself that the high water in the spring, which had been his chief obstacle, was caused, in part at least, by the increased rapidity with which the drainage waters of mostly the whole of the Township of Raleigh and Tilbury East were being discharged into the Plains area through the operation of artificial drainage works. Believing also that the reclamation of the whole area of the Plains lying south of Jeannette's Creek could be accomplished by the co-operation and to the mutual advantage of both the interested land-owners and the Municipality, he made repeated appeals to the Council, but without effect.

At last, on July 10th, 1884, he presented to them a petition signed by a majority of the interested land-owners, praying for the drainage, by banking and pumping, of certain Plains Lands lying south of Jeannette's Creek, containing 5,000 acres.

The Council of that year consisted of Col. Martin, Reeve; John A. McGregor, Deputy-reeve; and W. C. Fletcher, Henry Sales and Henry Wilson, Councillors. Deputy-reeve McGregor and Councillors Fletcher and Sales were disposed to regard the petition favorably, but the Reeve and Councillor Wilson were both opposed to its reception.

As a preliminary precaution, it was resolved that the whole matter, especially as to the Council's responsibility for protection of the lands in question against increase (over what had existed in a state of nature) of the depth or area of submergence thereof, as a consequence of the construction of artificial drains under the control of the Municipality, should be submitted to Mr. Pegley, their Solicitor, for his opinion and advice.

Subsequently, the Reeve admitted the receipt of Mr. Pegley's advice, but, for what he deemed prudential reasons, declined to



submit it to the Council. That refusal was naturally taken by the members favorable to the petition, to indicate that the Reeve's own position had not been on all fours with that taken by the Solicitor.

However that may have been, the matter, for that year, was allowed to rest.

In the following year (1885) the membership of the Council was unchanged, except that for Mr. Henry Sales, who was retired and substituted by Henry Powell, who, likewise, was favorable to the petition.

On the second day of March 1885, a fresh petition having been presented to the Council, Mr. Augustine McDonell, C.E. was instructed to make a survey of the territory described in the petition and to make report, with plans and specifications of and assessment for such works and mechanical means as he might deem necessary for the carrying out of the prayer of the petitioners. Having been able to make his survey on the ice before the end of the same month, Mr. McDonald's report was in the hands of the Council ready for their meeting on the tenth of April next following, but was, at that meeting, laid over till their next meeting on the fifth day of the following May, when the Clerk was instructed to prepare a by-law for its adoption. On May 28th that by-law was provisionally adopted, and on August 12th, it was finally passed.

Both within and without the Council, however the measure was met with most violent opposition, and was finally quashed on appeal to the Courts on a technicality, the ground being a clerical error, the costs, amounting to \$4,000.00, being paid by the Municipality.

Mr. Forbes then became to be regarded, and for a time so remained, the most unpopular man in the Township. He was not the man, however, to be put down permanently by one defeat.

On January 24th, 1887, a fresh petition, but in terms similar to those contained in the former, was presented to the Council which, that year, was composed of John A. McGregor, Reeve; W. C. Fletcher, Deputy-Reeve and David Simpson, Geo. Hope, and Henry Powell, Councillors.

By the Council that petition was again referred to the same Engineer, who, on March 24th presented his report, which, in some details varied slightly from his former report

in the same matter.

On May 16th an adopting by-law was provisionally passed, and in due time was finally passed.

On July 28th of the same year the contract for the construction of the works was let to The Chatham Dredging and Contracting Co. for the sum of \$45,500.00, being a sum considerably under the estimate of the engineer in that behalf.

The works contemplated by the by-law consisted of:

(1) A heavy embankment along the boundary of the drainage area as far as was necessary for protection from the inflow of

#### CAL ONE HUNDRED & TEN.....

exterior waters. This embankment was formed of materials excavated by a dredge in the construction of a large drain, contiguous to but outside the embankment, and in all, probably, about eight miles in length.

(2) An internal drain, also constructed by a dredge, for receiving and conducting to the pumping station the drainage waters of the whole drainage area.

(3) A pumping station at the lower or westerly end of the internal drain, in which was a steam operated "flash" wheel revolving in a narrow channel by which the waters were lifted five or six feet above the bottom level of the internal drain and discharged into the adjoining outlet of the Wilson Creek.

The debentures issued for construction were sold at a premium, and the work was let and completed at a cost considerably under that as estimated by the engineer, and the surplus thus arising was used towards the redemption of the debentures, covering, at least the amount of the debenture and the interest coupons first falling due.

To most of the assessed owners, especially such of them as were possessed of no reserve financial resources, this provided a welcome and substantial relief. Their position was nevertheless precarious. The land, after the first laborious ploughing, had to lie fallow for a year, and in the following spring had to be subjected to further toilsome preparation before becoming fit to receive the



seed for a crop. Under these circumstances, the maintenance of their families and the payment of taxes, augmented as they were by the yearly debenture levies, became, as the years went on, a burden which the less affluent among them were unable to bear. After some five years of heroic, though seemingly unavailing effort, a number of them were constrained to apply to the Council for an extension of the period limited for debenture redemption. Unable to comply with that request the Council applied to the Ontario Legislative Assembly for a special Act to empower the Council to amend their by-law so as to add twenty years to the time thereby limited for the payment of the amount of their indebtedness still outstanding. The prayer of this petition was granted and a special Act passed accordingly. Under the authority of that Act, an amending by-law was passed, under the provisions of which the time limited for the payment of the remainder of the indebtedness represented by the debentures still outstanding, was extended twenty years and the amounts leviable yearly against each lot and part of lot assessable therefor, proportionately reduced, provision being made for the redemption of the original debentures still outstanding, as they severally fell due by means of the reduced yearly levies, supplemented by the issue of a debenture in each year to the end of the currency period of the original debentures, equivalent to the amount of the said reduction in each year, of the said levies respectively.

By the majority of the interested land-owners, the relief accorded under the provisions of the special Act and the amending by-law was accepted with gratitude, while such of them as preferred to meet their assessments in terms of the original by-law and duly gave notice to that effect, became legally entitled to exemption from the operation of the special Act and the amending by-law thereby authorized.

In actual operation, the flash wheel with its connected machinery was found most effective for the discharge of the waters from the internal drain, but difficulty was experienced from the first, in persuading the waters to proceed along the drain at sufficient speed either to give prompt and efficient drainage relief to the more distant lands or to bring to the pumping station, except in

times of flood, water sufficiently fast to give steady employment, at full pumping capacity, to the pumping machinery.

In a few years that defect was cured by the installation of a second pumping station some two or three miles back from the first equipped with two steam-driven centrifugal pumps. The cost of that second installation was raised by the issue of debentures yielding interest at four per cent. which were sold at or slightly above par.

Outside the drainage territory, the drain upon the general funds of the township caused by road and bridge construction within the drainage area, caused some mutterings of discontent for a time but it soon became apparent to all that an addition of 5,000 acres to the tillable area of the township could not fail to become an economic advantage as well as an important contribution to the salubrity of the surrounding country.

Soon after the completion of The Forbes Works, a like drainage scheme, known as "The Dauphin Drainage Works", was set afoot for the reclamation of about 2,500 acres of marsh lands on the north side of Jeannette's Creek, along the southerly bank of the river Thames and a little later was launched "The McGregor Drainage Scheme" for the drainage (also by embanking and pumping) of 500 or 600 acres of plains or

#### GAL ONE HUNDRED & ELEVEN.....

flooded lands adjacent to the Kent and Essex County Line.

These three schemes, therefore, together embraced about 8,000 acres of land which were, previous to being thereby reclaimed, valueless for any purpose except the raising of musk rats and bull-frogs.

To the late John A. McGregor, the late Wm. C. Fletcher, the late Henry Sales, the late Geo. Hope, the late Henry Powell and Alexander Gracey, the last named of whom alone survives, belongs the chief credit for service within the council in inaugurating and forwarding the interests of The Forbes Drainage Scheme, in the face of much opposition and abuse. Outside the council however, they had the valuable support of a large number of influential men without whose support and influence the scheme could not have been carried through.

In view of the successful operation of all



these works for a quarter of a century or more, and of the immense benefit thence resulting not only to the interested land-owners but also to the township generally, it is not easy to understand or sympathize with the strenuous opposition with which The Forbes Drainage Scheme was, at its first introduction assailed. It must not be forgotten, however, that the initiation of such a scheme is not unattended by serious risks, nor that in its continued operation (to which the Council, as trustee would be committed under the by-law) would expose the Municipality to risk of liability in damages arising from possible negligence on the part of the Council in discharging the duties assumed by them on behalf of the Municipality.

To such risks the friends of the scheme were not blind. They had, however, faith in the practicability of the scheme and in the successful and profitable operation of the proposed works. They further believed that the danger of being subjected to payment of damages arising from future negligence on the part of the Council was exceedingly remote. In any case they were prepared to accept of such a possibility rather than risk the probability of an action at law to compel the protection of low lying lands in and on the margin of the plains complained of, which could be, in their opinion, effectually accomplished only by the construction of works costing little, if any less than that (as estimated) of The Forbes Works.

## EDUCATION.

At the time of Confederation, the Township had progressed sufficiently to be able to establish and maintain within its limits four Public Schools. Since then, their number has been, at least, doubled, giving ample opportunity to every child within the Township for the attainment of such education as the primary school is calculated to afford.

From these Schools and the rude culture of bush and farm, have gone forth from the Township a number of men who have taken a useful and honorable place in the world, though none of them, perhaps, have become known to fame. Of these may be mentioned the late Mr. Alex. Coutts, one of the earliest settlers who had the honor to represent, in the interests of the Conservative party, the riding of West Kent in the Ontario Legislature, and

Mr. Archie McCoig, whose maternal grandfather, the late Mr. Matt. Martin, Sr. was one of the first settlers in the Township. Mr. McCoig who is, himself, a native of the Township and a product of its Schools, represented for many years, West Kent in the Dominion Parliament, and to-day holds the position of Senator.

Of those of the natives of the Township who have become members of one or other of the so-called learned professions, may be mentioned the following:—Of the family of the late Mr. R. H. Waddel, an early settler, one son; of the family of the late Mr. Andrew Wilson, one son and one grandson; of the family of the late Mr. David Ferguson, an early settler, one grandson; of the family of the late Mr. John Coutts, who, with his late father of the same name, was one of the first settlers in the Township, four sons, (besides grandsons enumerated under a different surname); of the family of the late Mr. John Fletcher, (Tp. Clerk), four grandsons; of the family of the late Rev. Wm. Burgess, one son and one grandson; of the family of the late John Kerr, one son; of the family of the late John Laing, one son; of the family of James W. Smith (whose father, David Smith, was a member of, and accompanied on their first arrival in the Township, the first family to settle on the Smith Creek), one son; of the family of the late Charles Farquharson, two sons and four grandsons; of the family of the late Mr. Harry Forbes, one son; and of the family of John Fletcher, (nephew of John Fletcher above named), one son; of the family of Timothy Feenan, one son.

## GOLD HUNTERS.

Some time in the early sixties, a number of the young men of the Township left for



the gold mines in British Columbia. None of them were overstocked with capital and some of them were compelled to use all their ingenuity to enable them to reach their destination. John Wilson, one of the earliest settlers, already mentioned, is said to have covered the intervening distance over the Rocky Mountains on foot. James Stewart, also named above, with a number of others, among whom were Henry Richardson, John Reid, James Fletcher, and probably William Hickey and others, went by boat from New York to, and by the usual means of transport at the time available, crossed the Isthmus of Panama. Mr. Stewart had the misfortune to lose his purse in New York and had to use his wits to make his way. By some means, he had been allowed to get employment as ship's carpenter, on the boat on which his more fortunate fellows had taken passage, though he really possessed no knowledge of ship construction or of the duties which he had undertaken to discharge. Fortunately for him, and possibly for others as well, no necessity arose for the exercise of skill above what he possessed, and he landed with his companions at the Isthmus with funds sufficient to enable him to reach, with the others, his destination.

## POLITICS.

In Politics the population was divided, with preponderance of votes usually in favor of the Reform Candidate. For several years, Mr. Archibald McKellar had been the popular Representative for the County of Kent, but in the first election for the Dominion Parliament in 1867, he was defeated by Mr. Rufus Stephenson, then Editor of The Chatham Planet.

In one of Mr. McKellar's previous political campaigns he held a meeting in the old Town Hall of the Township of Tilbury East. At the time, the Rev. Wm. King was arranging for the establishment of a refuge in the Township of Raleigh for slaves escaping from the United States. However sympathetic they may have been with the slaves as long as they were in the United States, the people

of Raleigh and Tilbury East did not like the idea of having them as near neighbors, and the opposition to the establishment of such a refuge was being met with violent opposition in both Townships. Mr. McKellar was known to be sympathetic with Mr. King's plans and to have been taking an active part in aiding their accomplishment. Thinking that this question, if brought home to Mr. McKellar, might be the means of making a split in the ranks of the local Reformers, Mr. John Wilson who was, in politics, strongly Conservative, asked how the education of the colored people was to be carried on and what Mr. McKellar would think of having them attend the Public Schools along with the white pupils. To this Mr. McKellar replied that the question asked was rather a difficult one, but it must be remembered that the British constitution took no notice of color and that it was probably just as well that it did not. If notice were taken of color, it would follow that notice should be taken of grades of color all the way from white to black and if that should be done, he was afraid that neither Mr. Wilson nor himself would pass as of first grade.

For Mr. Wilson, Mr. McKellar and all their generation, life's battles are past and gone. Most of the questions that then divided politicians into hostile parties have ceased to divide the community. But the question arises, "Are we any better or any wiser than were our fathers?" Have we, with our added experience, been able to free ourselves from the prejudices which we have inherited or acquired, or have we become better able than were they to regard matters of public concern without regard to our own personal interests and to record our vote in accordance with our own convictions of right and duty without fear, favor or affection of, for or by any person or persons whomsoever. If, in this direction, we have, individually and as a people, made progress, there is hope for the future. If we have failed so to advance, we have morally and politically lived in vain.



## ROAD DEVELOPMENT IN KENT COUNTY.

BY W. D. COLBY  
COUNTY ENGINEER AND ROAD SUPT.

THE earliest settlers came to Kent County between the years 1790 and 1800 and were greeted with a fertile soil but a vast pathless forest of gigantic trees and in many localities with impassable swamps. Locations for settlement were chosen for the most part along the banks of rivers and streams or along the Ridge in proximity to Lake Erie as these lands were higher and besides being near the water afforded the pioneer a route upon which he could travel.

As settlement slowly increased along the river Thames, roads soon were cut, the road-work being done by the sparse, courageous pioneers who had but few tools and almost insurmountable barriers to overcome and, needless to say, they followed the line of least resistance which accounts for the many devious windings in these roads today. Settlement was also taking form along Pain Court and Big Creeks in Chatham Township, trails being made along these streams to a point in the rear of Louisville where a cross-cut route was taken to the river road and thence to the settlement where Chatham now stands, but nothing save the most primitive kind of cart-tracks pierced the interior of the Township until the Rebellion of 1837.

The first organized attempt at road making was begun in 1795 when the Government instructed Abraham Iredell to lay out a road of communication between the Chatham townsite and Rond Eau where Shrewsbury now stands. This was completed in 1797 and some time later cut out and established as far as where Blenheim now stands and named the "Mill Road" or "Communication Road", the latter name of which it bears to-day, but this road was not established to Rond Eau until as late as 1844. The motive of this work was to provide a place of settlement for the U. E. Loyalists, but which they did not take advantage of.

About 1816 and later, settlement began on the "ridge" along Lake Erie, the settlers being given their lots provided they would

clear a roadway in front of their lands, Colonel Talbot being the Government Agent, a character who never considered matrimony and whose life was full of many interesting as well as amusing episodes, and which road bears his name to-day.

In 1810 the Raleigh-Harwich Townline was the mere semblance of a road as this section of the County was far in the rear of other locations as to settlement, nor did it improve much as time went on till sometime prior to 1830, when the road was gravelled from Chatham to Blenheim although that feature was not apparent to some of its travellers who narrowly escaped foundering in its bogs. Some dignity was imparted to this highway by toll gates at frequent intervals whose rates of toll suggested the excellence which was not observable in the road.

The Townline between Chatham and Dover Townships was as an early traveller described it "the worst turnpike in the world," travel being a task bordering on the impossible when the soil is overcharged with moisture. Stephen Kinney was the first to locate on the Chatham side of the Townline in the 9th Concession soon after the Rebellion of 1837, where he opened a tavern and entertained those who were so unfortunate as to be forced by the pressure of circumstances to travel by his place.

The first bridge spanning the River Thames was a frame structure built in 1816 at the foot of William Street, Chatham but was later destroyed and rebuilt in 1838. During that interval however a second bridge was built at the Eberts farm just at the easterly limits of Chatham. The first bridge to be built at 5th Street where the present one stands was in the year 1848, it being subsequently swept away by the floods and later rebuilt.

King Street, Chatham was little or no better than a trail through a partially cleared wood when Stephen Brock in 1830 as some claim, or 1835 as circumstances seem to fix as a more probable date, opened the first frame store in Chatham on the site of the present Bank of Montreal corner, but it gradually grew better as Chatham grew larger and by 1830 the street was entirely paved with cobble stones and cedar blocks, these in turn giving away to a brick pavement about the dawn of the 20th Century which pavement was treated to an asphalt surface in 1922 and to-day presents a very fine appearance and smooth riding surface.

In the year 1841 soon after the Union of Upper and Lower Canada, the Municipal Act was passed which gave local self government to the Villages, Towns and Townships and Counties of Upper Canada and it was from that time on that road development began



to show marked improvement. People began to seek locations in the interior and such roads as the Prince Albert, Centre and Lindsley in Chatham Township were opened to connect the settlements along the Sydenham and Thames rivers, the Middle Road through Raleigh and Tilbury East were cut out and many other sideroads and concession lines began to take form. Soon after the Honourable George Brown appeared in Kent and put the Town of Bothwell on the map and had Peter and Main Streets graded from the River Road along the Thames to connect with the County Line between Lambton and Kent.

These were hard days for the road-maker and traveller as the County was so heavily timbered and being flat afforded but little natural drainage. The worst of the bogs and mires were paved with logs placed across the roadway and in many localities had to be staked at the ends to keep them from floating away. Such roads were called "corduroy" roads and many living today still hold a vivid recollection of these necessary evils. Planks were also used as a means of getting over the road in different parts of the county, and in many cases long stretches were in evidence.

In 1852 the Municipal Loan Fund Act was passed by Parliament which allowed municipalities to borrow money from the Government at a low rate of interest. Chatham Township participated in this Loan prior to 1880 to the extent of nearly \$10,000 which amount was expended in experimental road making on the river road for a distance of about four miles East of Chatham. It received a coat of "alleged" gravel dug from a sandy loam pit, besides other injurious attentions as to require the Statute of Labor for years to neutralize the effect.

Artificial drainage now began to occupy the minds of the inhabitants and has been persistently pursued up to the present time both by gravitational and pumping schemes with the result that practically every farm and road in the County is well drained or at least has access to an outlet. This work was without a doubt the first step in the direction of better roads and highways.

About the year 1866 Statute of Labor came into effect in the Municipalities of Kent which required land owners to do a certain number of days work out of the year on the public roads. This Act has been revised from time to time but continued into effect until very recent times, the last municipalities abolishing it in Kent in the beginning of the year 1925. While Statute of Labor as we look upon it to-day is a very cumbersome and ineffective way of improving our highways, nevertheless it certainly did much to improve

the conditions of the roads and expedite travel in the last four or five decades and with it the foundation of our present roads was laid.

During the last decade the automobile and motor truck have practically supplanted the horse drawn vehicle due to the fact that the public were eager to find a medium by which they could shorten the time in travel and thereby propagate their business with greater dispatch. This led to the demand for roads suitable for all year traffic and at the same time submit a smooth riding surface. The Provincial Government in order to satisfy these demands passed legislation granting aid to the counties who were desirous of improving roads and in which this county took advantage of in 1917. The Government and County officials held a meeting and decided which roads within the County should be designated as County Roads with the result that some 340 miles of the main travelled roads made up the County System, the Government paying 40% of the cost of construction and maintenance on County Roads and 60% on County Provincial Roads which roads were heavier travelled than County Roads and constituted about 17% of the System. A road superintendent was appointed by the County to supervise all work.

In 1920, after consideration the previous year, the Government designated Provincial Highways across the Province and Kent fell "heir" to two of these trunk lines, one following the Longwoods road along the north bank of the Thames from Bothwell to Chatham, thence across the river through the city and along the 4th Concession Road through Raleigh and thence to Tilbury, and the other following Talbot Street along Lake Erie. By these Highways approximately 88 miles were eliminated from the County System as the Province assumed charge and the county to contribute 20% of the cost of the work.

In 1925 the County Road Systems over the entire province were reclassified but the roads in Kent for the main part underwent little change to that which was previously designated, although the subsidy from the government now being 50% instead of 60% and 40% as before and the status of County Provincial Roads being changed to County Roads.



Township within the County, under the new legislation passed by the Provincial Government whereby they would be granted 30% subsidy on the cost of construction and maintenance of roads in the township system should they appoint a Road Superintendent to supervise the work and abolish Statute of Labor. Previous to this the townships were paid 20% of the cost of work if they had abolished Statute Labor.

The result of this county coming into the County Road System has made a marvellous change in our roads, practically every mile designated has been drained, graded and received some surface treatment. We have about 37 miles of concrete pavement in the system outside of the connecting links to County Roads within the Towns which are also paved. The roads between Chatham and Pain Court in Dover, the Harwich-Kateigh townline from Chatham and Charing Cross, 5½ miles of the Chatham-Dover Townline, Wallaceburg to Lambton County line on 15-16 Sideroad and from Wallaceburg through Dresden to North Thamesville with the exception of two miles have all been paved. Our graveled roads are now in for motor traffic during all seasons. We have constructed permanent concrete and steel bridges, with width permitting easy passage of two fast moving vehicles and which are very numerous due to the many creeks and rivers, the most notable of which is the bascule lift bridge completed in 1925 across the River Thames at Prairie Station which cost \$132,000.00.

The northern route of the Provincial Highway has been paved from Tilbury to Thamesville, a tar macadam road being laid from Tilbury easterly to the Drake Road, Raleigh and the balance of concrete. With the close of the present year this road will be entirely paved through Kent. The Southern Road is now an excellent gravel road.

Since the county participated in the Road System there has been expended approximately \$2,215,000.00 on the County Roads and it has contributed \$314,000.00 to the Provincial Highways, but is in the proud position to-day that it does not owe one cent for that work, all work being paid for on the "pay as you go" policy rather than the issuing of debentures.

While the Township System has not had sufficient time to show much progress as yet, we have every confidence that it will bring forth good results if the officials and people get behind it as they did with the County System.

In closing, I cannot refrain from showing the progress the City of Chatham has made in the condition of its streets. Twenty years ago the streets were in the wet seasons almost impassable with mud and ruts that were as deep but to-day it would be hard indeed in travelling around the city for one to find an unpaved street.



Chatham was selected as a town-site by Colonel Simcoe, first Governor of Upper Canada, in 1793, with a view to establishing there a military post and ship-building station. The first division of the site into town-lots was made by Surveyor Iredell, in 1795. It became an incorporated village, with George Witherspoon as the first reeve, in 1850. It was incorporated a town in 1855 and a city in 1895. Kent, with Chatham as its county town, was established as a separate county from Essex and Lambton in 1850. Its municipal history was associated with that of the county until 1880, when it withdrew, and has since carried on its own independent municipal existence.

## BLENHEIM

ave log-cabin can be designated by the name.

The owner of this groggery was George Hughson. The other two who shared with him the honor of being Blenheim's pioneer residents were Thomas Lynch, a tailor, and Harley Halstead, a farmer and contractor. In 1844, Mr. Halstead completed the construction of the Communication Road from Talbot street to the Rondeau, and thus gave the newly surveyed town plot transportation facilities to Chatham on the one side and Lake Erie on the other, an important aid to the future settlement of the town.

ost office at first named Rondeau.

The first store was established in 1845, by two brothers of the name of the Pass, these continued in business but a few years when it passed over into the hands of two other brothers, long identified with the subsequent history of Blenheim, Orrin and Redman Gee. The Gees, in addition to their store, established a brick yard, and were the first to erect a brick building in the town. A post office was established in this store in 1849, and one of the brothers, Orrin, became its first postmaster. The post office was named Rondeau, though the village itself had previously been named Blenheim. This was done to avoid confusion as the name

The surrounding district, an unsettled forest until 1850.

Blenheim had already been applied to a post office and township in Orford township.

Up to this time all that section of the township east of the village to the townline, on both sides of the Talbot road was unsettled, and was known as the "Ten Mile Bush." It was therefore situated in the midst of a splendidly timbered region. The land which hitherto had been held in the hands of speculators, was being opened up for settlement, and consequently there was a boom in the activities of the district. With increasing industries, an increasing number of men were being employed and houses began to be erected for their accommodation. Timber,



## TOWN OF BLENHEIM



GEO. RISEBOROUGH



M. DENHOLM

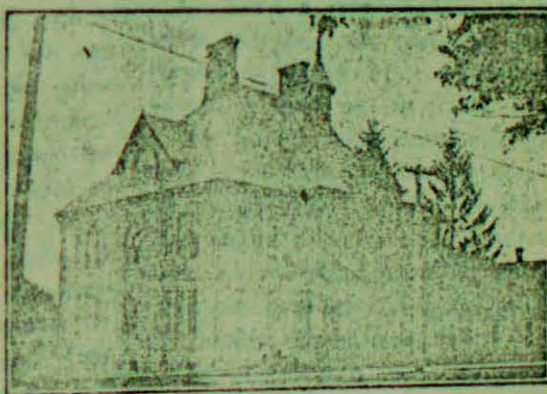
### PRESENT-DAY CITIZENS OF THE TOWN OF BLENHEIM.

unlike what it is was in the days of the first pioneers, had now become of marketable value. This was especially true of three of the varieties widely distributed in the southern section of the township of Harwich, oak, elm and walnut. Oak was exported as square timber and as staves for barrels. Elm was manufactured into staves and walnut into lumber, both for export. For the first thirty or more years of its history Blenheim was a lumbering centre and owed its progress to this industry. It was one of the many lumbering villages then so thickly distributed throughout the county, but one of the few, also, to survive and continue an urban centre, after the supply of timber had been exhausted. Its favorable position surrounded by an excellent farming district, secured for it, a large volume of agricultural trade which it still continues to hold and increase.

From this it will be seen that Blenheim is one of the newer corporate towns of the county. This year, 1925, is the semi-centennial anniversary of its incorporation into a village. For the first thirty-five years of its history it was a part of the municipality of Harwich, a centre of its municipal business and the trade of the southern half of the township. Its incorporation as a village took effect on the first day of January, 1875, the personnel of its first Council consisting of A. L. Bisnett, reeve, and

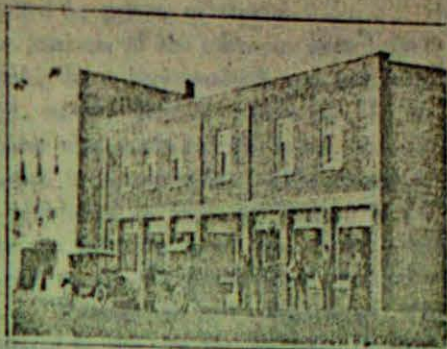
T. R. Jackson, John McMichael, George Mallory and Lewis Kinne, councillors.

A. L. Bisnett was well worthy of the honor of being elected the first reeve of the newly incorporated village, as he was also, the first Mayor when it became a town. His life is a splendid example of the success which under favorable circumstances, attends consecrated aim and effort. His father died when he was a youth, leaving his mother with her four children, of which Alfred was the oldest, unprovided for. In consequence he was compelled to forego further education, a handicap which retarded the progress of all his future enterprises. He engaged himself while a boy to a lumber firm, where, under these necessitous circumstances, he learned to practise the saving virtues of self-reliance and industry. He steadily advanced his position, until he became first the proprietor



THE PUBLIC SCHOOL, BLENHEIM.





**IDLE HOUR INN,**  
SITUATED AT THE NORTH-WEST CORNER OF  
TALBOT STREET AND COMMUNICATION  
ROAD.

**KNIGHT'S SALESROOM  
AND THE TEMPLE THEATRE**  
SITUATED AT THE SOUTH-WEST CORNER OF  
TALBOT STREET AND COMMUNICATION ROAD.

of a lumber-mill at Blenheim, then a carriage bent-goods factory, a grist-mill and a store, finally rounding up the sum of his activities by purchasing eight hundred acres of unimproved land, which he converted into a first-class farm. During all these years he was a leading spirit in the Municipal Government of the village and town, and was as zealous and successful in administering its affairs as he was looking after the interest of his own private business. To him is rightly given the credit of being the most prominent figure in the first fifty years history of Blenheim.

T. R. Jackson was a native of the village. He was the eldest son of John Jackson, one of the early pioneers of the county, who settled in Romney in 1815, but moved to Blenheim after it was set apart for a town-site and became a pioneer of the east end of the village, owning both lots on either side of Talbot street. His son was born here in 1841, and spent his early life upon the farm. Later, he entered into a banking business in Blenheim and became senior partner of the firm of Jackson, Fuller & Company having also a branch in Leamington. He creditably filled a number of responsible public positions, served four consecutive years as Reeve of Blenheim, and

was Warden of the county in 1879.

John McMichael was also one of the early settlers in the county. At first he lived in Toronto, but about 1848, removed to Blenheim, and there he made his home, becoming a man of substance in the community. He was justice of the peace, a member of the county council, county warden and reeve of the township, and school director, acting in the latter capacity for forty years, while for many years he was captain of the militia. His death occurred December 2, 1896, when he was eighty-two years of age.

The other two members of this first Council held similar creditable records in the future history of the town.

The town is indebted, also, to Stoddard, whose activities are described in another chapter, to Morrish & Ash, whose factory was burned in 1873, and to others, who helped in that busy era connected with the timber days in the history of the county. But with the disappearance of the wood-lands, the town settled down to what it has since become, a rural centre depending for trade and commerce upon the growth and prosperity of the farming district surrounding it.

The town was a busy, industrial centre during the lumber era, but the passing away



of the industries connected with the manufacture of wooden products left the town practically an agricultural centre. Although the town has increased in population from 1212 in 1881 to 1565 according to the last census, there has not been a commensurate advance in its commercial and industrial activities in that period. In 1864, the town contained, two steam saw-mills, one grist mill, two general stores, three groceries, four blacksmith shops one saddle and harness shop, three hotels, two turning factories. To-day the town contains but two industries a grist mill and a canning factory, but the number of commercial houses has increased. It now contains two drug stores, one hardware, two general stores, five garages, two bakeries, seven groceries, one shoe store, and several other smaller shops. One of the hotels has been replaced by a business house, leaving only two, the Idle Hour Inn and the Cadillac.

The town presents considerable attractions as a place of residence for retired farmers and others. The houses are neatly built and surrounded with pleasant gardens, brick structures predominating. It has ample transportation facilities. A provincial highway, the Southern, which places the town on the tourist route between Detroit, Toronto, and other eastern places, passes directly through the town. The Ridge road, on which it is built, is well gravelled and connects with Ridgetown. The highway to Chatham is paved more than half its distance, a promise of further pavements in the near future on all the leading highways of the district. All other highways are well kept up and supply convenient routes of traffic to farmers seeking to do business in the town. In addition to its highways, the town is served by two railways, the Pere Marquette, running east and west from Detroit to St. Thomas, and the Wallaceburg and Lake Erie line running from Sarnia to Erieau. The Michigan Central is but five miles distant to Charing Cross to which there is regular connection by bus line.

Blenheim has a peculiar feature of being built away from the conveniences of lake, river, or stream of any kind. Consequently the water supply is by deep wells which are controlled for household purposes by private enterprise. The fire department of the corporation has its own system of wells and makes provision for emergencies by the erection of tanks located at different places but sufficiently numerous to cover the requirements of every locality. These are always kept full, in readiness to serve their purpose for every emergency. The town is lighted, as are all the other towns of the

county, with hydro-electric, Chatham being the distributing centre. In addition, the town is served by natural gas from the Tilbury oil fields, and from surrounding private wells. These also are developed and controlled by private enterprise.

The interests of the town are kept before the public by a very readable and well conducted weekly journal edited by J. M. Denholm who succeeded his father, Andrew Denholm, in its ownership. This newspaper was established in 1873, by Samson & Ash under the title, the Rond Eau News, since changed to the Blenheim News, and after passing through several ownerships was purchased by the late Mr. Denholm in 1880. It enjoys a large circulation and has a wide influence because of its advocacy of high morals and the ability displayed in its local and editorial departments.

Blenheim is well served by all the religious denominations. It has one Roman Catholic church, one Baptist church, one Anglican, two United churches, one Latter Day Saints church and there has recently been formed a small congregation of continuing Presbyterians. The first denomination to erect a church building was the Methodists in 1856. It was called a Union church where both Methodists and Presbyterians preached for a time. Before this all the denominations used the school house for their services, and here, also, Mrs. Stoddard and Mrs. Sheldon established the first Sunday School of the village. The Methodist church was served in those days by itinerant preachers, both lay and ordained men, of whom Mr. Jeffrey of Raleigh seems to have been the first. The Anglicans were served occasionally by Rev. F. W. Sandys, a travelling missionary whose parish covered the whole of the southern part of the Lake Erie district. This denomination built their first church in 1861, with the Rev. Mr. Lampman, the father of the well known Canadian poet, as its first rector. This was a frame building with a seating capacity for two hundred, which is still in use having been removed out of the town four miles east for the Ridge Community church. The Presbyterians erected their first church in 1866, during the pastorate of Rev. Alexander Waddell, the first minister of the United Presbyterian church, on the Ridge, Harwich, inducted there in 1854, and for thirty six years afterwards laboring in Blenheim and vicinity.

These original wooden buildings have all been replaced by brick structures. The first brick building erected was that of the Baptists in 1878. The Anglicans built their present building in 1891, a solid brick structure with a tower and steeple with a seating capacity for two hundred and fifty.



The Methodist church erected their present building, now called Chatham Street United church in 1881, a solid brick building with a seating capacity for four hundred and fifty. The Presbyterians built what is perhaps the best appearing and largest of all the churches of the town. The corner stone was laid on September 11th, 1895, and is now known as Septemeber 11th, 1895, and is now known as the Erskine United church of Blenheim.

As with its religious, so also is it with its educational institutions. The town is well equipped with schools. From the very first its people gave attention to the need of educating their children and the establishment of good buildings. In fact, for a time, it excelled all other places in the county in the provision which was made for school buildings. A writer of forty years ago, visiting the county, wrote of Blenheim Public school, "Of the Public school buildings in the county outside of Chatham, that at Blenheim bears the palm for beauty of design, elegance of finish, extent, and perfect adaptation to the purposes for which intended. Not only does this building eclipse any in the county, but compares favorably with the best in any village of Ontario. Its cost was \$13,000; it has six departments, controlled by as many teachers, and enjoys an enviable reputation as an institution of learning." Unfortunately this building was burned down in 1899, but it has been replaced by a very creditable structure in 1900 containing eight rooms and large enough to accommodate over three hundred pupils. For higher education a Continuation School has been built containing four school rooms and an assembly hall besides teachers' apartments. This school is now in charge of four teachers with an enrolment of three hundred for this year 1925.

End.



BOTHWELL.

THE town of Bothwell, according to the last census had in 1921 a population of six hundred and thirty three inhabitants. It is situated in a favorable location, in the township of Zone, enjoying good transportation facilities from the main lines of both the Canadian Northern, and Canadian Pacific railways and the Longwoods road, a provincial highway and paved, connecting Toronto with Windsor. It is also surrounded by an improving agricultural community on which it at present depends for whatever of business and trade is transacted in the town, and to which source it must look for whatever of progress awaits it in its prospective future.

Bothwell owes its status as a town to the development of the oil interests in its neighborhood, or rather to the 'oil boom' incident to that development. Its incorporation took place in 1867, by a special act of Parliament, having never enjoyed municipal existence as a village, though its present population would not justify a standing any other than that of a village.

The settlement of the vicinity commenced in the year 1852, by the purchase of a tract of four thousand acres, lying to the north of the Mohavian Indian Reserve, and including the entire site of the present town, by the Honorable George Brown founder of the *Toronto Globe*. In that year the line of the Great Western railway had been located through this district and Mr. Brown saw in this an opportunity for a splendid business proposition selling the hardwood timber off this tract for lumber, and in cordwood to the railway when it was put in operation, and in utilizing the cleared land afterwards for farming purposes. He also was the founder of the town. From the remoteness of competing points, and the future promise of the surrounding country as a farming district he conceived that point to be a desirable place for establishing a trading centre. After it had been cleared, he had that part north of the railroad surveyed into town lots, established saw-mills to manufacture the marketable timber of his lands into lumber, and built a furniture factory employing about thirty hands. In these days he had the nucleus of a considerable town established when the oil-boom blew down upon it in 1863. In his survey, Mr. Brown made provision for the two streets which still remain the principal thorough-fares of the town, the one, Main street which connects it with the Lambton County Line, and the other, Peter street connecting with the London road.

After these initial undertakings of Mr. Brown, others came in and began to assist in building up the town. A grog-shop was one of the first of these additional institutions to be established, an eighteen by twenty-four foot structure named "*The Sebastopol*", enjoying it was said a patronage so great that crowds were often unable to gain admission, and had therefore to be served out of doors. Others in the same business followed in rapid succession, until no less than five hotels were firmly established here before 1857, an unmistakeable evidence of the social conditions of the times. The first store was established in 1856 under the proprietorship of Messrs. Campbell and McNab who subsequently removed to Chatham. In 1858 a second store was opened by William Laughton, who became a permanent resident of the place and continued to prosper during all the changing vicissitudes in this history of the town. On the south side of the railroad a third store had been built by a man named Crawford, which was burned down some time later. During these years, and before the oil boom the greater proportion of the workmen in the village and vicinity were under the employ of Mr. Brown. Money was a commodity almost unseen, the circulating medium being mainly orders on Mr. Brown in payment of wages which were readily accepted by the merchants in exchange for goods, or in payment for debts, a condition which continued until, and for some time after, the boom days in the oil industry.

The oil boom which lasted several years, was occasioned by the discovery of a well in 1863 on the Colville farm near the Mosa townline and close to the London road by one John Lick, a Pennsylvania promoter, followed by a second on the Chambers farm south of the town and a third on the Gordon farm which yielded one hundred barrels a day. In addition to these discoveries the price of crude oil itself went up from \$1.00 a barrel for the first shipment of one thousand barrels to the fabulous price of \$10.00 a barrel in 1864, which reached the maximum of \$12.00 a barrel in 1866. The opening up of the industry in this district,



with this enhanced price in the value of crude oil brought a legion of American operators into the town with limitless wealth, who began to invest their moneys both in prospecting and boring for oil, and also establishing hotels and business houses and dwellings in the town. Business blocks rose up rapidly, some of them brick and three stories high, including hotels, banks, billiard halls and the numerous other institutions required for a town with a population of six or seven thousand. A magnificent public hall, called *Gatling Hall* was erected by a brother of the inventor of the famous Gatling gun. Hotels sprung up, like mushrooms in the night, some of them of immense size, not only within the limits of the town, but throughout the whole of the oil area. For these building operations alone, an army of workmen were required. But when the bottom fell out of the boom, a backset was given to the progress of the place, from which it has never since recovered.

In 1865 Honorable George Brown sold out his interests to the 'Bothwell Land and Petroleum Company', who allowed the land which had been devoted by him to agriculture to turn into commons, while they concentrated their energies in extensive operations for the discovery of oil on their acquired lands. With the collapse of the oil industry it took some considerable time to bring about a stable re-adjustment of the affairs of the town and vicinity. The numerous hotels became deserted, business houses were closed, and an utter abandonment of all the interests that gave life and prosperity to it took place. This was followed by a disastrous fire which swept away the greater part and the finest buildings of the town, including *Gatling Hall*. Following this, the boom town gave place to a common-place, and unattractive village, without anything new to enhance its growth, save the trade that could be obtained from the surrounding farming district.

The special Act of Parliament of 1866, which incorporated it as a town took effect in January of the following year, with Mr. John Taylor, a secretary for Honorable George Brown, its first mayor, and John C. Collier, reeve, with ten others as councillors, two from each of the five wards into which the town limits had been divided.

The history of the town since the fire has been one of slow though steady progress. Several handsome brick blocks have been built up on its two principal streets, some creditable residences, and a fine town hall of red trimmed with white brick which has a seating capacity of about four hundred, contains stores and offices on the ground floor and presents a very good appearance. Its churches, schools, and other institutions are sufficient for its present needs. In its electric light plant, water-works system, telephone system and public park, it has kept pace with recent discoveries in supplying modern conveniences and comforts to its citizens.

Its industries include a saw-mill, a sash and door factory and a grist-mill, which find in the surrounding agricultural districts an ample market for their productions. In Bothwell, Zone township has an attractive centre for its industrial, business, educational and social requirements, while the town on the other hand, has in the township a dependable source for its future progress and prosperity.



# DRESDEN.

THE town of Dresden is built up on both sides of the Sydenham river at the head of navigation, occupying an area of about six hundred and twenty three acres, the greater part of which is on the south side of the river. It is situated about twelve miles from Chatham to the south of it and the same distance from Wallaceburg to the west of it. The honor of being the first resident here belongs to Gerard Lindsley of the Thames river settlement who settled on lot four concession five, as early as 1825, but the honor of founding the town is conceded to Daniel Ross Van Allen, a prominent lumber merchant in the early days of Chatham. He became a resident there in 1845, when all the surrounding district was an almost unbroken forest, as managing clerk in a small store carried on at the point where Dresden is now situated. Thinking this locality, with the Sydenham navigable to this point and all the district around a rich and fertile land heavily timbered with the best of marketable hardwoods and elm, a good situation for a townsite, he purchased seventy acres from Gerard Lindsley, and in 1852 had twenty acres of his purchase surveyed into sixty town lots. In 1854 a post-office was established to which the name of Dresden was given by the postal authorities and with John Blackwood as the first post-master. South of Mr. Van Allen's town plot, William Wright, who settled in Dresden in 1840, had about the same time an area surveyed into lots, which he named 'Fairport' and which continued to be the name of the place for some considerable time.

In order to get the place established as a centre of trade, Mr. Van Allen built there an hotel, a grain ware-house and a merchant's shop in which he carried on business for a time. Mr. Wright also, established on his location a store and tavern, to which he later added a grist-mill, the first to be erected in the village.

In the immediate neighborhood, beyond the town limits, the British and American Institute had in 1840 begun the establishment of their settlement of refuge colored people, and quite a colony of them soon grew up about the town. A store, a mill, a house of refuge, and a cluster of cabins were erected, and with these for a beginning the settlement soon became a prominent feature in the development of Dresden, and continued as such for the next thirty years of its history, until the abandonment of the Institute work in 1870.

The growth of the village at the first was very slow. Two stores, an hotel and a school

house were all that existed in 1850 upon which to base the expectation of an important urban centre to be established in the future at this point.

Soon however the prospects of the village brightened materially. The number of settlers locating on the surrounding lands were increasing rapidly, especially that part north of the river. The navigable waters of the Sydenham were extensively used for their convenience, both in bringing them and their goods into the settlement, and transporting out whatever of products they had available for an export market. Especially was this true of the timber products of the district, of which, like all other timbered parts of the county, there was no lack.

Addition after addition both in the number of its houses, industries and population continued until in 1862, there were three mills, one grist and two saw-mills, and four stores erected, their sustenance made possible by the growing requirements of the increasing number of new settlers locating on the farm lands of the surrounding district, and the trade in lumber and cordwood which was now at its height. From a population of three hundred and fifty at this date, it increased to nearly a thousand, in the next decade, at which time it was incorporated a village, while in 1882, when it became a town, its inhabitants numbered over two thousand people (2082). Unfortunately the census of 1921 shows a population of only one thousand three hundred and thirty nine so that while the town itself has been increasing in material wealth, there has not been a proportionate increase in the number of its inhabitants.

Dresden was also fortunate in the quality of the men who located here, and the success which attended their enterprise and thrift. One of these, Alexander Trerice, deserves special mention. He was born in Elgin county in 1835 of Scotch descent. His grandparents were early pioneers of Nova Scotia where his father was born. He removed to Dresden when he was twenty years of age, and remained there until his retirement to north-western Canada in 1891, his personal history being a part and a conspicuous part of the municipal and commercial history of Dresden, as it expanded first into an incorporated village and then into a town. Although he had the advantages of nothing



more than a public school education, yet he developed in ability—both as a business and public man—as he seized new opportunities for advancing his own and the interests of Dresden. At first he employed himself as a carpenter and joiner, a vocation which he gave up to become a carriage manufacturer though on a small scale. Moving still onward, he erected a saw-mill which he operated successfully for many years. Finally, he rounded off his achievements by establishing a ship-building plant, where he erected five vessels, three steam-boats and two sailing vessels, one of the former, the "*Byron Trerice*", named after his son, did duty for many years as a transport vessel on the Sydenham, a valuable asset in the building up of the town at a time when it lacked the railway facilities now enjoyed by it in the services rendered to this section of the county by the Pere Marquette railway.

Mr. Trerice was the first reeve when it was incorporated a village in 1872, and the first mayor when it was incorporated a town in 1882, and warden of the county in 1878. He was a strong supporter of the Baptist church and an ardent Conservative in politics.

Associated with the activities of Mr. Trerice in building up the town have been the industries operated by the McVean family, Smith's Woolen mill, and Rudd's carriage factory. After the lumber and cordwood business had ceased when the supply of timber was exhausted, it was necessary, if the town should give employment to its two thousand inhabitants, to have some stable industries established. This need was met in respect to two such, established in the early history of the town, a grist-mill and a wood-working factory, both of which came later into the possession of Alexander McVean.

The McVeans came from Scotland in the beginning days of Ontario's settlement, in fact, their family were the first white settlers in the Gore of Toronto. Alexander McVean was born in Weston, 1829, and after learning the milling trade, settled and operated a grist-mill at Yarker, Ontario. He married Sarah Hennery of Kingston, and to them were born six children, five sons and a daughter. Looking out for an opening which would provide occupation for his sons, he came to Dresden and purchased, first, the grist-mill in 1872, and two years later the wood-working factory, manufacturing hubs, spokes and bent-goods for wheels.

The grist-mill was taken over by his son, Sandy, in 1878, who operated it until 1887, when he built an additional mill, a large roller flour-mill, with its attached elevator, but still using the former stone-mill for corn-

meal and buckwheat flour, of which he did an extensive business.

The wood working factory was operated by his two sons, Osgoode and William, who came into sole possession in 1890, on the retirement of their father from active business. To provide for his other two sons, John and James, Mr. Alexander McVean purchased a hardware business, eight years previously, 1882.

In these three spheres of activity, the five sons continued energetic, industrious and respected citizens of the town during the whole period of their business careers, achieving a well-merited success which gave to their family name a place of prominence second to no other in the past fifty years history of the town. The grist-mill and the hub, spoke and wheel factory are still the main industries of the town.

Owing to its situation, Dresden is assured of a good commercial trade from the surrounding rural districts. Paved roads connect it with Wallaceburg, to the west of it, Thamesville to the east, and Chatham to the south. These with its railway facilities and navigable stream ought to assure it a stability and progress commensurate with the increase of growth in wealth of the farm lands surrounding it, and augur for it an increasing development both in the quantity and quality of its manufacturing industries.

Finally, if one were to single out the chief attraction of Dresden we think this would be found in the quality of its private residences. Few centres of its size in Ontario, and none in the county, can surpass it in this respect. It has good public buildings, in its town-hall, and schools and churches, but in these it is as in other towns of its size. But in beautiful residences, beautiful both in architectural design and in their surroundings, and in the size and number of them, the town has a feature of attraction that would bring prestige to a much larger centre and gives to the place an air of prosperity and comfort which a passing traveller cannot fail to appreciate.



CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS—DRESDEN.

1825. Gerard Lindsley located on lot four, concession five, of Dawn, now Camden township.

1839. Josiah Henson, settled on lot two, concession five.

1840. British and American Institute established at Dresden, on lot three, concession four of Dawn township, later Camden township.

1845. Daniel R. Van Allen having purchased seventy acres from Mr. Lindsley, had twenty acres of it in this year surveyed into sixty three town lots.

Shortly after William Wright, to the south of it on lot three, concession five, Camden Gore, had a plot surveyed into lots which he named 'Fairport'.

1850. Camden Gore taken off Dawn township and added to Camden township.

1854. Post-office established here and named Dresden by the P.O. authorities with John Blackwood the first Postmaster.

1855. Alexander Trerice located at Dresden.

1862. Population 350, of whom majority were colored people.

1864. First bridge erected across the river.

1871. The first Newspaper established by Alex Riggs, *The Dresden Gazette*.

1871. Institute lands sold ( $1\frac{1}{2}$  acres reserved for market) and a total of \$40,000 realised.

1872. Institute merged into the Wilberforce Educational Institute of Chatham.

1872. Dresden incorporated a village, with Alexander Trerice, reeve, and Alexander Watson, C. M. Clancy, W. G. Huff and Horatio Hughes, councillors.

1872. The steam-boat "*City of Dresden*" built by Captain John Weston.

1882. Incorporated a town.



## RIDGETOWN.

The south-eastern section of the county of Kent has in Ridgetown its own centre of trade, a flourishing town which bears the same relation to Howard township which its sister town of Blenheim does to Hurwich. When a post-office was established at this place, it was given its present name, from its situation on the watershed running from east to west across the county midway, between lake Erie and McGregor's Creek or the river Thames, locally known as the Ridge. The selection of the summit of this plateau for the townsite gives it a high and dry location, in contrast to the low-lying lands, so characteristic of much of the neighboring district to the south and north-west of it, and lends added attraction to it as a clean, healthy and pleasant place in which to live. The town is situated twenty miles from Chatham, the near city, eighty five miles from Windsor and about seventy from London, leaving for it a large territory of excellent and fertile lands with which to establish a trade, a circumstance that ought to promise it a bright and progressive future.

The Ridgetown district was opened up for settlement in the year 1822. Some years before this there was laid out across the bush a road—from the Talbot highway to the Thames river which was used for military purposes during the War of 1812, but no settlement was made along this road until William Marsh settled on lot nine on the tenth concession of Howard township in 1823. He was followed immediately after by James Watson who located on the opposite lot from him, with Edmund Mitton and Ebenezer Colby settling on the two adjacent farms on lots ten, on the ninth and tenth concessions respectively. On these four lots the town is now situated.

On their arrival, this quartette of pioneers found the whole surrounding district a forest in which oak, walnut, beech, hickory and maple, were the chief timber trees. Wild fruits, such as berry bushes, crab apple and wild cherry trees were also found distributed here and there throughout these woods. Here these four, with Wilson, Scane and others added to their numbers built for themselves homes, very primitive in character and without too much surplus of room for their accommodation. The Mitton family, comprising ten members, were housed in a log dwelling, fourteen by eighteen feet in dimensions, one story high, and the others had similar dwellings. The growth of the settlement was very rapid from the very first. The land was high and dry; the soil, one of the most fertile in the province; and com-

munication from outside points to the place was easily made by way of the Talbot road and by way also of boats on Lake Erie. It thus became a place of popular location until all the lands of the neighborhood were taken up. Clearances came into existence rapidly both as to their number and size. Yet not withstanding the rapid growth of the settlement, nothing to justify the name of a village was established before the middle of the century on the lands where is now situated Ridgetown. In 1851, the survey into town lots was first begun. At that time a blacksmith shop established by James G. Mitton, a store carried on by Malcolm McLean, and a schoolhouse erected in 1830, was all that existed of a nucleus from which has since been built up the present business centre, now noted for its pretty homes, wide streets, and progressive business houses.

From the date of its survey progress towards a village of some consequence was commenced. In that year the first church was built by the Presbyterians on the site where later has been erected their present commodious structure at a cost of \$20,000, and other institutions were added to the place as the needs of the surrounding community seemed to require it. But at no time for the next twenty years did the place show any inclination to a progress which would lift it above the status of a small rural trade centre for the supply of a limited local demand.

In the meantime an event took place in the history of the district which entirely changed the future prospects of this heretofore country hamlet. This was the construction of the Canada Southern, now the Michigan Central railway, running from Niagara Falls to Windsor, and passing just one short mile north of Ridgetown. Before this it was Morpeth which gave promise of becoming the commercial metropolis of Howard township, and the surrounding district, and its steady progress before and up to this time supplied just grounds for this expectation.

This flourishing village was situated four miles south of Ridgetown, one and a quarter miles north of lake Erie. It had good sea-port facilities at Antrim, and later at Port Hill's landing with its warehouse and pier erected (by William Wilson) there in the early history of the county. In 1830 a post office was established there with Captain Wheatley, a disbanded British soldier as the first postmaster and it had besides at that time a store, a tannery, a shoe-shop, and a



blacksmith shop, all doing a flourishing business with a rapidly increasing farming settlement surrounding it. In 1841, William Sheldon erected a tavern and laid out the eastern end into a village site. At the end of five further years, it contained three stores, two hotels, two blacksmith shops, a distillery, a cabinet and tailor shop, with a population which increased to five hundred before the end of the next five years.

Sometimes the growth of one populated centre is obtained by the decline of another. Such was the case as between Ridgetown and Morpeth by the coming in to the district of the Canada Southern railway. Had this railway chosen a route proximate to lake Erie, as some of the original promoters sought to have it do, then the story of the rise and progress of Ridgetown would never have been written. But the event decreed otherwise. The inhabitants and business men of Morpeth lost faith in the future prospects of their town, and they moved out and took up their residence at Ridgetown, now made the more favored place, because of the transportation facilities supplied by the incoming railway. At that time Morpeth contained four general stores, three groceries, one saddle and harness shop, five shoe shops, two tailor shops, three hotels, one carriage factory, two cabinet shops, one cooperage, one bakery, three blacksmith shops, one carding and fulling mill, a foundry, town hall, Masonic and Orange lodges, two churches, four physicians, a good school. There were two mills within a mile and a half of the village, Campbell's grist mill, situated on Big Creek, and Simon's grist and saw mill (steam and water power), and much business was done at both of them. But all this has now become non-existent. A sleepy country village only remains where once was situated this flourishing business and industrial centre. The railroad built up the one place but at the expense of the other.

From this time the growth of Ridgetown was phenomenal. Five years after the coming of the railway, the increase of population warranted the establishment of an independent municipal existence—hitherto it was a part of the municipality of Howard—and accordingly it was incorporated a village, which took effect on January the

first, 1877. That year the first village council was elected composed of Jacob Smith, M.D., as reeve; Zenis Watson, David Watterworth, Charles E. Scane and H. W. Westland as Councillors.

The growth of the population continued until, in 1882, it reached in the immediate neighborhood of two thousand one hundred. This increase above its former figures led to its incorporation as a town which took effect that year, with H. D. Cunningham accorded the honor of being its first mayor. Since that time, although there has been an increase in the number and quality of its houses and institutions, the population has not advanced. The last census, 1921, gives the population at that time as numbering one thousand eight hundred and fifty five, a decrease of over two hundred since the date of its incorporation, a depopulation of the rural town corresponding with the depopulation of the rural district immediately surrounding it.

Advantages for education are liberally bestowed upon Ridgetown. It has an excellent public school, a Collegiate Institute, and there is now being added a Vocational school, in which Agriculture, both its scientific knowledge and its practise, is to be the main subject of study.

The first school in the district was built in 1828, at the east corner of lot seven, on the ninth concession of Howard township. The teacher was supported, as was the custom of those days, by monthly fees from the parents of children attending and by boarding round at their homes, a practise which often times placed the burden heaviest on those least able to carry it. The next school was built by Joseph Nash in 1830 on the west corner of Main and Erie streets. This location on the main business thoroughfare of the town, becoming undesirable, the school house was moved to another, and a wing added in 1872, the increased population due to the coming of the railway to the town, demanding it. In 1875 a still larger school was required followed in 1882 by the building of the present large brick structure on the south side of Jane street which has remained since the only public school building in the town.



Ridgetown's supply of water is obtained from artesian wells. The water is drawn from these wells by means of compressed air, and then diverted into a reservoir or tank, erected one hundred and twenty seven feet high. The power house is equipped with the latest engines and pumping machinery with a capacity of about fifty five thousand gallons an hour. The system is considered to be one of the best possible, costing the town in the neighborhood of forty thousand dollars to establish, and capable of supplying a sufficiency of water not only for its domestic use, but an ample provision is made also in case of fire, which can be greatly augmented in case of such an emergency.

Ridgetown is essentially a centre of agricultural trade, and from that source it must look for whatever of future progress awaits it. It has several thriving industries but all of them are in keeping with this circumstance. These consist of a large canning factory, a grist-mill, a sash and door factory, a basket factory and a machine shop. As a shipping point for agricultural produce, in some respects it stands second to no other in the county. It has three large cleaning elevators, and more beans are said to be shipped from this place than from any other Canadian centre, arising from the fact that the soil of the surrounding farm lands is specially adapted for bean-growing, while its southern latitude supplies it with the suitable climate. Tobacco, potatoes and corn are also grown in large quantities, on these lands, as well as the market-garden produce and fruits which supplies the canning factory with the needed material for its continued operation.



## THAMESVILLE

In the middle forties of the last century Sir Richard Bonnycastle, Military Engineer, "a chief takin' notes," as he travelled westward towards Detroit spent a night in Thamesville—a name which excited his ire as an unwarrantable liberty with the name of old Father Thames. He put up at Freeman's tavern which stood west of the present limits of the village about where Mr. Taylor Vance's residence now stands. He does not give the number of houses in Thamesville, but at that time there were not many families in the vicinity—to say a dozen would be to overstate it. Sir Richard found a black substance on the stoop bench outside the tavern which he was told had been brought by the Indians from a dozen miles beyond Cornwall's Creek. It was crude petroleum. He was informed that salt was procured by evaporating briny pools in the neighborhood. He noted the immense white wood and elder trees and also the large walnuts, which he complained the settlers were wasting by using for fence rails. Of birds he mentions the mourning dove, a new variety to him, whippoorwills and the quail.

Soon after Sir Richard's visit Freeman's tavern was bought by William Mayhew lately out from England. His young wife agreed to perform the duties of postmaster gratuitously for the convenience of getting her own mail. The mail was carried on horse back from London and when the roads were bad—which was often—its time of arrival was uncertain. Mrs. Mayhew sometimes left her bed in the middle of the night to change mail. Besides Freemans and Mayhews, there would be Shermans, Cornwalls, Jackmans, Sanfords, Hubbells, Wallaces and Ingalls getting occasional letters.

In the early fifties when the Great Western Railway was surveyed two bids were made for the honor of having the postoffice. Mr. Erastus Wallace subdivided for what he hoped would be the future village on the south side of the river near the present Railway Bridge, and called it Thamesville; and Mr. David Sherman subdivided part of his patrimony which won the honor of being the third and last corpus to carry the name Thamesville. Mr. Sherman did not first choose that name, calling his subdivision Tecumseh after the hero he remembered speaking to in 1813 just as he was going to his death in battle with Harrison's troops. But that name had already been given to a postoffice in Essex, and Thamesville was his second choice.

He might have called his village Shermanville. His father, whose original location he was subdividing, was the first white man to settle within what is now Thamesville. He was a United Empire Loyalist from Pennsylvania and came here in the late days of the Eighteenth Century, building his cabin on the banks of the river, where the Sherman cemetery now is. He had few neighbors when the battle of the Thames was fought. His wife prepared a breakfast for Proctor's men but they did not stop to eat it. The Americans being so close, they had to press on to the spot chosen by Proctor to make his stand. David Sherman was about nine years old when he spoke with the great chief and afterwards helped bury the dead. Mr. Sherman's barn was used by Harrison for a military hospital after the battle, some of the wounded men spending months there, and one James Dunakey electing to make his permanent home with the Shermans. He is buried in their plot. The old barn still stands, having been moved to a site adjoining Tecumseh Hall, Miss Ferguson's residence. Mr. David Sherman suffered imprisonment as an adherent of McKenzie during the '37-'38 troubles. The fourth generation of Shermans still holds part of the original grant of land with a fifth generation growing up around them.

When the Railroad was built Mr. Mayhew moved near it and built a hotel which was the principal hostelry of the village for forty years. He has descendants of the third and fourth generation still among our citizens.

The Great Western station was built in 1854 and Thamesville Postoffice moved near it. The Postmasters since that time are: H. F. Cummings, Mr. Collier, James Duncan, John Duncan and Catherine Duncan Kenney.

Mr. Robert Duffus coming here from Scotland in 1854 built a mill on the creek which enters the river near the present bridge and conducted a ferry before any bridge was built.

In 1857 James Ferguson moved hither from Ridgetown having emigrated from Stirlingshire, Scotland, a few years earlier. With his sons John and Robert he carried on an extensive lumber business for many years.



A mill was built on the property now occupied by Dr. Stewart's residence. Later they bought the Northwood mill on the south side of the river near the Railway bridge, which the sons operated till the late eighties, Mr. James Ferguson having died in 1866. A loan business founded by John and Robert Ferguson still subsists, and grandchildren and great grandchildren of Mr. James Ferguson are still among our citizens.

With the coming of the Railroad, Thamesville took the position she has since occupied of shopping centre for the fine farming district surrounding her, one store after another opening with a display of the various merchandize necessary for the local trade. The Canadian Pacific Railway station built in 1839 a mile and a half north of the village made it a still more desirable shipping centre. Houses have always been in demand although few years pass without some new ones going up. No place took greater advantage of the invention of cement blocks to beautify and render substantial its dwellings. Good foundations, handsome verandahs, well kept lawns, with good cement walks and adequate street lighting make the village a desirable residence.

At half a dozen stores one may buy dry goods of limited or general variety. Nearly a dozen sell groceries, and there are four ice cream parlors. There are three hardware stores, one drug store, three where farm implements may be bought, one flour and feed, and one harness shop, two blacksmith shops, three barber shops, two shoe repair shops, one furniture and undertaking establishment, one sewing machine shop, two millinery shops and two garages. There are two Banks and two billiard rooms.

Thamesville began its corporate existence in January 1874. The first Council consisted of: Robert Ferguson, Reeve, and G. A. Tye, G. F. Spackman, F. J. Mayhew and Lemuel Sherman Councillors. They assembled in Mayhew's Hall, now the property of the Canning Factory, and appointed Wm. McKinley, Clerk, D. McFarlane, Treasurer, E. C. Decow, Assessor, and N. Beutzon, Collector.



## CAL ONE HUNDRED & THIRTY .....

ALLACEBURG is the second largest urban centre in the county. This is, no doubt, due to its advantageous position on the Sydenham, a deep and easily navigable river, which branched at this point, making an ideal spot for a town-site from the point of view of boat traffic. Situated but a short distance inland from lake St. Clair, it has, therefore, facilities for transportation by water second to no other town or village in the county.

**W**allaceburg was founded by Selkirk settlers.

The inception of the town may be said to be a by-product of the Selkirk settlement. Its history cannot be disassociated from that well-meant but unfortunate venture. It was a Baldoon settler, who built the first log-house and started the first-clearance in its neighborhood. The first store and hotel was opened out by Laughlin McDougall, one of the original 'one hundred and eleven,' where soon after him were located his two brothers, Archibald and Hector. It was a Baldoon school teacher, Hugh MacCallum, that became its first post-master, and gave to the town its name, which he called after Scotland's patriot and soldier, Sir William Wallace. It was a Baldoon settler, Hector McLean, who settled on the lot where now stands the major portion of the town; and it was a Baldoon settler, Lionel H. Johnson, who opened out the first blacksmith shop and store in the north-west angle formed by the junction of the two rivers.

**P**ioneer stores established on the south side of the river.

The south bank of the river was the first the first to take upon itself the aspect of a village. On four adjacent lots, twelve and thirteen in the first concession, and twelve and thirteen in the second concession of the township, then called Sombra but now Chatham Gore, four families had settled and established on their farms, three of them, stores, and the fourth a post-office and school. These were, the McGregors, a family of grown-up sons of John McGregor who distinguished himself in the war of 1812, and to whom was given by the Government, eight hundred and fifty acres of land for the services he then rendered; James, Baby who was a descendant of that honorable and prominent French family of Detroit, one of whom was appointed by Governor Simcoe an

Executive Councillor for the Western District in the first parliament of Upper Canada; and Laughlin McDougall and Hugh MacCallum, the above-mentioned pioneers from the Baldoon settlement. On the north bank of the river, there was erected in 1833, a frame building by one, James Henderson, in which he, too, kept a school. This building passed into the hands of Hector McDonald, which he turned into a tavern or boarding house, and kept there a place of entertainment for many years. This place, called then the 'Gore', has since become the principal business section of Wallaceburg, and that which was last chosen as a business site, has now become the first in importance and the chief centre for trade in the town.

**N**oticeable development did not begin until 1850.

Although the Post Office was established as early as 1834, and the first survey of town lots made in 1837, it was not until about 1850 that the place gave any indications of developing into a centre of trade and industry, such as it has since become. Like all other centres within the bounds of the county, the first and most important influence, impelling a noticeably forward movement in its progress, was that of the lumbering industry. The district round about was covered with the best of timber, especially oak and elm, and its good location as a vessel port gave to it an opportunity for advance when the timber became marketable, which its enterprising inhabitants were not slow to seize. For the next ten years, the lumbering industry was at its height, and save for the lull in the year 1857, when, owing to the financial hard times then existing there was considerable unemployment among its inhabitants, Wallaceburg went forward with rapid strides. The lumber industry in this decade brought much business and settlers to the town. As it was with the Thames river, so also with the Sydenham, its banks were lined every winter with timber sticks and staves, and in the spring of the year its waters were made hardly discernible because of the numerous quantities of these floating down on its surface to find a market at Detroit and elsewhere. But the prosperity attendant upon this industry was merely temporary. Stable prosperity came through the development of the surrounding farm-lands and the establishment of industries. The next decade, 1860 to 1870, was a period of transition. As a source of employment every year in this period the timber business was getting more precarious. Every increase in the production



and exportation of square timber, staves, lumber and cordwood, lessened the quantity of timber available, and brought the end of the lumber industry that much nearer. The opposite was true of the farming industry. As the farming district round about became developed and the quantity of its agricultural productions increased, the village grew proportionately. It was not so rapid a progress as the lumber industry brought to it, but it was permanent. Wallaceburg was saved from the fate of many other equally declining lumber centres by its position on a navigable river, and the rapid increase of settlement on the surrounding lands of the district. In the transition from one source of dependence to the other, progress lagged but did not entirely cease.

**B**oat traffic on the Sydenham was one of its first enterprises.

When the country all around was a forest, and the roads impassable owing to the low nature of the surrounding district, the Sydenham river became in the early history of the county the highway for lake sailing vessels and lumber barges. The first of these was built by Laughlin McDougall. To men accustomed to fishing and fishing-boats, as were the Highlanders who composed the Baldoon settlement, it could not be supposed that they would leave so navigable a stream as this unutilised. Hardly had McDougall settled in the neighborhood of "The Forks", when he began to use the banks of the river for boat-building purposes. It was perhaps the remembrances and experiences which he and his forebears went through on his native island of Mull, that suggested to him the sailing schooner as the means of obtaining the goods wherewith to start a trading post at this locality. At any rate, two vessels, which he named respectively *Wallace* and *Silkirk* were constructed and set afloat as early as to do duty for the conveyance of the products of the hunter and trapper of his store to Detroit, and the bringing back with them the necessities required for the hunting and trapping trade, the household needs of incoming settlers, and later, the requirements for the camps of lumbermen. This first attempt at navigation was soon followed by the coming and going of many vessels as soon as the lumber industry created a demand, with the building of necessary docks and ware-houses, until the village became such an important point of navigation that it was made a port of entry and honored with a customs official, an event which is dated in the calendar of the village as having taken place in the early fifties.

**C**aptain Steinhoff, a noted shipbuilder and prominent industrialist.

Next to McDougall the name which stands out most conspicuous in the shipbuilding enterprises of the past history of the town, is without doubt that of Captain James W. Steinhoff. He was born in 1834 of Pennsylvania Dutch ancestry, a class of settlers prominently associated with the early history of this county. His father moved from St. Thomas, where his son James was born, and settled in Howard township in 1836. There he remained until 1843, when moving to Wallaceburg, he took up a small farm, and followed this vocation for the rest of his life time. At ten years of age, the boy, who was destined to become so noted a citizen of industrial Wallaceburg, began his life's undertakings employed in carrying the mail between Chatham and Stony Point, a distance of twenty five miles between them, and driving both ways the same day. This was followed by his becoming in turns, a stage-driver, a cook on a lake vessel, a teamster in the lumber woods, finally ending his career as a laborer, a sawyer in a lumber mill. At twenty, with what money he had up to this time saved, he began business for himself, a purchaser of cordwood, which he transported with his own scow to Detroit. This he found a most profitable undertaking. His business rapidly expanded, and his increasing capital enabled him to add other barges, which he had constructed at Wallaceburg, until he had a fleet of half a dozen employed steadily at this work during the navigation season. To these he added a sailing vessel, the *Anna Steinhoff*, in which he carried barley between Chatham and Toledo. For a time, he was the master of a steamboat, *The Islander*, which earned for him the title of "Captain". At Wallaceburg he built four steamers, one of which was the *J. W. Steinhoff* on which he had the honor of being host to Lord and Lady Dufferin, the Governor General, when on a travelling expedition through the district, he visited Detroit, Sarnia, Goderich, and other lake ports. After long service, it was sold to the 'McKenzie and Mann' interests at Toronto, and plied as a passenger vessel between that port and Port Dalhousie, under the name of *Garden City* an old bottom under a new title, where it rocked the passengers to sickness in every little gale, until it was finally removed off the route for safety's sake. In 1887, Captain Steinhoff



## GAL ONE HUNDRED & THIRTY-TWO.....

retired from business, though it was not until 1902 that he sold his last vessel. In the meantime he had been a promoter, and a large contributor to the establishment of the town's best and largest industries, the Dominion Glass Works, the Sugar-beet Industry, the Flax-mill, and the Cooperage business. In addition, he was interested in a private banking business, and in farming, owning and operating not less than two thousand five hundred and sixty acres of farm-lands in the counties of Kent and Lambton. He left as a monument to his enterprise and ability not only these industries which he helped to call into existence but a beautiful park or play ground, his gift to the town, and now comprising, with Government and Library Park, an outstanding feature in the scenic attractions of the place.

**F**uture enterprises must not overlook the capabilities of the Sydenham.

In forecasting the future development and industrial enterprises of the town, the capabilities of the Sydenham to supply facilities for transportation, should not be overlooked. This same river which was used as the highway for passenger and freight traffic in the days of the incoming of the first settlers to the district, and the capabilities which McDougall and Steinhoff saw in it for the building up of trade, is still looked upon by the present-day citizens of the town as one of the resources upon which they build their expectations for additional progress and development in its future history. There is nothing to prevent Wallaceburg from being a port of entry for all vessels which have to make use of our inland lakes and canals, for the river can supply a channel of water eighteen feet in depth, and wide enough to provide a turning basin for vessels three hundred and fifty feet long. It but requires the enterprises of trade and industry to develop these capabilities which Nature has supplied the town through the medium of this river. Nor has the town been unmindful of its heritage. Although to-day no local Navigation Company exists to take the place successfully held by McDougall and Steinhoff, yet as a navigation centre, it still holds an important place. Its sugar refinery is visited bi-weekly during its season by vessels coming in from the tropical south, with their freightage of raw sugar, and going out with the refined product to its various destined markets. Passenger vessels look after the tourist trade in the summer months and supply facilities for pleasure-seekers to pass to and fro between Wallace-

1846. Wallaceburg was made a port of entry. A custom house was established with Colonel Bell as the first custom's officer.

1850. Wallaceburg became headquarters of number five, Division Court.

1871. The first newspaper, 'The Western Advocate' was established.

1873. The first bridge was built over the river; before this a scow, pulled from side to side by a rope fastened to both shores, was used as a ferry.

1874. Wallaceburg was incorporated as a village.

1875. January 18. The first village Council meeting. Population 1526. Ratepayers, 380. Assessment roll, \$180,000.

1876. Town hall was built.



# CHRONOLOGY: WALLACEBURG

1757. The district—western part of Chatham Gore—surrendered by the Chippewa and Ottawa Indians for the price of £800. September 7th.

1824. Lord Selkirk brought one hundred and eleven Highlanders to the Sydenham and established Baldoon Settlement.

1821. The district was surveyed and named Sombra, and became a part of Kent county.

1822. Laughlin McDougall, a Baldoon settler, located on lot thirteen, concession two, of Sombra, now named Chatham Gore.

1825. A squatter built a log house on the north shore of the Sydenham, where Wallaceburg is now situated.

1828. March 17. Francis Baby acquired lot twelve, concession two, Sombra.

1831. The McGregor family of 1812-14 war renown were given a grant of 850 acres for war services, and became the second of the settlers of the district. They kept a store for twelve or fifteen years, a little below McDougall's.

1833. The first plot of land surveyed into town lots, and named McDougall's survey.

1833. James Henderson built a frame house where he kept school, and where later (1846) Hector McDonald kept a traveller's house of entertainment.

1835. Hugh McCallum bought south half of lot twelve from the patentee, Francis Baby, on which there had been erected a log house, and built a frame where he taught school and kept the post-office.

1835. A post-office is established which was named Wallaceburg by Hugh McCallum the first postmaster, in honor of Sir William Wallace, Scotland's patriot hero.

1836. A second plot of land was surveyed into town lots, and named McCallum's survey.

1839. James Baby, son of Francis, erected a pretentious building in which he kept store for a short time. About the same time, James Johnston from the 'Sny' store, set up a merchant's place on the opposite corner.

1840. A third plot of land surveyed into town lots on the north bank of the river and named Babyville.

burg and Detroit, Buffalo, Sarnia and other lake ports. The prophet of to-morrow doubtless sees a boat-traffic, with Wallaceburg as its centre, worthy of the river and the fertility of the district of which it is the medium for drainage.

## Activities of D. A. Gordon add new industries to Wallaceburg.

Associated with Captain Steinhoff in some of his industrial enterprises and surpassing him in the benefits conferred through him to the town was his nephew, David Alexander Gordon. He was born in Wallaceburg in 1858, and since 1883 until the time of his death in 1919, one of the most prominent industrialists in the county of Kent. His first venture was in the Cooperage business which he established in partnership with his uncle, becoming its president and general manager. When the Sydenham glass works were established, he became managing director in 1897, and under his guidance it enjoyed from the start, a constantly increasing business until it became the largest and most important enterprise of its kind in the province. Through his efforts, the Beet Sugar Company also was located at Wallaceburg and he was made its president and general manager. Without doubt the progress of the town during the last forty years of its history, the years in which it has made the largest strides forward in its prosperity and size, was due in large measure to the industrial enterprises which his activities and influence were instrumental in establishing. He took an active part in the municipal affairs of the town, and was mayor for three consecutive terms. He also represented West Kent in the House of Commons for fourteen years being elected as a Liberal, holding the seat continuously from the time of his first election until his death.



# CHATHAM TOWNSHIP

THE Township and Gore of Chatham form the largest territorial subdivision under one municipal government within the County of Kent. The original Township of Chatham extended from the Thames on the south to the line which bounded the original Indian grant on the north, the same line now forming the dividing line between the township proper and the gore. The side boundaries of this township run at substantially right angles with the Thames. The western town line separates it from Dover, and the eastern from Camden. Between the Thames and the base line of the Gore at the west side of the township the least distance is about sixteen and a half miles, but owing to the convergence of those lines toward the east, the distance between the points named at the eastern town line is less than six miles. The Gore of Chatham (so called probably because, like the Gore of Camden, it is less similar in shape to a "gore" than any other geometrical figure) consists of four concessions of seven eighths of a mile each, lying between the base line referred to and the Lambton County boundary, and stretching from the Gore of Camden on the east to Lake St. Clair on the west.

The area of Chatham Township and Gore is 84,139 acres, of which, in 1880, 31,955 acres were returned as "cleared," an increase from 26,381 acres in 1871. The peculiarities noticeable in the surface of other townships in this county are generally observable in Chatham, one of the most marked being an absence of small living streams within its borders. The Thames on the south, and the Sydenham traversing the gore from east to west, are the only bodies of water approaching the dignity of living streams, but the township is intersected in different localities by depressions of about six feet below the general level, and appearing to have been scooped out by early freshets. These gullies pursue a very tortuous course, substantially from east to west, are dignified by the name of creeks, and by some called canals. Most of these creeks dry up during the summer season, when their bottoms (usually averaging forty feet in width) yield luxuriant crops of wild hay, which the cultivation of repeated cutting elevates to a good grade.

The principal creeks of Chatham Township are Arnold's (the only one flanked by banks of respectable height), emptying about two miles above Chatham; Pain Court, rising near Louisville, and draining the third and fourth concessions, thence to the Dover town line; Big Creek, rising near the Thames,

above Louisville, and coursing thence through the third, fourth and fifth concessions into Dover; and Little Bear Creek, the most considerable of them all, which drains the territory between those before named and the Sydenham. The quality of the soil bordering these creeks (except a few localities on the Little Bear) is strictly first class, being of a generally heavy, durable and productive clay, which the drought and heat of summer transforms into flint, making tillage well nigh impossible until the visitation of after-harvest rains. As the land recedes from these creeks, its consistency becomes more pliable, and a fertile loam, overlaid by a rich vegetable mould, succeeds the more stubborn grades nearer the creek banks. Another peculiar feature of the topography of this region is the sloping of the surface gradually away from the banks of rivers or creeks until the slopes meet in semi-swampy land, whose surface is below the level of creek bottoms. These low-lying sections are in turn drained by municipal drains, some of which have to be extended many miles to secure eligible outlets.

This township is now traversed by a perfect network of these drains, constructed under authority of the Drainage Act, so that little now remains to be done to secure its surface from the effects of floods and freshets. The most extensive of these works is the Dover townline drain, running nearly a dozen miles along that highway, and discharging into the Sydenham. Did it run parallel with that stream one would find difficulty in determining, from a superficial glance, which was the river and which the drain, so large is the volume of water discharged by the latter. At periods of high water, in fact, it is no unusual occurrence for small steamboats to ascend this drain considerable distances and load with wood, logs, timber, stave bolts, &c., immense quantities of which are annually floated down its surface to its junction with the Sydenham. The Prince Albert drain, from the western centre of the township northward to the Sydenham, is also a stupendous affair, while the Mills drain, traversing the territory lying between Pain Court and Big Creeks, and many others of lesser magnitude, contribute to make Chatham one of the best drained townships within the area of the level lands of the west.

Comparatively little of this township is incapable of being brought under cultivation,



as little of it lies too low to admit of drainage. There are, however, somewhat extensive stretches of "plain" land contiguous to the western border and north of the centre on which the water lies during the greater part of the year, the surface level sinking as it approaches the Sydenham. This stream, towards its final end, runs between banks scarce higher than its own water level, which it overflows in unusually wet seasons, thus inundating large areas of the plains referred to. The river has even been known to attain a greater height of water than the drains emptying into it, when the tactics of Hollanders have been resorted to, and dykes constructed, over which the water from the drains has been pumped by windmill power.

The Township of Chatham received its first settlers when the original influx of pioneers to the County of Kent took place, in the last decade of the eighteenth century. No authentic record exists of any settlement having been made within the bounds of the township prior to 1794, when Mr. Baker (referred to in our sketch of Chatham) was awarded a grant of several hundred acres on the river front, apparently as one of the conditions of his locating here to superintend the construction of Government ships at the shipyard then established on the more recent "Barrack Ground," now called Tecumseh Park. It is related by the descendant of a pioneer, however, that the land alluded to had been previously drawn by the brothers Jacob and Valentine Iler, who surrendered their claim to Government when the latter found it expedient to establish Mr. Baker in that location. At any rate, the Ilers did not again choose a location in this or any other township of the county where their names have come under the notice of the writer. This farm remained the property of Mr. Baker for many years, and finally passed into the hands of Henry Eberts, whose father, Joseph Eberts, married Mr. Baker's eldest daughter.

Much uncertainty exists concerning the dates at which those whose early location in Chatham denominates them the pioneers of the township took up their residence here, neither the presence of memoranda or the apparent accuracy of tradition serving to locate dates during that early period with any degree of precision. It would appear, however, that among the first to follow Baker into this township was George Sicklesteale, who settled on lot nine, river front, probably not later than 1794. He was a Hessian by birth, and had been a member of the Hessian contingent of troops whom the British Government hired to assist in the fruitless

task of subduing the Americans during the Revolution. A son of that pioneer, David Sicklesteale, who so long kept a hotel on the lot mentioned forming one of the prominent landmarks of the township, was among the first children born here, the date of that event being during his life.

Other prominent families in the early history of this township, and not less prominent at the present day, were the Arnolds, Everetts, Blackburns, and Frenches. Representatives of the three first named of these families arrived in or about 1796. They were all United Empire Loyalists from Pennsylvania, who had remained in Michigan some time after coming west; but when the surrender of that territory to the Americans became a foregone conclusion, they removed up the Thames, impelled by a sentimental preference for the British flag. There were two brothers, Arnold who settled in this township, sons of Frederick Arnold who, with the balance of his family, chose a location on the river front of Howard. The brothers who remained in Chatham were Lewis and John, the former of whom settled upon lot thirteen, and the latter on lot fourteen, next adjoining on the east, building his house near where G. B. Grover's house now stands.

The Everett family then consisted of William Alexander, the father, and his sons Adam, William, David and John. Mr. Everett located lot fifteen where Louisville is now built, and continued there during the balance of his life. Not all his descendants remained in the township; still there has ever since been a respectable and influential representation of the family here, several of its members becoming prominent in municipal affairs, as notably William A. Everett, J.P., grandson of the original settler of that name, now living near Louisville. The Blackburn family was then even more numerous than the Everett's and consisted of John, the father, and his sons Anthony, Joseph, Robert, James, Leonard, Isaac, William, another son who died in youth, and one daughter. With this numerous staff of assistants Mr. Blackburn located east half of lot ten, concession two, now occupied by his grandson, Abraham Blackburn. He also drew several other lots in the second and third concessions, some of which were afterwards settled by his sons, nearly all of whom raised large families here, and, with a continued increase through succeeding generations, the name of Blackburn has become one of the most common in a township noted for the numerical extent of several of its families.



The fountain head of the French family in this township was Peter French, who came here with the pioneers while yet in early boyhood. He subsequently took up lot eleven, concession three, where his son John still resides. The elder Mr. French distinguished himself in the war of 1812, as did several of his sons in the quelling of the Mackenzie Insurrection. He raised a large family of sons and daughters, several of whom, as well as a host of more remote descendants, continue to reside in the locality of the third and fourth concessions from the Prince Albert Road eastward, in consequence of which this part of the township has long been known as French's Settlement.

Another of the pioneers of the Louisville section was Richard Jackman, who came in and settled about the same time as the other families named, or at any rate prior to the dawn of the present century, but this name has become extinct in the Township of Chatham. The above named families constituted the bulk of the settlement in the township for a good many years, during which the current of progress was not directed towards its interior. Nor was the river front brought to a very flourishing condition of improvement until the first quarter of the present century had sped by. It was but shortly before that period that lot eight was occupied by the Knapp family, in whose possession it still remains, but at a somewhat earlier period than that John Messmore located lot seven, holding his residence about where the Messrs. Williamson's house now graces the scene.

The Fisher family arrived in the township in 1827. It comprised the father, John, and the sons Peter, John, Robert S., and James, the two last named of whom are still numbered among the highly respected residents of the river front. They settled lot eleven along the river, on which a Frenchman named Fortier had kept store before their location there, the said store, the first in the township, having been situated on the site now occupied by Mr. James Fisher's house. One of the sons, John, subsequently settled on lot nine, concession three, where one Moe had located as a "squatter" very early, and, it is related, had cleared forty acres, when he was obliged to surrender his possession and improvements to Fisher.

With the exception of Moe and Peter French, there were no settlers back of the second concession of this township up to 1830, but about the date mentioned a bachelor named Scott had taken up a residence in a mud-walled shanty on the banks of Pain Court Creek, lot seven, concession

four. He remained at least long enough to raise a crop of wheat, a portion of which, instead of sustaining, deprived him of his life in this manner: He was following up along the creek, carrying a bag partially filled with wheat, and coming to a fence on Moe's place, turned his back to transfer his burden (carried partially across his shoulder and breast), when it fell across the top rail, catching his throat in its embrace, and there he died of strangulation.

About 1833 Peter McGeachy located on the lot rendered vacant by Scott's death, becoming practically the pioneer of a considerable expanse of territory thereabout; but three years later, in 1836, there settled further down the creek, on lot six, Robert McCubbin and his sons Robert and William, since quite prominent in this part of the township. They had come from the Township of Nelson, in Halton County. During the period between 1830 and the Rebellion, the nucleus of the Scotch settlement was formed by the location of John McVicar and several sons on lot eleven, concession four (north part), Malcolm McKerrall on the lot adjoining on the west, and Donald and John McKerrall in the immediate neighborhood, on the banks of Big Creek. Mr. McVicar's sons were Duncan, Neil, Malcolm and Donald, the former of whom, still residing on their original location, has long been a gentleman of much influence in the township, and one of the younger brothers is now a widely noted doctor of divinity connected with the Presbyterian College of Montreal. Prominent among others who contributed to the composition of the Scotch Settlement were Duncan McNaughton, now residing in Chatham, who located lots nine and ten, concession five, in company with his brother Dugald and their father's family, at the date prior to the Rebellion; Henry Robertson and William Wallace in concession six, and James Simpson in concession eight. Of these Messrs. Simpson popularly identified with the progress of the township, both holding places on the Commission of the Peace and contributing largely to the enviable status to which the Scotch Settlement has attained.

Highway facilities were neither numerous nor elaborate in those early days, and this remark in regard to the comforts of travelling holds good with respect to the comfort of living. The River Road had been cut out



along the devious windings of the river bank, but nothing save the most primitive kind of cart tracks pierced the interior of the township up to the period of the Rebellion. The settlers along Pain Court and Big Creeks followed these trails along the banks of the streams named to a point nearly in rear of Louisville, whence they took a cross-cut route to the River Road, and thence to Chatham, the centre of their undeveloped commerce. With the closer attention to internal improvements which followed as a consequence of the Rebellion, however, Chatham received material benefit in the opening of the Prince Albert, Caledonia and Lindsey Roads, and an increase of settlers in the interior. It was well into the present century before even a name was bestowed upon this township, the style of its denomination having previously been "the third township north of the Thames"; Dover East and West having then been separately numbered to correspond with the numbers of those along the south bank.

The date is comparatively recent at which the tide of progress extended inland from the Scotch Settlement, whose northern limit may be stated as the eighth concession. The intervening period was devoted to settling more densely the territory already circumscribed by the slight cordon of pioneers named above. In the section in rear of Louisville, and eastward to the Camden boundary, the Arnold, Everett and Blackburn families became very numerous; the Merritt then the others named, also rose into numerical prominence, and grasped large tracts in that part of the township, while the Shaws and Traxlers along the river front above Louisville, and several of the second generation of Frenches along Pain Court Creek, added density to the population of the southern half of Chatham.

Referring, after this lengthy allusion to "southern affairs," to the settlement of the Gore of Chatham (which, prior to 1850, belonged to the Township of Sombra), it should be stated that the pioneers of this section were principally the descendants of the emigrants brought out by Lord Selkirk, and settled at Baldoon in August 1804. That venture of the Scottish Earl will be more lengthily referred to in our sketch of Dover, to which the history of the enterprise largely appertains. Suffice it to say in this place, that of one hundred and eleven persons so located in a little colony on the Baldoon farm, many, and eventually all, removed to the adjacent lands bordering the Sydenham, Chenal Ecarte, and other portions of Chatham Township and Gore, Dover and Sombra. Among the most prominent of those who

located along the Chenal Ecarte (a French term signifying "lost channel," applied to the most easterly channel of the St. Clair delta, but which has been corrupted into "Suy Cartv" through mispronunciation) was James Johnson, father of Lionel H. Johnson of Wallaceburg. He had accompanied his father to Baldoon, where the latter was employed by Lord Selkirk in the capacity of overseer of stock. The location chosen by Mr. Johnson was lot three, concession one, of the Gore, just at the head of St. Anne's Island, the date of his settlement there, about 1809. Farther up the "Suy" Charles Fisher, a blacksmith, was one of the first to settle, while on lot two, James Stewart, another of Selkirk's settlers, located about the same time as Johnson. Others of these pioneers took up locations along the Sydenham, then called Bear Creek, among the earliest to settle in the vicinity of Wallaceburg being a numerous family of McDougalls, several of whom, including John and James, settled in the first concession of the Gore, where traversed by the river, quite early in the century.

Above the village named the settlement is only about fifty years old, the first to penetrate that locality in the capacity of settlers being George Little on the north and William James on the south side, the former on lot eighteen; and about the same time, along the same stream, between Wallaceburg and the Camden Gore border, Paul Dustan located on the north bank of the river and adjacent territory, lying partially within the present limits of Wallaceburg, Captain John McGregor drew a grant of eight hundred and fifty acres of consideration of services rendered during the War of 1812, in which he lost an arm. This tract he divided among his eleven children, only two of whom, one son and one daughter, are now living.

One of the earliest locatees within the present limits of Wallaceburg was Lachlin McDougall, who took up a residence on the south bank, just east of where the north branch enters the main stream. There he opened a store and hotel, the first of each in the village. Opposite him, in the angle



formed by the main river and branch, and east of the latter, his brother Archibald located, also very early in the history of the place and just east of him was another brother, Hector. Lot twelve, concession two, on which the major portion of the village now stands, received a settler about 1830 in the person of Hector McLean, who resided on the north part of the lot, leaving the southern portion, where the village has since been built, still a dense forest.

The western margin of Chatham Township is not so highly developed as other portions to which we have alluded. The Dover town-line, forming the great highway by which this section is reached, was not opened for years long after flourishing settlements had been planted beside the waters of the Svedenham. The first settler on the Chatham side of that road was Stephen Kinney, who located soon after the rebellion in the ninth concession. Here he opened a tavern and entertained those who were so unfortunate as to be forced by the pressure of circumstances to travel the town line in those early days, a task bordering on the impossible even at this late period, when the putty-like soil is overcharged with moisture. The tavern established by the father is still kept by a son, and there is also located a post office bearing the unusually euphonious name of "Oungah."

The history of municipal government in Chatham Township dates back to 1832, on the first day of which year a meeting convened in the school house standing on the river bank, lot twelve (now owned by Adam Arnold), when the following named residents were placed upon the official list for the township: David Everett and Benjamin Knapp, Assessors; Louis J. Arnold, Collector; David Sicklestele and John Traxler, Roadmasters; John Fisher, Sr., and John Arnold, Town Wardens; Joseph Blackburn, Pound-keeper; Samuel Arnold, Town-clerk. No meeting was held in 1833, but certain Magistrates appointed Samuel Arnold, Clerk, and other gentlemen to the minor offices. For 1834 the list included the names of Samuel Arnold, Clerk; David Everett and Traxler and Peter French, Assessors. Jacob Arnold, Town Wardens; Michael M.



# THE SETTLEMENT OF THE TOWNSHIPS

*This Chapter is a reprint from the narrative sketches prepared by Mr. McDonald in 1882, who, in turn, was indebted to James Soutar of Chatham for much of his material, supplemented by the corroborative information supplied him by the immediate descendants of these first settlers. Though much of the material dealt with in this chapter will be referred to in other chapters in this volume, a good purpose, it is thought will be served by reproducing the story of these early settlements in Mr. McDonald's own words.*

## CAMDEN TOWNSHIP.

THE township of Camden includes within its bounds two incorporated villages, Thamesville, situated on the north bank of the Thames; and, Dresden, on either bank of the Sydenham. The original township of Camden West (there being another township of Camden in the County of Addington) embraced but a small gore-shaped territory, lying between the Thames on the south-east, the Chatham township line on the west, and the line which bounded the original Indian grant on the north, forming also the northern limit of Camden. The line referred to, running due east and west from the Thames to Lake St. Clair, now forms the division between Camden proper and the Gore of Camden, so called probably because it bears not the slightest resemblance to a gore. The so-called "Gore" is an oblong-shaped piece of territory, stretching about twelve miles from east to west, and four from north to south.

The fitness of things has been utterly disregarded in the naming of these two sections of the township; for while the shape of the so-called gore attests the inaccuracy of its nomenclature, the balance of the township is really a gore in shape, and the combined circumstances justify the conclusion that when the names of township and gore were decided upon, their bestowal was decided by lot, with a result the reverse of what it should have been.

Camden extends on the east almost to the intersection of the line before alluded to, with the Thames and Gore of Zone intervening, Zone forming its northern boundary till the Gore of Camden is reached; Dawn, in Lambton County, lies immediately to the north; the township and Gore of Chatham to the west; and the Thames to the south or south-east. The Gore of Camden also extends about half its length to the west of Chatham township line, its westerly portion being bordered on the south by that township. The surface of Camden is fairly representative of the general level which distinguishes the entire county. Its southern portion is marked by an entire absence of streams, with one or two insignificant exceptions, but the gore is traversed diagonally by the Sydenham, which enters its borders on the north-east corner at Florence, and pursues a remarkably tortuous course to the Gore of Chatham border. The banks of this stream are very fertile and

highly cultivated, which remark applies with equal justice to the banks of the Thames. Great natural fertility likewise marks the greater part of the balance of the township, but lack of drainage prevents its utilization in some localities remote from the rivers named.

Camden, in common with the townships to the west, received its first settlers about the close of the last century, when the altered relations between Great Britain and her former thirteen colonies induced the removal of so many Loyalists to Canada. Of the representatives of that class who came into Kent county, but very few found their way to Camden, which township remained almost unsettled until flourishing communities had been formed along the river front of the neighboring townships. About 1796, however, or soon thereafter, Joshua Cornwall located lot fourteen of the river front. He was a United Empire Loyalist from Connecticut, who had come to this locality directly from Detroit, at which point many of the pioneers of Kent 'rendezvoused', and others resided, prior to making their onslaught upon the forests of the Thames. Mr. Cornwall's descendants still living cannot locate the exact date of his arrival but it was certainly prior to the year 1800, which was the date of the birth of his son Nathan, a native of Camden, the first white child born within its limits, and from 1834 to 1841 a member of the Canadian Assembly of Kent, as his father had been from 1812 to 1816.

Others among the early residents of the river front were Absalom Shaw, whose descendants are now quite numerous in the township, and Lemuel Sherman, a Connecticut Loyalist, who located lot fifteen, where Thamesville now stands, in 1805 or the following year, his house being situated just south of the present village on the river bank. This was about the extent of the Camden settlement until after the war of 1812-15, when a new resident came to the township in the person of Lieutenant Knight, who took up a location about a mile east of Kent Bridge. He had served in the British army during the then recent unpleasantness, and soon after its close had married a daughter of William Baker (who had superintended the Government ship-yard at Chatham), after



which he settled down to a pioneer's life on the bank of the Thames, lot three Camden. Some of this gentleman's descendants still reside in the county.

The most important settlement following that on the Thames was effected along the Sydenham between Dawn Mills and Florence about 1820, the pioneers being parties who had previously settled on Old Talbot Street in Harwich, whence they removed to accept grants in this locality, on discovering the land occupied by them in Harwich to have been already deeded to other parties. Among those who thus located along the stream named were John and William Tiffin, Job Hall, and a family named Boulton, they forming at that time the first settlement on that river, south-west of Strathroy or east of Wallaceburg.

The locality of Dawn Mills was first settled in 1830, the pioneers being William Taylor and James Smith, who built a grist mill on the south bank of the Sydenham. Prior to the construction of that mill the settlers were obliged to go to Detroit in Canoes to have their gristing done, the only mills nearer that point being on the Thames, between which stream and the Sydenham was as yet a pathless forest. These two gentlemen wielded great influence in shaping the destiny of their locality; being upright, intelligent, industrious and enterprising, their efforts were soon marked in the development of the surrounding section. During the rebellion, Mr. Taylor was commissioned a captain, and raised a company in which Mr. Smith served as lieutenant, their property being thus left to take care of itself until the welfare of the state was secured. Mr. Smith married the eldest daughter of the captain; soon thereafter succeeding to the sole control of the mill. He took an active part in municipal affairs after the introduction of that system; was many years reeve of Camden, and eleven consecutive years Warden of Kent county.

A village gradually clustered around the mills so erected by Messrs. Taylor and Smith, to which was accorded the name of Dawn Mills, for what is now the Gore of Camden was then part and parcel of Dawn, hence the name. By the provisions of the Municipal Act of 1850, however, the township limits of Camden were extended northward to the Sydenham, and later to their present location on the Lambton county line. Another of the early residents of Dawn Mills was Charles Prangley, who officiated as miller in Smith's mill for many years, establishing thereby a wide acquaintance among the residents of that region. A. B. Baxter, father of Lieutenant-

Colonel Baxter of Chatham, located there soon after 1835 with his sons, one of whom, Charles, was then grown to manhood. Mr. Baxter was a partner in the first store in Dawn Mills, it also being the first in the township, opened about 1836 with Mr. Taylor, before named, as the other partner; and among other early residents, David Wallace deserves mention.

The banks of the river below Dawn Mills did not become settled until some time after the establishment of a considerable village at that point. The Sharpe family were the earliest to locate on the south side, about midway between there and the present village of Dresden, while nearly opposite them, on the north side, were a family of Traxlers, and on lots four and five, concession five, just in the northern part of Dresden of the present, Abram Devens chose a location about 1844. Below Dresden, John McDonald settled on lot three, concession three, among the earliest residents of the south bank, and a similar distinction in regard to the north bank is due to William Boylan.



## DOVER.

HERE are nominally two townships of Dover in this county—Dover East and Dover West, but the existence of the latter is discernible only during periods of low water, when Lake St. Clair has temporarily withdrawn its floods from the region which the exuberant imagination of early surveyors coined into a township, under the name mentioned. Dover, by which name we shall hereafter refer to both townships, is the most westerly of the northern tier of townships in this county, stretching from Lake St. Clair on the west to the Chatham township line on the east, and from the Gore of Chatham base line on the north to the Thames on the south, a portion of its south-eastern extremity being included within the corporate limits of the town of Chatham.

The topographical features here displayed are similar to those prevailing elsewhere throughout the level areas of the west, except that in this township a greater percentage of low lying lands is met with than in neighboring townships, a large area of its extent bordering the Sydenham, Chenal Ecarte, Lake St. Clair, and the Lower Thames being submerged a considerable portion of the year. In the interior too there occur considerable areas of semi-swampy lands distributed in many localities, but the excellent character of the soil in more favored sections efficiently neutralizes these disadvantages, and secures to Dover the reputation of possessing as high an average of arable land as any of the townships adjoining. This average is being constantly elevated too, through the medium of an extensive and extending system of drains, some of which assume immense proportions, as notably the Bear Line Drain emptying into the Thames, which at its mouth presents much of the appearance of a trench cut through high banks for a narrow gauge railway. The natural drains traversing Dover are Pain Court, Little Bear and Big Creeks, each of which enters its territory from the adjoining township of Chatham. Little Bear takes a tortuous course through an excellent agricultural section about the centre of the township, and discharges into the Chenal Ecarte after flowing some distance towards its mouth through low plains. Big Creek also traverses a very fertile tract to within a short distance of its point of discharging into Mitchell's Bay, and Pain Court Creek is flanked by some as fair and fertile fields as ever lay exposed to the sunshine, producing the best barley grown in western Canada, besides excellent crops and grades of all other cereals.

The pioneers of Dover were the Dolsen family, the Canadian branch of which sprang from a United Empire Loyalist who left the valley of the Susquehanna in Pennsylvania soon after the close of the struggle for American Independence. Mr. Dolsen was then far advanced in years, and beyond the age of active participation in the toils of pioneer life, but his two sons, Matthew and Isaac, were in the vigor of manhood. The former chose a location on the Dover side of the river, though the name of Dover was not then thought of in connection with this township, which, after survey, was referred to as the "second township north of the Thames," Dover West of the present being then the "first township." Isaac Dolsen, the other brother, located on the Raleigh side of the river, in connection with which township he will be at greater length referred to.

The location selected by Matthew Dolsen was lot nineteen where he settled probably as early as 1792, for it is related that when his family, including his two sons, John and Isaac M., arrived in 1794, he had already made considerable improvement upon the lot. Next lot east of Dolsen and of the present Bear Line Road, was early occupied by Thomas Clark, who removed thence to the creek banks above Chatham, very soon after his first arrival on the Thames and there he established the pioneer mill of the county, as related in our sketch of Chatham. On the next lot east, one Wilmore, located also very early, but the removal of both of those pioneers left the river front between the Bear Line and Chatham without a settler for many years thereafter.

The centre of attraction along the river front for a long period was the Dolsen farm (now owned by William Gray, 1832), where the proprietor's enterprise had established several manufactures of considerable magnitude, which he continued to operate until the second decade of this century was past. One of his first ventures there was a general trading mart, which he supplied with goods brought from Buffalo and Detroit in a vessel of his own construction, said to have been the first vessel built on the Thames, it having been launched within a few years of his settlement there. Later, he opened a distillery and grist mill, the former fitted with four "worms," and the combined establishments employing eight horses to furnish motive power for grinding. The immense quantities of whiskey thus manufactured were disposed of chiefly to the North-West Comp.



pany, but as Mr. Dolsen's possessions at that point included a tavern and the red ribbon pledge had not yet become popular among the settlers, it is but reasonable to suppose that a goodly share of the "ardent" went to supply the local demand. A tannery, blacksmith shop, and cooperage, in which quite a large staff of men were employed added to the volume of trade and height of the dignity centering at this place; but with the increase of settlement throughout the country, the collapse of the North-West Company, the division of trade in general among other marts which an increased population called into existence, and the many other indefinable reasons which attended the decline of small trade centres in the early days, the spirit of commerce deserted this point, and the "hum of industry," which here established its original dwelling place in Canada, left for parts unknown.

Neither was the settlement of the river below the Dolsen centre either rapid or dense for many years after the pioneer locations were made. Matthew Dolsen's two sons grew to manhood here, when John (familiarily known as "Squire John") retained his residence on the old homestead and Isaac M. took up a home on the lot adjoining on the west, their father having drawn a four hundred acre grant here originally. Still farther down stream the settlement was formed during the present century by John Hamilton, the Poquettes, and Babys. The banks of Pain Court Creek, below the village of that name, were first settled being J. D. Lozon, who was followed by Gabriel, Primeau, in order named. All these parties took possession of the land as "squatters," but at their request Surveyor-General Rankin was sent up to survey a tract hereabout (to which is now accorded granted patents for their holdings).

The interior of the township was not settled until about the time of the Rebellion and the years succeeding that event. The vanguard of settlement along the east centre was formed by Thomas Smith, who located on the Chatham town line, in the tenth concession. He was followed somewhat later by the McPhersons, Rankins, and Ashers, in the vicinity of Baldoon Street and Little Bear Line, while in connection with the settlement of the region intervening between their locations and the north end of the township, the names of Bishop, Owen and Hyatt prominently appear.

Pursuing the course of our narrative north-west necessitates retracing dates to the year 1201, when the Selkirk immigrants arrived at the Baldoon farm, lying within the angle formed by the Gore of Chatham base-line on

the north, the Chenal Ecarte on the west, and the St. John's on the south-east. These pioneers came to the New World under the patronage of the Earl of Selkirk, at that time a nobleman of considerable wealth, vast enterprise and great philanthropic attributes, the latter of which he demonstrated by his endeavors to better the condition of many of his countrymen by transplanting them from the sterile Highlands of Scotland to the fertile plains of Canada and the North-West. The first shipload of his immigrants left Greenock in the ship Oughton, landing at Montreal in July, 1804. They were conveyed thence to Lachine in French carts, thence up the St. Lawrence to Kingston in batteaux, thence to Niagara by sailing vessel, thence across country on foot and in vehicles to Fort Erie, and from that point to Amherstburg and up the Detroit River and Chenal Ecarte to their landing place, which they reached during the month of August.

To this place the name of Baldoon had already been given, in honor of a parish in the Earl's Highland estate. The number of arrivals at that time and place was one hundred and eleven, but another large party who came across in the same ship continued their course to the banks of the Red River of the North, where they founded the Selkirk Settlement, which now forms so important a factor in the composition of Manitoba. Earl Selkirk had received from Government a grant of all the land lying between the Chatham town line and Little Bear Line of the present, and extending from the northern limit of the township to within one concession of the Thames; among other conditions of the grant being one for colonization of the territory by a certain number of settlers. With the object and expectation of accomplishing this purpose and fulfilling those conditions, he brought out a great quantity of very choice farm stock, including horses, cattle, sheep and swine, the sheep so brought being said to have been the first introduced into the County of Kent.

The colony of Highlanders who first arrived included numerous families bearing the names of McPherson, McCallum, McDonald, McDougall, McLean and Stewart, but the McCallums and McPhersons of this party have since become extinct, while the other families have vastly increased in numbers. The entire community rendezvoused on



the Baldoon farm of about 1,000 acres, for some time drawing their means of support from a common fund provided by the Earl, when their individual efforts were not successful in gleanings a sufficiency from the soil. The triangle referred to was considerably improved by Lord Selkirk at great personal expense, erecting suitable buildings, constructing drains, etc., but the entire grant subsequently passed out of his hands, through his becoming financially involved and being unable to carry out his grand scheme in detail. While the partial failure of his large enterprise is to be regretted, the noble Earl is deserving of high encomiums for the liberal and courageous spirit displayed in bringing to our shores so large and eminently useful a class of citizens as has been developed from the party alluded to, only five of whom now live to relate the trials, privations and vicissitudes attendant upon their early experiences in the vicinity of the Sydenham and Chenal Ecarte. Lord Selkirk paid several visits to his colony after first planting it here. He used on such occasions to come in by way of the settlements on the Thames, whence he would traverse the woods and plains to Baldoon, employing as a body-guard a brawny Highlander, a portion of whose duty it was to carry the Earl across the creeks and swails upon his back.

Within a few years of their settlement at Baldoon, objections to the locality began to present themselves in the increasing number of inhabitants without a corresponding increase in the facilities of gaining a livelihood on that piece of territory, though it has meanwhile been divided up between the settlers in small farms, while some of them removed to the south bank of the river, or to the bank of the neighboring Chenal Ecarte, and a general disintegration of the community succeeded. Some of the settlers located in what is now the Gore of Chatham, while others penetrated beyond into the Township of Sombra, settling along the north branch of the Sydenham and the River St. Clair, others again removing to adjacent localities in Dover. There were some who remained on the original farm, however, but these were ultimately driven off by the rise in the water level of the neighboring network of streams and channels. This rise commenced about 1825, and to resist the threatened inundation, dykes and levees of sufficient height were constructed where the variations of surface rendered them necessary. Despite their efforts, the water level continued its upward tendency, and stories are told of harvest fields on which the shocks of ripened grain

stood in luxuriant beauty, being flooded to the depth of several feet by a break in the levees. By 1830, the water had reached its utmost height, and in that year, it is related, the former wheat fields were navigated by moderately deep draught vessels. During that period also, as is stated by some gentlemen still living in this region, canoes were used as vehicles to carry children to school across what had formerly been arable land, and the practice of thus riding on the tide to a seat of learning, and mooring their craft to the school house door, is said to have been not infrequent.

This state of affairs of course necessitated a retreat of the settlers from the inundated localities, and now the once fair scene of prosperous agriculture is a desolate waste, over which the floods sweep during several months of the year.

After the release by Lord Selkirk of his claim to the tract granted him, it was settled by families coming principally from the north of Ireland without any concerted plan of immigration, among whom were some of those referred to as locating the Baldoon Street and Bear Line. As another prominent pioneer of the township should be mentioned Robert Mitchell, one of the earliest settlers, and the most influential resident in the locality of Mitchell's Bay, so called in his honor.

The history of municipal affairs in this township has not been wholly preserved on record, but from the book of earliest minutes extant, it appears that in 1848 the list of township officers contained the following names:

Robert Mitchell, District Councillor; Thomas W. Smith, Clerk; William A. Crowe, Assessor; Thomas Crowe, Sr., Collector; John Toll Isaac D. Dolsen and John Lawless, Town Wardens. On the introduction of the Municipal Act in 1850, Robert Mitchell, St. Luke Emery, Adolphus Reaume, Andre Peltier and Alexis Urquhart, were elected the first Reeve, and the following appointments to municipal offices were made: T. W. Smith, Clerk; William Gordon, Collector; Wm. A. John, and Robert Crowe, Assessors; and Thomas Crowe, Treasurer. The list of township officers for the present years stands



thus, viz.: J. n Wright, Reeve; Cornelius Purser, Deputy-Reeve; Philip Blair, Henri Thibodeau and Thomas Bordeau, Councilors; J. W. Welsh (Dover South P. O.), Clerk; Jos. Bechard Treasurer.

There are but few post villages in Dover, and none of considerable importance. The list includes Baldoon, about the centre; Oldfield, on the Chatham Town Line; Mitchell's Bay, near the shore of that inlet; and Pain Court, on the banks of the creek of that name, about seven miles from Chatham. The village is almost exclusively French, and contains a very fine Catholic Church and Presbytery, store, hotel, steam saw mill, and a population of about 100. Its peculiar name (signifying "short bread") was bestowed under the following circumstances: Before the erection of a Catholic Church nearer than Sandwich, the settlers along this creek were annually visited by a Priest from that point on a tour of inspection and collection of contributions to the Church. The settlers were then very poor, and often lacked the essentials of comfortable diet. One of them, with whom the Priest used to stop over night on such visits once expressed his wonder at the coincidence of these visits always falling upon a date when he was without bread in the house. The circumstances, thus brought to the notice of the reverend gentleman, resulted in him bestowing the above name upon the settlement, as a reminder to the residents of their former poverty and to his successors of the rough experiences attending clerical duties among the French settlers of Dover in the early days of its history.



## HARWICH

THE township of Harwich occupies a place of geographical advantage in the centre of the southern tier of Kent county townships, extending from the Thames on the north to lake Erie on the south. A portion of its north-westerly corner has been included within the town limits of Chatham. It is bordered on the east by Howard and on the west by Raleigh. Of an average depth of sixteen and width of ten miles, this township embraces about one hundred and sixty square miles of territory, or ninety six thousand acres. Its surface partakes of the same uniformly level nature which distinguishes this entire county, the only relieving feature being the "Ridge" which traverses the township from Buckhorn in a north-easterly direction to the Howard town line. This natural elevation is quite narrow in extent along the westerly half of its course through Harwich, but east of Blenheim it broadens somewhat, and expands in places into the form of a plateau of considerable width.

The principal stream by which Harwich is traversed is McGregor's Creek, which, crossing the Howard townline about six miles from the Thames, flows in a generally westerly direction to within a few miles of Chatham, when it diverges toward the north-west, and discharges into the Thames within the town limits. Other streams of less considerable volume traverse different sections of the township, but McGregor's is the only well defined water-course crossing its entire width. The current of all the streams not only in this township, but throughout the county, is exceedingly sluggish, and, except during freshets, almost imperceptible, owing to the intense level nature of the surface. This latter feature of course prevents any great facility of drainage, but not to such an extent as to preclude the highest agricultural excellence being attained.

The soil of Harwich is fairly representative of hard, stubborn, tenacious, but exceeding productive and durable clay for which the county of Kent is noted. Its fertility is evinced by the enormous crops of cereals, hay and roots, which here reward the labor of the husbandman, and the effects of its high culture reflected in the comfortable and well-to-do appearance which characterizes the farmsteads throughout the township. In some localities, however, the compact character of the soil relaxes into a decided loam, and even into an approach to sandiness, as is the case along portions of the Thames river front, and at places along the Ridge. These displays of lighter soil do not impair the general fertility of the township in the

least, however, the prominent feature of those localities being of greater adaptation to fruit and root crops, and a greater facility of culture.

The history of pioneer effort in Harwich dates back to 1792, when Thomas Clark located lot two, on the river front, on what is now known as the McGregor farm, at Chatham, but our remarks on this subject in connection with the sketch of Chatham render further reference unnecessary. Farther east, along the river bank, the pioneer settlements were made in the year 1796, if the statements made by descendants of the original settlers are accurate as to dates. The pioneers of that section were the Traxlers, a family consisting of father (Peter) and several sons—Peter, Michael, and John—who located about three miles above Chatham; John Shepley, who took up a farm a short distance down stream from them; Adam Everett, above the Traxlers; and one or two representatives of the Arnold family, whose descendants are still so numerous along the river fronts of Harwich, Howard and Chatham. These parties were all United Empire Loyalists, and though arriving here at so late a date after the Revolutionary War, many of them had resided in British territory during the interval and now claimed their "United Empire rights," in the shape of land grants which had been here surveyed for them. In 1796, Hugh Holmes settled lot twenty three, river front, near Kent Bridge. He was of Irish birth, but coming to America in childhood, he remained a time in Montreal, then took a course in Dartmouth (New Hampshire) College. He afterwards removed west, and taught school in Detroit, where he married, removing thence to the location named in the year mentioned. Here his son Abraham, still living in Chatham, was born in 1797, this being the first birth in Harwich, so far as we have been able to learn. The elder Holmes, being liberally educated, had his services in a clerical capacity widely sought by his less-favored fellows, for whom he acted as notary in the preparation of all legal writings, and was in fact for many years the scribe for the entire community of the river front. He subsequently removed to Sandwich, where he taught school in the old stone school-house, which then constituted a prominent landmark of the frontier, his family remaining on the farm meanwhile, and retaining its ownership even to the present day.



In 1795, the township of Harwich was partially surveyed by Abraham Iredell, whose instructions included an order to lay out a "road of communication between the Chatham Settlement and Rond Eau or Little Lake, and to lay out two hundred acre lots on either side thereof for settlement by United Empire Loyalists." This was accordingly done, as some parties claim, as late as 1797, but the road was not established to the lake till 1844, though that portion between Chatham and where Blenheim now stands had been long previously cut out and named the "Mill Road" or "Communication Road." By the peculiarities of the survey, Harwich has been favored with four "first" concessions, one at the river Thames (R.T.), one at Lake Erie (L.E.), one east and one west of Communication Road (E.C.R. and W.C.R.), the concessions numbering back from each of these fronts.

Although reserved for settlement by United Empire Loyalists, the land along the highway mentioned was not so taken, except a few lots in the vicinity of Blenheim which, although drawn from Government by representatives of that class was not settled by them but subsequently transferred to other parties. In the nearer vicinity of Chatham, however, settlements were made along the Communication Road at an early period of the present century. As early as 1804 Phillip Toll had located lot six, concession six, River Thames survey, having removed thither from the Raleigh river front, of which locality he was a pioneer but he subsequently removed farther south in Harwich, and became one of the first residents in the vicinity of the Ridge.

The same year Patrick McGarvin drew lot five, concession four, River Thames survey, but did not take up his residence there till four years later, he having meantime lived in the neighborhood of Louisville, Chatham township. Nearer Chatham, on the site of the present cemetery but on the opposite side of the creek traversing that lot, Solomon Messmore and Peter Smith had also located at that early date. The removal of some of these settlers, and the accidental death of two others, left this locality almost tenantless about 1811, in which condition it remained a considerable time. The accidents referred to were the drowning of McGarvin in the Thames above Louisville in 1811, and Messmore's death by a falling tree the spring following, when only Toll was left upon the creek, and his removal sometime after left a deserted locality hereabouts.

The lot formerly occupied and abandoned by Toll was taken up by Daniel Field in 1816, he becoming thereby the pioneer of the

second settlement in this vicinity, being followed sometime later by Michael McGarvin, son of the original locatee of lot five, concession four, who had now attained an age warranting his assumption of backwoods labor and responsibilities. The settlement of this portion of the township was by no means rapid for some years thereafter. Among the next to locate along the creek (McGregor's) was John Searnes, who located his wife's United Empire rights about 1820, and was followed in 1822 by Neil McQuarrie.

The sparseness of the population, and their pecuniary inability to provide the facilities for education, public worship, social enjoyment, etc.—not to mention many of the more necessary elements of life in the shape of food, raiment and household furnishings—rendered the early existence of Harwich pioneers the reverse of luxurious, while in material status subsided several degrees below ordinary comfort; but the will-power and courage which had guided them to the selection of this region as their future homes, sustained them in uncomplaining patience during the reign of want and poverty, tiding them eventually in safety through those narrow straits, and securing to them a degree of comfort and independence highly complimentary to their energy and application. Longfellow has described the Puritan pilgrims as having "short allowance of victual, and plenty of nothing but gospel," which degree of plenteousness was denied to Harwich pioneers; but under the order of things long since inaugurated, through the medium of their muscles they and their descendants now enjoy plenty of either commodity.



## HOWARD

THE Township of Howard occupies a position between Orford on the east and Harwich on the west, the River Thames on the north, and Lake Erie, on the south. It contains an area of about one hundred and five square miles, and ranks second to no township in the county in point of agricultural excellence. It is quite densely settled by a peculiarly thrifty and enterprising class of farmers whose labor has rendered Howard one of the most attractive townships in appearance to be found on the map of western Ontario. Especially has the feature of attractiveness, both natural and artificial, been highly developed in the vicinity of Talbot Street and Lake Shore, where a succession of handsome and even elegant farmsteads form a picture of rural beauty rarely surpassed in any of the other agricultural sections of Canada.

The topographical characteristics of Howard are somewhat more varied than those of the townships farther west. The township is traversed by a gravelly ridge running at a distance of about five miles from the shore of Lake Erie, toward which sheet of water the surface gently slopes on the south, while to the north of the elevation alluded to a gradual decline toward the northwest is observable. The "Ridge" forms the only "water shed" in the township, numerous small streams flowing thence into the lake on the one hand, and toward the Thames on the other. A network of rivulets combine to form the volume of McGregor's Creek in this township, and to the north of that system several others of local importance. Field's McGorgan's and Arnold's Creeks, afford convenient drainage. The soil of Howard is of a generally lighter and more porous consistency than is found in the west riding of the county, the vicinity of the "ridge" being especially devoid of the stubborn clay features which characterize other townships of Kent. There, a gravelly loam of great fertility and pliability predominates, and though in other parts of the township a somewhat heavier grade of soil is found, it, in no locality assumes a nature too compact to forbid its classification as a rich loam, with alternate inclinations to clay, sand and gravel. By nature Howard has been more favored than any of her adjacent sister townships, in being provided with a soil quite as productive as is elsewhere found, while being more convenient of tillage, and drained by natural water courses.

The Township of Howard remained uninhabited representatives of the Anglo-Saxon race until the American Revolution had been

brought to a successful issue and the contemplated early cession of the territory of Michigan had suggested to the numerous adherents of the British Crown who had removed thither after the close of hostilities, the sentimental desirability of transferring their residence once again to British territory. Accordingly, when the surrender of British authority in Michigan became a foregone conclusion, a considerable exodus of residents of Detroit and vicinity to the western counties of Canada took place. Among the devotees of British institutions, who then flocked up the Thames, seeking a new home under the flag that many of them had fought for during the then recent struggle, were the pioneers of Howard.

Among those was Isaac French, who located lot three on the River Front probably as early as 1794, but removed thence about two years later after disposing of his interest therein to Frederick Arnold, who was a native of Berlin, whence he emigrated to Pennsylvania. Espousing the Royalist cause, he bore arms against the Continentals during the Revolution, and was obliged to quit the country or take the oath of allegiance after the termination of that struggle. Coming west to Detroit, he resided there a short period, then removed to Petite Cote below Sandwich, remaining a couple of years and removing thence to the Thames about 1796 as above outlined. His sons, four in number, were respectively named Louis, John, Christopher, and Frederick, the first two named of whom located on the river front in Chatham township, the younger ones remaining in Howard, where their posterity to a large number still reside.

Previous to the location of the Arnolds, lots one and two, adjoining the Harwich town line, had been taken up by J. G. Ribley, and lot four by one Miller, who was subsequently drowned while fishing in Lake St. Clair. Lot five was settled by William Howard about the same period and lot six next adjoining on the east, was patented to William McCall, who was soon after succeeded in its possession by John Carpenter, and beyond him to the east were John Gordon on lot eight, Nicholas and Elihu Cornwall on lot nine, and Jacob Quant, who had borne the chain for Patrick McNiff, in the survey



of this tract along the Thames, on lot twelve. One McDonald settled on lot thirteen at quite an early date, though not as early as the others named, who were United Empire Loyalists, and beyond the location occupied by him the settlement of the Howard river front did not extend for several years. The community did not expand in any direction with great rapidity for a considerable time after its first settlement, though new accessions to its population arrived from time to time, the progress of the entire county during the first two decades of its settlement being of a very moderate order. Quite early in the present century, however, Joseph Johnson settled on lot one, and, with the location of others, the population of this locality became gradually quite dense.

Soon after his advent upon this scene the elder Arnold erected a small saw mill on lot three, on the banks of a small creek, since called Arnold's Creek. To these facilities were soon added gristing apparatus, both of which branches of industry were extensively utilized by settlers from long distances for many years.

There was no rapid development observable in this township prior to the War of 1812, except such as took place within the limits of the locality outlined in the foregoing paragraphs. The entire southern part of the township was still an unbroken forest without a white resident, save John Crawford and family, who took up a residence on the Lake Shore adjoining the Harwich town line in 1809, and there continued to reside amid the solitude of the mighty forest and the murmurs of the lake until their isolation was broken in upon by the influx of other settlers. Soon before the outbreak of the Anglo-American War of 1812, removed to lot eighty eight, Howard lake shore, where the latter built the first mill south of the Thames in Kent County. The Hackneys were Englishmen, remained in single blessedness during the greater portion of their natural lives, and exhibited other peculiarities which distinguished them from the "common herd," and gained a considerable degree of prominence along the shore. It is related of "Ned," as one of the brothers was invariably called, that chancing to visit a house in the neighborhood where an infant girl was asleep in a cradle, and the mother expressing a desire for a new splint broom, he offered to "swap" such a broom for the child when it should have grown to womanhood. The offer being jokingly accepted, as is stated, "Ned" performed his part of the contract, and in after years successfully solicited the fulfilment of the other part.

In 1817 the first general influx of settlement along Talbot Street occurred, in furtherance of the governmental plans which Colonel Talbot, as general land agent was sent out to superintend. Here, as elsewhere along the shore of Lake Erie, free grants were made to settlers on condition of the not very onerous "settlement duties" prescribed at the time, which have been repeatedly described in this work. The previous fall of 1816, however, had marked the arrival of the pioneers upon the site of Morpeth, in the persons of three Nova Scotians, the brothers, Joseph and Robert Woods, and the former's son James, who cut the first tree on the site of that village, has ever since resided in the vicinity and is now spending his declining years at Troy. The trio named returned east with the approach of winter, and the following spring returned to their western location and formed the vanguard of a numerous colony who, in 1817, and the years immediately following, settled along Talbot street in this township.

Early in the year 1817 the Cull family moved into the neighborhood of which Morpeth now forms the centre, coming from the river front. There were six in number, named respectively John, William, Samuel, Jesse, James and Thomas. James Cull settled on lot ninety two, north of Talbot street; his brother Samuel opened a blacksmith shop in the vicinity; lots, ninety one and ninety two south, were taken up by Woods brothers mentioned; and the arrival of others in the same locality speedily transformed the recent forest into a scene of pioneer development. Those, whose location here came next in order, where John Desmond, afterwards one of the most prominent men in the township, and Nicholas Cornwall from the River Front, who built a mill on his new location.

The settlement along this street became quite dense within a year after the arrival of those named, the locatees on the south side, commencing at the Orford town line, in addition to those already mentioned being Freeman Guen, William Brown, David Palmer, Murray, Walter Galbraith, McGill, John Armstrong, Jos. Lyons, John Shippy, Peter Stover, James Clarke, James Leonard, Jacob Smith, James Brown, William Fisher, Isaac Bell, Thomas Lambert, and Samuel Crawford. On the north side of the street at the same time were located one Tipp, on the east, and thence toward the west (besides



those before mentioned) the list included Samuel Brundage, — Stewart, Isaac Swartz, Edward Scarlett, George Hewitt, Alexander Goff, William Desmond, John Bell, Rufus Hubbell, Lovell Harrison, Israel Smith, Thomas Brown, Joseph Richardson, Joseph Oakley, Joseph Wheatley, Mark Chase, Benjamin Bell and Adam Richards. The only survivors of those named above who then invaded the wilderness armed with the implements of husbandry, and the courage and patience so characteristic of the pioneer, are John Desmond and James Woods, both of whom have considerably exceeded the age prescribed by the Psalmist.

The first store in Morpeth was opened by Edward Lee, who had established a similar institution on the Howard and Harwich town line about 1822, and removed to Morpeth about 1826. It was about the latter date that the name now borne by the village was conferred upon it by choice of the people, that of 'Jamesville' having been diligently urged by James Cull, who owned the lot forming the north west part of the village. In 1828, or soon thereafter George Duck came to the township, settling on Talbot street about midway between Morpeth and the Harwich border, where he opened a store and continued its management for a long period. Mr. Duck was one of the most active and influential public men of the township up to a comparatively recent date, serving the people repeatedly in a representative capacity in Township, District and County Councils, and contributing in numerous ways to the material interests of the community.

The locality of the "Ridge" in this township was included in the tract under the management of Colonel Talbot, but continued in its primeval state until 1823. The first stage in its development was marked by the location of settlers upon the site of the present town of Ridgetown. The distinction of cutting the first brush heap here in 1832 is accorded to Edmund Palmer, who still resides in town, a son of David Palmer mentioned among the early residents of Talbot street. The occasion of that incident was a trip to this place by the gentleman named in company with Alexander Marsh, their object being to clear a space and erect a log habitation for the reception of the family of William Marsh, father of Alexander, who had drawn lot nine, concession ten upon which he took his residence early in 1824, becoming the pioneer of the Ridge Road. The same year Edmund Mitton located lot ten, concession nine and built a house opposite where the town hall now stands. Several other families settled here

about the same time including John Wilson, John Scane, James Watson, Richard Tyhurst, and Ebenezer Colby. Among others whose connection with the early settlement and subsequent developments of the Ridge rendered them conspicuous were Thomas French, George, John and Henry Reeder, Levi Cornwall, James Scaife, John Palmer David McKinley, Thomas Dickson, Samuel Kitchen, John Bryhurst, and Richard Rushton, the last named of whom settled at the Harwich border and gave to that point the name of Rushton's Corners, which it still bears.

The development of this section was not particularly rapid for some years, though the gradual expansion of the clearings and appearance of well cultivated farms proclaimed that industry and energy were the order of the period among the pioneers. The settlement progressed as is usual with rural localities. With the production of grain which followed the clearing of the forest, came the establishment of numerous distilleries, whose product was liberally partaken of by those whose inclinations took that bent. It is related that, for want of more convenient vessels in which to carry this fluid, metallic bells were used, being carried by the "clapper"—these articles having been quite plentifully manufactured by an Orford blacksmith, who used to send them to the local centres for sale by such of the neighbors as chanced to be thither bound; hence the utilization of them for the purpose named.

The styles of wearing apparel, both in texture and design, were then of a very primitive order, the fabrics being spun at the domestic wheels, woven in the home looms, and dyed in lye to impart a "fast" color of butternut brown for Sunday wear. Churches and schools were few and far between until the settlement advanced in age considerably; but previous to their establishment, itinerant preachers expounded holy writ in different houses throughout the township. A log school house, the first south of the Thames settlement, was built on Lovell Harrison's farm, Talbot Street, where one Eastman first presided as pedagogue, being followed in that capacity by a gentleman named Boyd. The first school house on the site of Ridgetown was erected about 1830 by William Nash, on James Watson's farm, being first taught by one Gowdy; and to John Moody is ascribed the credit of having built the first mill in this flourishing town.



## ORFORD

THIS is the most easterly township of Kent County, lying south of the Thames. From that river it extends a mean distance of about twelve miles to Lake Erie, its respective eastern and western boundaries being formed by the Townships of Aldborough in Elgin County, and Howard. Being about seven miles in width, Orford contains a superficial area bordering upon 54,000 acres, about 4,000 acres, of which bordering the Thames midway between its eastern and western limits, are reserved for the residence of the Moravian Indians, of whom more will be said anon. Exclusive of this Indian Reserve, 48,973 acres of the township are occupied by actual residents, leaving only nine hundred and one acres of non-resident land. The assessed valuation of this area, including the personal property thereon, is \$1,018,811.

Orford presents more varied topographical features than any other township in the county. Entering its eastern border along Talbot Street, one meets a succession of quite sharply defined hills, which extend westward about to Clearville, where the surface subsides into a gentle roll, which it retains thence to its western border. Remote from the Lake Shore, a ridge of slight elevation traverses the township in rather irregular order from east to west and along the crest of that outline the "Middle Road" has been surveyed, with a range of lots extending on either side, out of uniformity with the later surveys. North of this ridge the surface is a generally level expanse, with slight knolls in some localities, succeeded by corresponding depressions below the general level, but neither so strongly marked as to merit the application of the term "undulating." The soil of Orford is also varied in character and consistency, that lying to the south of Talbot Street being considered the most productive. It is of clay composition, inclining to loam at some points; while north of that thoroughfare a tendency to sand is in some places observable. Farther north the stern features which mark the Lake Shore relax into a decided loam, which is in turn succeeded by a light sandy soil around Highgate and the northern centre of the township, the vicinity of the Thames partaking of much the same features.

A large area in the northern part of Orford was early granted by Government to the Moravian Indians, together with a considerable tract on the north bank of the Thames in Camden and Zone. These Indians were the principal remnant of the once flourishing congregations of the Moravian or United

Brethren Church in the United States, who were compelled in the year 1792 to seek an asylum in Canada, on account of their hostility to the American Government. By an Order in Council dated July 10th, 1793, a tract of about 50,000 acres flanking the river in this vicinity was granted to them, and there they proceeded to build a church, habitations, and other premises. This village, which was located on the north bank of the river, was burned by the victorious Americans under General Harrison, October 4th, 1813, when its defenders, including the notorious Tecumseh, were so disastrously defeated and the chief mentioned killed. After that catastrophe the band removed to the southern bank and built another village, now called Moraviantown, but which was formerly called New Fairfield. In writing of these Indians in 1851, the author of "Smith's Canada" says that about three hundred and fifty acres of the river flats had been cultivated by them, and that as late as 1817, the community numbered one hundred and sixty seven Indians of the Delaware and Iroquois tribes. Up to that date no natural increase of the number had occurred, but it had received accessions through conversions from other bands. A German missionary was supported by them; the habit of drinking had been conquered to a great extent, and as stated, they "had kept themselves more sober than the white people." By a second Order in Council, dated February 26th, 1795, a survey of that part was made about 1816 or 1817, a double tier of lots being laid out, one on either side of what is now called Talbot Street, which is located one and a quarter miles from the shore, the southern tier of lots extending to the latter point the northern tier an equal distance in an opposite direction. The tier of settlement reached this township from the east in 1816, but pioneer locations were not at first so numerous throughout the extent as along this same street in Howard, next adjoining on the west. The first actual settler within the township was John Bury, who located at the mouth of Clear Creek on the Lake Shore in the spring of 1816, being followed about a year later by David S. Baldwin, John Kitchen and Samuel Burns. Accompanying Mr. Bury was his son Phillip, then grown to manhood, who settled upon the northern part of the lot occupied by his father, the one next east of



the creek and south of Talbot Street (No. 58) being taken by Mr. Baldwin referred to; Burns located opposite Baldwin, and Kitchen on lot fifty four, north side, now the Aldborough town line. But a short interval passed between the location of the first and the last of the three last named. There followed soon after them several families who remained but a brief period, being frightened out of their forest locations by the many hardships and privations which characterized the life of the pioneer, unattended by comforts of a corresponding degree to neutralize the former. Of these families little can be said that would interest the reader at the present day their stay in Orford having been about equally brief and uneventful, and their names in most instances forgotten by those who remained behind and reaped the fruit of their severe exertions in the "times that tried men's souls."

Among the next prominent arrivals, whose posterity still possess the land of their fathers, was Eliakim Newcomb, who settled on lot sixty two in the fall of 1820. He brought with him a numerous family, including his sons Timothy, Dan Webster, Elizah and James, the second of whom still resides, at an advanced age, on the old homestead. Farther to the west, the prominent pioneers were Jacob Street and John Eberle, who settled, each with a family of sons, on lot seventy two where Palmyra is now located, the former on the north and the latter on the south side of Talbot Street. Among Mr. Street's sons, some of whom were then but boys, were Joseph L. Charles and Samson, the homestead still remaining in the possession of the former. The sons of Mr. Eberle, some of whom still reside in the vicinity, were Abram, Anthony, John, Joseph, Jacob and William. Nathaniel Mills was another of those to whom the early progress and pioneer of this locality is largely due. He located on lot sixty nine, north side of Talbot Street, among the earliest residents, and for many years held a place of influence and esteem in the community. Several of his sons are still among the most popular and useful members of society hereabouts, one of them, the Hon. David Mills, having long since acquired a national reputation in the political arena.

On lot sixty three south, David H. Gesner located at an early date, though not until that lot had been already drawn and occupied a short period by another party who removed from the township. Mr. Gesner took a very active and leading part in the management of public affairs for a long time after the introduction of a very crude form of municipal

government; he was a man of more than ordinary ability, and as popular as he was useful to the interests of the township in general and the "street" in particular. Other pioneer names which figure in the history of progress along this thoroughfare are those of William Ridley, who located on lot sixty one north, and Alexander McTavish, who settled farther west at a somewhat later date.

Another of the influential men of his day was George Henry (whose sons now conduct grain merchandising in Chatham), a gentleman of considerable enterprise, who came to the township about 1830 and built a grist mill on the Lake Shore on lot sixty one, this being the first mill in Orford. Prior to the date of completion the settlers were obliged to go to the neighboring Townships of Aldborough and Howard for milling conveniences. About the time of Henry's building his mill, Duncan McLaren established a saw mill on the creek traversing lot fifty two, adjoining the Aldborough town line. One of the most noted institutions then possessed by the township was the tavern opened at Clear Creek (now Clearville), by David S. Baldwin, soon after his location there. At that hostelry a good share of the public interest centred, and there were all reforms and improvements, either proposed, impending or accomplished, discussed around the cheery log fire that blazed on the spacious hearth of "mine host." That, too, was the "seat of government" after the privilege of partial self-government was extended to the people; there the "town meetings" were held for many years, and the political features of the times were discussed with all the profundity of rural statesmanship. A school house, erected on the creek bank south of the road, was added to the attractions of the locality, and "there in his noisy mansion, skilled to rule," David Herring taught the young idea how to shoot, he being the first or among the first to wield the tawse in Orford.

The vicinity of the Middle Road was settled about eight years later than Talbot Street, the survey of this locality having been deferred until about 1826. The first house in this portion of the township was built by John Blue on lot seven north, where he still lives, though now in the decline of life. He arrived in February, 1826, and the spring following, lot four, both north and south of the road, was taken by the brothers Duncan and Daniel McIntyre. The pioneer location on the site of Quart was made about two years later by John Hatch; Timothy New-



comb located west of that point; and one Smith, who had assisted in the survey of this tract, took up a farm somewhat nearer the setting sun, as did also John Sinclair, who had been similarly connected with that work. As the settlement of this section progressed, the need of milling facilities was met by T. A. McLean, son of the then Chief Justice of that name. He established at Duart an extensive steam saw mill and other branches of industry connected with the timber trade, and for a long time wielded a vast local influence, through this medium, and from him did the village receive the euphonious name it bears. The first store in the village was opened by James Tait, who was also the first, as he is the present Postmaster, the post office having been opened in 1857.

North of Duart, in the vicinity of Muirkirk of the present, the settlement lagged considerably behind that of the Middle Road, and not until about 1840 did that section receive its pioneer settlers, among whom may be reckoned John and Duncan Gillis, Thomas Simpson, David Ford, Thomas English and William Curtis. Still farther toward the river, the land was held by the Moravian Indians until 1858, when they surrendered all except the block above referred to as being now held by them, whereupon the portion so released was thrown upon the market, and soon thereafter sold among numerous settlers, the list of names identified with the history of this section including those of Marcus, Sussex, Donald, Grant and Parker on the east, and Brown, Norton, McFarlane and Richardson, on the west of the present Reserve.

The locality of Highgate was first settled by several brothers of the Gosnell family, who arrived there some time prior to the survey and settlement of the Middle Road. Most prominent among the early residents of that name were Joseph, John, and James, whose posterity have now become very numerous in that section. The members of this family early exercised a leading influence in township affairs, and have in later days been closely identified with the progress of this community and the municipality at large. Others who bore the burdens of pioneer life in and adjoining the Gosnell Settlement, as that locality was then called, were John Lee, since Warden of Kent, Finlay McKerricher and his son William, now one of the leading citizens thereabouts, and Thomas Tape, which latter name is now borne by a large number of the enterprising residents of the neighborhood.

Those were indeed times of wild and rough experiences, when the unsmoothed surface of trying circumstances presented alternate

aspects of distress and danger, jewelled by the occasional visitation of comforts which, though of so abstractly indifferent a grade as would now give them a place among the so-considered hardships of life, yet then, by the very force of their contrast to the prevailing monotony of toil and privation, became decided luxuries. True, game was plentiful in the dense forest which then stretched almost from limit to limit of the township, but its very plenitude robbed it of pecuniary value beyond such as attached to it as an article of food for the settlers, not always provided with the means of purchasing supplies. In fact, the number of beasts and birds then haunting the forests was often productive of annoyance and danger rather than sport; wheat fields required watching to repel the foraging expeditions of deer and turkeys, while the sheepfold was in constant danger of receiving wolfish attentions. Stories are told by the pioneers of remarkable achievements in gunning during that period, one disciple of Nimrod having, as is related, brought down an even dozen wild turkeys at one shot. The absence of streams probably alone accounts for the non-recital of equally reasonable fish stories. It not unfrequently happened that settlers would get benighted in their journeys to or from other settlements or villages, and while awaiting the dawn, be entertained by the cheering refrain of a wolfish chorus, reciting their desire for more intimate relations with the settler's ox team. On one occasion a deer was chased by those denizens to the door of a settler in the night, whereupon he went out and caught the hunted and exhausted creature as easily as though it had been domesticated.

But the exercise of those habits of industry and perseverance so eminently characteristic of the average pioneer soon transformed the wilderness of Orford into a series of progressive settlements; and with the additions to the population and increase in the wealth of the people, the pace of progress quickened, the forest became diminished, the clearing expanded, and this township was soon accorded a place among the most promising in the west. At no time has a halt in the onward march of improvement and development been here observable. The industry of the sires, inherited and exercised by the sons, and aided by the spirit of enterprise which has characterized the people of this township throughout its entire history, is now reflected in the handsome villages and succession of



smiling farmsteads throughout its limits, where tidy premises, elegant buildings, blooming orchards, and other equally attractive features, denote the fertility of the soil and thrift of the people.

The inception of municipal government in Orford took place in 1823, on the 7th day of January of which year a "Town Meeting" was held at David S. Baldwin's tavern, Clear Creek, at which the following named parties were elected to official positions: David H. Gesner, Clerk; James Morehouse, John Kitchen, Assessors; John Stewart, John Bury, Jr., Joseph Gosnell, Daniel McIntyre, Roadmasters; William Bury, Constable; William Ridley, Collector; Alexander McTavish, Eliakim Newcomb, Poundkeepers; Fred Lampman, James McLaren, Town Wardens. Mr. Gesner was continued in the Clerkship until the close of 1841, when he was elected District Councillor, and succeeded in the Clerkship by Archibald Walker, who was in turn followed by Peter Lampman in 1843, he giving place to Daniel Morehouse the year following. In 1845 Mr. Gesner was again installed in the Clerk's office, and held that position thenceforward till 1853, when he was succeeded by his son John H., who continued in the incumbency of the position till 1865. In the latter year James C. McDonald received the appointment, holding it ten years, and in 1875 the present efficient and courteous officer, Henry Watson, of Clearville, was entrusted with the duties of the office. The succession in the District Councillor's chair was divided about equally between Messrs. Gesner, Morehouse, and George Henry up to 1850, when our present municipal system was inaugurated. In the year last named the Council elected was composed of Messrs. Daniel Morehouse (subsequently elected first Reeve of the township), Duncan McLaren, Archibald Walker, John Stewart and Francis Johnston. The names of Orford's Reeves and Deputies since that date may be found in our Municipal History and for the present year we append the names of local magnates as follows: John Mason, Reeve; H. C. Gilmore, Deputy Reeve; Robert Henderson, Joseph L. Street and Andrew Marcus, Councillors; Henry Watson (Clearville P. O.), Clerk; John D. Gillis (Duart P.O.), Treasurer.

The list of Orford's villages is but moderately extensive, which remark will also apply to the villages themselves.

Duart is the township "capital," as there the Town Hall is located. Its other attractions embrace a brewery, steam mills, three stores, several shops, and a population of about one hundred, including one or more practitioners of the healing art. Clearville, situated on Talbot Street at the crossing of Clear Creek, contains two stores, churches, hotels, shops, and a small rural population. Palmyra, also on Talbot Street near the western border of the township, boasts attractions similar to those of Clearville. Highgate is a station of some importance on the Canada Southern Railway, which traverses the township from east to west near the centre. It is twenty six miles from Chatham, contains a population about three hundred, steam saw, oat and flouring mills, two churches and the conveniences in mail, telegraph and express matters incident to railway villages.

Turin, a post village between the tenth and eleventh concessions near the Howard town line, and containing church, school and shop, completes the list of trade centres within a township whose chief attractions consist in its highly wrought fertility, and the intelligence, industry and thrift for which its people are noted.



RALEIGH TOWNSHIP

**R**ALEIGH lies to the south of the Thames, bordering Lake Erie on the south, with the Townships of Harwich and East Tilbury forming its respective eastern and western boundaries. Lying immediately to the south-west of Chatham, a portion of its original territory is included within the corporate embrace of that town. The area thus included is 71,083 acres of which, in 1880, 33,238 acres were returned as cleared, and 66,239 acres as owned by actual residents of the township.

Raleigh displays topographical characteristics similar to those which distinguish the surrounding townships, being a generally level plain which in no place arises to any considerable elevation, though in some localities it sinks to a level too low to admit of successful tillage. In the vicinity of the Thames there are quite large areas of these plains or low prairies which become flooded in periods of high water, and, as is the case in some localities, remain in a semi-submerged condition a good portion of the year. These low expanses stretch considerable distances into the interior, in places forming a contrast to the scarcely more elevated but densely wooded areas bordering and, in some instances, surrounding them. The characteristics of surface prevailing throughout the balance of the township are decidedly monotonous, the face of the country being generally quite low and thickly covered with a fine growth of elm, among which is intermixed a considerable proportion of excellent oak and black ash of goodly size, these forming the principal though not the only grades of wood produced in Raleigh. The neighborhood of the Lake Shore is marked by the 'Ridge', so often before referred to as skirting the banks of lake Erie. Its average height does not vary far from forty feet, nor does its distance from the shore vary materially from half a mile throughout this township. The soil along the Ridge is of a light gravelly consistency, easy of tillage and very productive of hay, grain, root and fruit crops, the latter flourishing better in this than any other township of the county apparently. Between the Ridge and the Thames the soil is generally a heavy, adhesive character of clay, almost utterly lacking in porous qualities, and so compact that horse tracks on the highway often retain the water as would a cup, until it evaporates.

Underlying this surface soil is usually a very heavy grade of blue clay intermixed with gravel, which contains but few and unsatisfactory springs of water, the difficulty of obtaining which fluid in sufficient quantities forms one of the most serious disadvantages of the central or Middle Road section. Farther north, among the lower wood levels,

this difficulty is not so observable. The clay subsoil is generally overlaid with deep mould of vegetable accumulation and great fertility, though not very durable. The soil of the plains is much the same as that last referred to, differing in no essential features. An extensive drainage system has now redeemed nearly all the redeemable lands of the township and greatly improved the agricultural value of Canadian townships in so far as concerns agricultural capabilities. The plain lands thus far brought under culture yield the finest crops of corn to be found in this eminently corn-growing county, the lower areas furnish a good quality and immense quantity of wild hay as well as luxuriant pasturage, while the more elevated localities produce in great abundance the many other crops for which this region is noted, as well as those specifically named.

Raleigh received its first settlers from among the vanguard of civilization which moved up the Thames in 1792. Unfortunately for the precise accuracy of dates, no memoranda touching the events of its earliest history appears to have been preserved, and some confusion of opinion consequently prevails as to the exact dates of certain occurrences. There appear to have been three separate periods of settlement here during the last century—the first in 1792\*, the second in 1794, and the third extending over the interval between 1796 and 1800. The population of the Raleigh river bank had assumed quite a numerical importance; but at this distance of time from the dates named, it is well nigh impossible to determine to whom is due the distinction of having been its pioneer, or the respective years in which subsequent settlers located. Among the first, however, were the Dolsen, McCrae, Reaume, Peck, Jacobs, Drake, Parsons and Toll families. It is related that Edward, a son of the pioneer Parsons, was born in this township in 1790, but other circumstances fail to confirm this early date, though he was evidently the first white child born in the county.

The Dolsen family, now so numerous along the lower Thames, sprang from John Van Dolzen and his two sons, Matthew and Isaac, who located along the bank in 1792, and whose surname has since been altered to the



more Anglo-Saxon style of Dolsen.\*\* The elder gentleman was then far past his prime, but his sons were in the summer of life, each having a family at that date. Matthew settled on the Dover side, while Isaac and his father chose a location on the south bank, about five miles below the present Town of Chatham, where their descendant, William Dolsen, now resides (1830). Isaac's family then or subsequently consisted of seven sons and three daughters, the names of the former being Isaac, Daniel, Gilbert, Matthew, Peter, Jacob and John, several of whom afterwards removed to the States, but at least three of them made this their permanent abiding place.

The McCrae family consisted of Thomas, the father, and several sons, including Thomas, Alexander and William. The parent is credited with having built the first brick house in the County of Kent. He was among the early Parliamentary representatives of the county, the influence which he asserted in the pioneer history of the community being perpetuated to a considerable extent in his sons, one of whom (William) was M.P. for the county from 1834 to the union of the Provinces. The brick house referred to as having been built by Mr. McCrae was erected soon after the present century opened, one Lenover being the artizan employed in the undertaking. George Jacobs was another of the pioneers. Soon after his settlement he opened a small trading post on the river bank, and continued in that line of business for a number of years, raising a family whose posterity are still reckoned among the highly respected residents of the locality.

On lot eleven, Phillip Toll settled in 1796, being then little advanced past the age of boyhood. He, in common with several of the other settlers of that date, had removed hither from the village or vicinity of Detroit, when the cession of Michigan to the Americans was formally decided upon and announced. He lived a long period in the township though not in this vicinity, as he subsequently became a pioneer of Talbot Street, where his life was closed many years since. On the west of his location on the river bank were the houses of John Williams, John Peck, Andrew Hamilton (with his son John), and Robert Drake and his son Francis, the latter afterwards gaining a local celebrity as a Colonel of Militia.

In 1817 the Thames settlement in Raleigh had increased to no very formidable or promising proportions, considering the length of time since its foundation. It then contained but twenty-eight inhabited houses

tenanted by one hundred and ninety-eight residents; while the Lake Shore or Talbot Street settlement, though started only the previous year, then contained twenty-five houses and seventy-five inhabitants. There was then no church in the township, but one Methodist preacher claimed residence here. One school, two horse mills and brick-yard were also among the attractions.

The settlement of Talbot Street in this, as in neighboring counties, was formed under the supervision of Colonel Talbot, who allotted their locations to the settlers and exercised a general superintendence over their performance of 'settlement duties', consisting of cutting out the road fronting their property, and making certain stipulated improvements thereon, these duties constituting the purchase price of their farms, which were deeded to them on payment of notarial expenses connected with drafting and registering the necessary documents, then amounting to nearly thirty dollars. Many of the locatees in this, as in other sections of the township, came to their new homes in abject poverty of worldly goods, some of them having but an axe, an industrious disposition and indomitable energy as a capital stock on which to begin the conquest of the forest. But their poverty did not deter them from the effective exercise of the advantages which nature had furnished them, and the result of their courage and perseverance in coping with difficulty cannot but challenge the respect and admiration of all who commend those sturdy qualities.

The pioneers of the Lake Shore located quite numerously in 1816 and the following year. Some of them came direct from the British Isles, but many came from other parts of Canada and the Maritime Provinces, the Township of Harwich contributing a few who had been ousted from their locations there on finding the land already deeded, and the southern townships of Essex county furnishing likewise a few who have since ranked among the most influential citizens of that locality. Prominent among those to whom belong the distinction of identification with pioneer effort along this street was John Sovereign, who 'squatted' on lot one hundred and thirty three, afterwards disposing of his interest to Richard De Clute, from whose hands the farm passed into those of its present owner, (1880), Magnus Crawford, in 1831. Samuel Watson, on lot one hundred and thirty five, achieved a local prominence by building there the first mill in southern Raleigh, where he charged one shilling per



bushel for grinding. Located at intervals along the front were also Nathan Slater, William Wedge, the twin brothers—John and Solomon Shepley, David Quick, Nathan and William Harvey, Flater, — Wilcox, — Hamlet, and Thomas and Samuel Pardo, the two last named of whom arrived in 1817. On the border of Harwich, south of Talbot Street, where W. S. Stripp's store and a portion of the Village of Buckhorn now stand, James Dolsen was the first to settle, his claim being subsequently transferred, and passing through the hands of several owners, was purchased by Mr. Stripp at a comparatively recent date.

Flater's location was chosen near the west border of the township, and was transferred about 1820 to James W. Little, afterwards commander of the local militia during the Mackenzie Insurrection. Mr. Little opened a store soon after acquiring that property, and that enterprise was continued in operation for many years, being co-existent at different periods with others of less pretentious magnitude, one of which was conducted at the house of Thomas Pardo by another party, who subsequently sold out to Pardo, by whom the store was carried on several years. The highway at that date ran in close proximity to the lake bank, being flanked by but one tier of lots; but convenience afterwards suggested its location in its present position. As early as 1826 a school house was erected where the cemetery on Samuel Crawford's place is now located, the road not having been removed at that date from the place of its original survey.

In 1825, or thereabout, Colonel Burwell contracted with Government to finish the survey of townships in this region, left uncompleted by Abraham Iredell and Patrick McNiff, who had conducted all surveys up to that date. By the terms of the contract referred to, the interior portion of Raleigh was prepared for occupation by settlers in 1828 or before, the vicinity of the Middle Road, traversing the township from Charing Cross to the Tilbury border, being the first settled. The pioneer of the "Middle Road" was William White, who took up lot twenty four, in concessions eleven and twelve, during the fall of 1828. Mr. White was of Kentshire nativity, removing thence to Pennsylvania, from which State he removed to Canada in 1825. Locating at Talbotville, in Elgin County, he conducted a farm for Colonel Talbot until 1828, when, as before stated, he came to the forests of Raleigh and laid the foundation of his subsequent prosperity at a

time when his sons were in their boyhood. He was accompanied also by a son-in-law, Thomas Williams, and George Harvie, making the trip hither through the bush with ox teams and waggons brought from Pennsylvania, and was obliged to cut out a road from their point of leaving the Talbot Road, where Blenheim now stands, to their destination in Raleigh. The stock then brought in by that party consisted of fourteen cattle and one horse, which were compelled to subsist on browse in the absence of more palatable fodder.

Mr. White and his companions had effected a clearing of considerable size before the arrival of any other settlers along the Middle Road, which was then marked only by a line of 'blazed' trees. The next or among the next to settle after the White family was John P. Powell, on lot two, south, just east of the present Village of Merlin. He located in the fall of 1830, and was followed by his family the succeeding year; while at intervals between there and the eastern town line quite a number of locations were made, including the families of Joseph Ake, lot four south, John Pardo, lot thirteen north, and his brother William, a short distance to the east on the south side of the road. One Green was an early settler on lot eight north, but within a short time of his location there he mysteriously disappeared, failing to return home after starting to visit Talbot Street settlement. The circumstances of the case gave rise to a suspicion of his murder, but no tangible clue to such a deed was ever discovered. Samuel Hall and his son Samuel, who had preceded him on lot four north, and an Englishman named Cook, on the north side of Middle Road flanking the Harwich town line, were also among the pioneers; the Village of Cook's Corners (now known as Charing Cross) having received its name from the last named gentleman, the original locatee upon its site.

The vastness of the forest and scarcity of 'landmarks' constituted a source of combined annoyance and danger in those early days. It was not an unusual occurrence for settlers to lose their way amid the wilderness, while it long remained positively dangerous to allow children to traverse the primitive trails lest a like fate should befall them. On one occasion, a little daughter of John Powell, now Mrs. Samuel Hall, of Merlin, strayed from the path she was attempting to pursue, wandering for five days, and sleeping for five nights amid the wild and awe-inspiring surroundings of the forest fastnesses before being found by the 'Vigilance Committee', into



which the entire community formed itself to search for her. During that period she carried her father's gun, and sustained life by feasting off the brace of pigeons which he had shot and given her to carry home while he pursued his way to the Lake Shore.

Tales of privation and distress prevailing during that period form a more interesting than edifying link in the chain of early reminiscences. Some of these who have since risen to affluence in the community arrived in the country with only the proverbial "shilling" in the form of cash assets, and one gentleman, now resident near this street, declares his cash capital on arriving in Canada to have been but six cents. So rare was the "purchasing power" in those days, that many of the settlers hereabout, as stated by some of them, were for years unable to provide tea for their tables, and for a like reason were they unable to purchase the thread necessary for ordinary use, and were obliged to unravel strands from such cotton garments as they were so fortunate as to possess. To us of the present day it appears almost incredible that women should then have been driven to such shifts to procure thread for patching purposes.

The first preacher to visit this part of the township was a Methodist minister named Jeffrey, who used to hold service in the different houses along the street. The first Sabbath School was organized about 1836 on lot four north, by Samuel Hall and his mother. There had been previously built a Catholic church at the Thames on the boundary between Raleigh and Tilbury, this being the first ecclesiastical edifice in the township. A mill was opened by Joseph Ake (who was an American) on his lot some time previous to 1840, prior to which time the settlers were supplied by the mills at Chatham on the Lake Shore. Until improved by artificial means, the drainage of this part of Raleigh was very defective, the surface being submerged at seasons to a depth of nearly two feet, and one year, this state of affairs continued as late as July, thus preventing agricultural operations that year. Scarcity of food and money, of course resulted, and during a famine of more palatable and nourishing viands, it is related that pig-weed was extensively resorted to as an article of diet.

It was many years subsequent to the location of the pioneers along this thoroughfare that highway communication with the then insignificant Village of Chatham was opened, and until the establishment of such

facilities the settlers were obliged to traverse the intervening woods and plains on foot or in ox carts, when dry weather or winter's frosts permitted the latter condition of things. It is related by one lady how she once made that trip on foot, wading through water two feet deep on portions of the plains, and carrying half a bushel of salt on her homeward route. Nor were these the only difficulties and privations presenting themselves. Shoes could scarcely be purchased by those with money, while those lacking that potent commodity were compelled for several years to swaddle their pedal extremities in cloth, this being the prevailing style of winter foot dress. Their crops were sown upon the rough and only partially cleared land, and hoes substituted for harrows in covering the seed. Many of the women, fired by a commendable zeal for forest conquests, were none too delicate to shoulder the axe when household duties permitted, and chop side by side with the sterner sex of the family, often displaying a degree of skill in the use of that implement which would shame a youthful farmer of the present day. The music of axe was accompanied by psalm-singing in the cases of several of the ladies mentioned by the pioneers, this combination of industry with piety displaying a degree of muscular Christianity highly commendable.

The settlement along the road alluded to did not become very dense for a score of years after the first locations were made, and when the attention of philanthropists was drawn to the project of providing in Canada asylums for colored refugees and liberated slaves from the United States, a tract of eighteen thousand acres of Government land, located in the interior of Raleigh on either side of the Middle Road, was set aside for that purpose, under the ownership of the Elgin Association. The prime mover in this humane enterprise was Rev. William King, who had emigrated from his native home in the north of Ireland to Louisiana at an early age. He there cultivated the anti-slavery sentiments natural to his humane disposition, and when by process of law he found himself the possessor of several slaves, he settled them on a plantation in that State, where he gave them the pecuniary benefit of their labor until he completed preparations for their removal to Canada.

When the rumor spread over this region that the planting of a negro colony in this section was designed, the most violent opposition was manifested in mass-meetings



and petitions to Government to prevent a grant of land being made for that purpose. Through the persistence of Mr. King, however, and the co-operations of Lord Elgin, then Governor-General, all obstacles to the project were surmounted, and in April 1848 Mr. King arrived with his fifteen slaves, whom he emancipated, and with them formed the nucleus of the Elgin or Buxton Settlement, called by the latter name in honor of Sir F. T. Buxton, who interested himself largely in the formation of the Elgin Association, of which corporation Mr. King was appointed the agent. Other accessions to the population of the settlement followed, land being sold to the settlers at two dollars and fifty cents per acre on easy terms of payment, and the colored population of the township became an increasingly important factor, the success of the colored people in wringing from the northern forests a fair livelihood, with growing prospects of ultimate independence, quite justifying the estimate of their capabilities formed by the philanthropic founders of the colony. As time progressed, educational and commercial institutions were established; the latter became self-sustaining as early as 1866; churches were added, and the Buxton Settlement strode forward to a position of very considerable importance, embracing about one thousand two hundred inhabitants in 1866, since which date the number has increased materially, though at this writing no authentic figures of its resources have been published.

The township records of Raleigh contain no information of municipal affairs prior to 1850, when our present municipal code was introduced. In that year a Council was elected consisting of Messrs. John Weir, Thomas Jenner, Alexander Peck, Nathaniel Hughson and Thomas Dillon. The first named of these gentlemen was elected Reeve; Walter McRae (then of the unincorporated Village of Chatham, who was subsequently elected to the Legislative Council and is now (1880) Judge of Algoma) received the appointment to the Clerkship; William West was appointed Treasurer; John Smith, Assessor; and Martin Drew, Collector.

The villages of Raleigh are not very numerous, nor is their commercial consequence highly developed. Probably the most important of them is Charing Cross, situated partially on either side of the Harwich town line, about seven miles south of Chatham. It contains a station on the Canada Southern Railway at which all trains stop, connecting with a line of stages for Chatham, steam saw mill, two hotels, church, store, post office, and several shops. This village is connected

with Chatham and Blenheim by what is alleged to be a gravel road, though that feature was not apparent to the writer when he last narrowly escaped foundering in its bogs. Some dignity is imparted to the highway by toll-gates at frequent intervals, whose rates of toll suggest the excellence which is not observable in the road.

Merlin is a village of about one hundred and fifty inhabitants, situated on the Tilbury town line where crossed by the Middle Road, sixteen miles from Chatham. It contains a few stores, shops, steam saw and grist mills, several churches, and a good temperance hotel. It is located about three and a half miles south of Fletcher station on the Canada Southern Railway, and has risen to its present status since 1877, when the Messrs. Marshall established their extensive mills at this point.

Buckhorn is built principally on the Harwich side of the town line, between that township and Raleigh, where intersected by Talbot Street. About 1855 this little centre was founded by Nelson Chapman, who opened a hotel on the Raleigh side, using as a sign a pair of buck's horns placed on top of a high pole, from which incident the place took its name. Buckhorn now contains a population of about one hundred and fifty, and the usual concomitants in the way of stores, shop, et cetera, including a mill and two churches.

Fletcher, on the Tilbury town line where crossed by the Canada Southern Railway, is a place of few attractions, and only such as are incident to a country post village of seventy five inhabitants, possessing railway facilities.

Buxton, on the Middle Road, before alluded to, is but a small place, whose residents are principally colored. It lies about two miles south of the Canada Southern Railway or North Buxton station.

The high development of her agricultural interests and prosperity of her people, rather than her possession of numerous important trade marts, form the chief attraction of this township. Its public affairs are well administered, its schools are neat, numerous and efficient; its residences uniformly indicative of taste, comfort, and in many cases, wealth. The adoption and enforcement of the Dunkin Act evince a decidedly moral inclination on the part of the people, while an almost total absence of crime among the residents furnishes an argument in favor of Local Option as enforced in this municipality.



## ROMNEY TOWNSHIP.

**R**OMNEY is the smallest in territorial extent of any township in Kent County.

It is of nearly triangular shape, and occupies a position in the south-western extremity of the county, being bounded north and east by Tilbury East, south by Lake Erie, and west by the Township of Mersea, in the County of Essex. Its superficial area embraces twenty six thousand four hundred and fifty two acres, of which extent eighteen thousand and nineteen acres are owned by actual residents, among whom are two hundred and forty five ratepayers. The surface of Romney is generally very level, and too low to admit of the highest convenience in agricultural affairs. The shore of Lake Erie is here skirted by the "Ridge," which forms the only relief to the monotonous levels of the entire county, the elevated outline referred to running in close proximity to the lake throughout the greater part of this township, toward its eastern boundary forming a bank or bluff directly overlooking the waves, and from which the surface slopes away nearly twenty miles to the river Thames, falling only twenty six feet in that distance. The characteristics of soil in this as in other townships hereabout include a tendency to gravelly loam along the Ridge; and in its rear a general inclination to clay loam, underlaid by a heavy clay subsoil, and capped in many localities by rich deposits of vegetable matter, constitute the leading topographical features.

The lake front of Romney was first settled in 1817 by parties from the north of Ireland, England, the Maritime Provinces, and the United States. The two first to locate within the limits of this township were Nathan Baldwin and James Stewart, who were settled but a short time when the Jackson family took up six hundred acres near the eastern town line. The brothers Samuel and Jonathan Wickwire were among those who located here the same year, and in 1818 Robert Coatsworth, from Durham, England, took up lot two hundred, where his son Caleb now resides. Peter and Joseph Heatherington, John Robinson, Thomas Renwick, Robert Shanks, John Dawson and John Edwards followed soon after, and took locations farther east along the shore. The settlement of the Ridge was for many years confined to these families, who experienced their full share of the difficulties and hardships attendant upon pioneer life in the woods, in being so far removed from a source of supplies. Their nearest trading post was then Malden (Amherstburg), which offered but indifferent attractions, they being often

obliged to go clear to Detroit to obtain the necessities of life. The nearest mill was on McGregor's Creek at Chatham, forty miles distant, and accessible only on sleighs in winter; but at a somewhat later date a mill was erected in the township of Gosfield, in Essex County, which reduced the inconvenience incident to a trip through the woods to Chatham. They made their journeys to the mills of Gosfield, and Malden in canoes, coasting along the shore in their freighted crafts with comparative ease.

That portion of Romney remote from the Ridge did not attract settlers for many years after the forests had disappeared from the shore, and their former sites had long since bloomed with the fruits of successful agriculture. In fact, the date when settlers began to select homes in the section referred to is still so recent as to constitute no text for an historical reminiscence, and the record of their progress in the fight with the forest has been so uneventful as to call for no comment unless expressions of respect and admiration for the zeal, industry and patience displayed by those who braved the hardships which presented themselves to the settlers, and by their persevering energy have wrought such substantial improvements in this originally uninviting portion of the township as to-day meet the eye of the visitor.

Prior to the inauguration of our present municipal system, the townships of Romney and Tilbury East were united for representation in the District Council, the honor attaching to that office being shared in about equal degrees by Thomas Heatherington of this township, and Peter Simpson of Tilbury. In 1850 a separate Council was elected for Romney, consisting of Thomas Jackson, Joseph Heatherington, John White, John Robinson and Robert Shanks. Mr. Jackson was elected Reeve, and the minor offices were filled as follows, namely: Ralph Stobbs, Clerk; John Dawson, Treasurer; Jacob Hyatt, Assessor; John Coatsworth, Collector.

Romney contains no villages of importance, nor any in fact deserving a more dignified appellation than rural post villages. On the Essex county line, where crossed by Talbot Street the village of Wheatley stands, principally in Essex, however, at a distance of forty miles from Chatham. Its attractions are not extensive, consisting of such evidences of industry and commerce as usually accompany a population of three hundred people.

Romney is a post office on lot two hundred, where are also a telegraph office, a few small mechanics' shops and docks, over which considerable quantities of forest products are annually shipped.



## TILBURY TOWNSHIP

THE Township of Tilbury East is bounded on the north by the River Thames, on the south by Lake Erie and the Township of Romney, on the north east, by the Township of Raleigh and on the west, by the County of Essex;

The Township therefore partakes, roughly, the form of a right angled triangle of which the boundary line running north and south between the Counties of Kent and Essex and the boundary line running east and west between Tilbury East and Romney Townships form the two sides and the boundary line running north-west and south-east between the Townships of Tilbury East and Raleigh the hypotenuse.

The concessions, with their flanking roads, are run at right angles to, and the side lines and roads are run parallel with the Raleigh and Tilbury East Boundary line, thus producing a fringe of gore lots along both the Essex County line and the Romney Town Line.

On reference to the map it will be seen that diagonally across the middle of the Township, as originally surveyed, was run (with a concession of lots on each side) a road, known as "The Middle Road." Designed, originally, for military purposes, the road was run in a zig-zag course, forming within the Township two or three angles of varying obtuseness obviously designed for the protection of troops against exposure to a hostile enfilading fire. This interference with the original plan and survey of the Township became, in after years, more or less of an inconvenience although, by way of compensation, its early opening was of great benefit to the settlers at the time and in after years became the means of shortening the distance by highway between the north-west and south-east parts of the township.

The Township, as surveyed, bounded as it was, on the north by a navigable river, and accessible from the south by Lake Erie, would, at first sight, seem to have presented to the prospecting immigrant a most hospitable aspect. As a matter of fact, on closer examination such an aspect was found fallacious. An early settlement, it is true, took place along the narrow alluvial bank of the Thames, while a little later, settlement commenced on the Talbot Road lots fronting on Lake Erie. The extension however, of either of these settlements towards the interior of the Township was, at the time and in view of the peculiarities of the terrain and the limited resources of the settlers, an impossibility.

The bank of the Thames on which the earliest settlement took place, itself an ideal field for agriculture, slopes away from the River southerly towards and soon reaches a submerged, treeless area of about eight thousand acres, known as "The Plains" which was the home of the bull-frog and aquatic fowls and plants. These Plains extended from Lake St. Clair in the west, easterly through the Township of Tilbury west (or north), through Tilbury East, and terminated in the Township of Raleigh two or three miles east of the Tilbury East Town Line.

South of The Plains, which, in earlier geological times, had probably been a continuation of the Flats of Lake St. Clair, lay the great bulk of the Township as an exceedingly flat plane with an inclination northerly from the bank of Lake to the Plains averaging about three feet to the mile. That inclination turned the drainage waters of the Township northwards diagonally across the Township lots as surveyed, and these waters, seeking, in their northward course the line of least resistance, formed for themselves five principal channels or creeks with numerous tributaries. These main channels came to be known respectively as The Hickey Creek, The Ten, or Smith's Creek; The McDougall Creek, The Twenty, or Wilson Creek, and The Burgess Creek.

In pursuing their northerly course, both the Hickey and the Smith's Creeks (at separate places) crossed the township limits into the township of Raleigh, finding there, within and near the easterly end or "head" of the Plains an outlet in Jeannette's Creek. Along the capacious channel of that sluggish stream their liquid burden was thence borne westward, along with the accumulated drainage of, practically, the whole township of Raleigh, to re-cross the township limits into the township of Tilbury East near the south-east angle of the fourth concession of the township last named. Running thence westerly, the Jeannette's Creek is soon joined by the waters of The McDougall and ultimately finds an outlet for its burden in the River Thames at lot number nine in the first concession.

The Wilson Creek had its source in the township of Romney and in its northerly passage, together with its tributaries, provided drainage for the westerly half of the township of Tilbury East, with the exception of a small territory near its south-westerly angle which was drained by the Burgess creek aboved named into the county of Essex.



ZONE TOWNSHIP

THE township of Zone forms the north-eastern corner of the county of Kent, being bounded on the north by the township of Euphemia in Lambton county; on the east, by Mosa, in Middlesex county; on the south, by the Thames River and a portion of Camden; and, on the west by the Gore of Camden. With the exception of a small gore extending south of its general boundary, it lies entirely to the north of the line reaching from lake St. Clair to the river Thames, between the Gores of Chatham and Camden and the old time townships of these names, a line which bounded on the north the original Indian cession granted to the Government in 1790.

The outline boundaries above given include the town of Bothwell, which is situated near the north-west corner of the township, and though its chief attractions are confined to a comparatively small area, its corporate limits extend to the Thames on the south and the Middlesex line on the south-east; and we find the town possessing the anomalous features of a population numbering about one thousand two hundred, and an extent of nearly two thousand four hundred acres, or about two acres per capita for its population.

The township of Zone does not rank highest among those of Kent county in point of either agricultural excellence or advanced development. Its soil is of a generally loamy consistency inclining to sand, and in some localities the sandy feature predominates to such a degree to render the surface almost sterile; nevertheless the township generally is fairly fertile and well adapted to the culture of such cereals and root crops as find warm, light soils congenial. The surface is very level, with only sufficient fall towards the Thames and Sydenham to admit of moderate conveniences of drainage. No streams of considerable dimensions traverse its area, the only ones of even slight importance being those flowing through ravines to the Thames south of Bothwell. The area of Zone is less than any of its sister townships in the county, being but twenty four thousand nine hundred and forty eight acres, and added to the area of Bothwell, makes up a total original area for what is now the township of Zone, of about twenty seven thousand, three hundred and fifty acres.

The history of Zone is alike brief and without incidents of thrilling interest. In date of settlement it lagged behind the entire balance of the county, but its development since the pioneer's axe first awoke the echoes of its forests has been of an order to place the township in a very favorable condition, whether viewed in the abstract or in com-

parison with surrounding townships. The first men to invade the woods of Zone in the capacity of settlers appear to have been the brothers, Richard and John Stephenson, who located lot eleven, concession two, in 1842, where they remained several years without white neighbors on either side. In 1849, William Corlett settled the west half of lot ten, concession two, just south of the Stephensons, and was followed in 1852 by Samuel Harris, present township clerk, (1880), who took up a location immediately adjoining on the south, lot nine, concession two. In the vicinity of Florence there were few settlers on the Zone side at that date; one Ackland, a tenant to another party, being the only one in that immediate locality, and he occupying the corner lot of the township.

Along the western border of Zone, Henry Buchanan, Sr., and Peter McAnnally were prominent among those to whom the development of that section is attributable, while the names of Ferguson, Shaw, Brooks and Miller appear in connection with the settlement of the more south-westerly portion. The vicinity of the Euphemia town line is of quite recent settlement comparatively, as is also the case with a large area of the more central portion of the township. A considerable tract fronting the river Thames continued up to 1858 to be held as a reserve by the Moravian Indians, but they surrendering it in that year, it was thrown open for sale and settlement. The first to permanently locate within the precincts of the former reserve being Joseph Swalwell, who still resides on his location, now included within the corporate limits of Bothwell.



The pioneers of Zone experienced comparatively few of the hardships which usually fall to the lot of the pioneer, as, owing to the establishment of prosperous settlements on all sides of them and the reasonable proximity of mills, stores, markets, and other conveniences, they escaped many of the privations endured by those who founded the settlements from which Zone's settlers now draw many of the conveniences of life. We would not, however, detract from the credit due to those who braved the solitude and sacrifices inseparably connected with a location in the midst of a forest of such area as the township under review, nor from the toil and suffering, never slight, necessary to the transformation of the pathless woods into so attractive a scene of agricultural development as to-day meets the eye of the visitor of Zone.

Prior to the coming into effect of the Municipal Act of 1849, which erected the county of Lambton, the township of Zone included the territory now embraced within the Euphemia township limits, but by virtue of the Act referred to, the line now dividing the two townships was drawn, and Zone being almost uninhabited, was attached to Camden for municipal purposes. In 1857 it succeeded to its municipal independence, and elected a Council composed as follows, viz.: Henry D. Monroe, William Carson, John Tinney, Peter McAnnally, Jr., and William Corlett. At its first meeting Mr. Monroe was elected reeve, G. A. Smith appointed clerk, and Hugh McLachlin, treasurer.

With a goodly supply of schools and churches of a creditable order, the advantages of a railway traversing it in a convenient locality, and a large degree of intelligent industry among its inhabitants, the township of Zone seems destined to take a high and enviable place among the rural municipalities of the west.



## TOWNSHIPS.—KENT COUNTY

Township	First so named	Settlement began	Area in acres	Repr'd West'n Distr't	Incorp under M. Act	Name of First Reeve	First represented by	
							Dep.-Reeve	
							1st	2nd
Chatham .....	1794	1792	84,800	1842	1850	Samuel Arnold .....	1860.....	1872
Camden .....	1794	1792	46,400	1842	1850	James Smith .....	1863.....	
Dover .....	1794	1785	81,000	1842	1850	Robert Mitchell .....	1868.....	
Howard .....	1794	1792	58,600	1842	1850	George Duck .....	1853.....	1874
Harwich .....	1794	1791	88,400	1842	1850	A. R. Robertson .....	1854.....	1868
Orford .....	1794	1816	53,000	1842	1850	Daniel Morehouse .....	1863.....	
Raleigh .....	1794	1785	72,400	1842	1850	John G. Weir .....	1858.....	1878
Romney .....	1794	1817	27,400	1842	1853	J. Jackson .....		
Tubury E. ....	1794	1785	52,600	1843	1850	John Wilson .....	1878.....	
Zone .....	1821	1825	29,000	1842	1857	Henry D. Munro .....		

TOWNS AND VILLAGES  
KENT COUNTY

Municipality	First surv'd	Vill'g Incor por'd	First Reeve	Town Incor por'd	First Mayor	Area in Acres
Blenheim .....	1844	1875	A. L. Bisnett .....	1885	A. L. Bisnett .....	620
Chatham .....	1795	1850	Geo. Witherspoon .....	1855	A. D. McLean .....	1650
Bothwell .....	1854		J. C. Collier .....	1867	John Taylor .....	2340
Dresden .....	1845	1872	Alex. Trerice .....	1882	Alex. Trerice .....	642
Ridgetown .....	1851	1877	Jacob Smith .....	1882	H. D. Cunningham .....	671
Wallaceburg .....	1833	1875	Alex. McDougall .....			500
Thamesville .....	1854	1874	Robt. Ferguson .....			382



## REPRINT FROM REV. DAVID ZEISBERGER'S DIARY

beginning on

MONDAY, 25th DAY OF FEBRUARY, 1793

25th. "In the afternoon came back his excellency, the Governor from Detroit, with his suite, and passed the night with us. He examined very carefully the bank of the river and the country which pleased him. After they had dined we gave them an address, in the name of the missionaries, which he well and graciously received. We took the opportunity to speak further with him, since before his time was too short.

1st. About our correspondence, that it would be hard and long for us if we could not send our reports directly to Bethlehem, but to England, whence they must first write to Bethlehem, and get an answer before giving us a resolution about a thing. He perceived this, and replied that it was not positively forbidden to write to the States, but an Act of Parliament had been passed that from His Britannic Majesty's lands no intercourse on the part of the aristocracy and the clergy, especially of the Bishops, should be held with the States which we could report home, and they could themselves ask further about this in London. When we heard this, we were concerned, for we had no letter last autumn, and have had none since, that perchance they are lost.

2nd. About the land whereon we live, he had informed himself more carefully, and found that it was included in the purchase, that the Government was well disposed toward us, and would give us land in consideration of our having suffered great losses, but that he thought that a township fronting on the river, took away from them too much land, since they intended to settle it thickly, and we could not make use of so much land. We told him that on the Muskingum we had three towns, but during the war, had much decreased in number, for a third part had been murdered, another third scattered among the savages, and a third now remaining therefrom, (which indeed was not unknown to him, as he gave us to understand,) but that we hope, especially if there should be peace to grow again. The conclusion was, that if the land should be surveyed and laid out, and it should be found necessary, one of us should be called to Niagara and there we should be well considered and advised. We asked farther if a deed for the land would be given, and when he said yes, we said at once we should like to have it made out in the name of the Society's trustees in England, which he not only approved, having nothing to say against it, but was pleased with.

3d. We said to him that our Indians did not go to war, that we taught them according to the Scripture, to live at peace with all men, as far as possible, for experience had shown us that if they went to war, our Mission was ruined and our labor in vain. This he agreed to and confirmed, but said that on this very account the Indians were not well disposed to our Indians, as also some of the whites in Detroit, which is well known to us, and we know the persons, too, who do not approve our principles.

Tuesday, 26th. In the morning we spoke farther with him, setting before him the want of our Indians, in the necessities of life, that this had not come from laziness, as is usually the case with Indians, but that failure of the crops and early frosts in the autumn were the causes of it, and we asked him, if it were possible, to come to their aid. Last year in the spring we had bought them at our own cost a hundred bushels of corn, and thus put them in condition to clear their land and to plant, but from failure of the crops they were now in the same circumstances. When he found difficulty and could not of himself do this, and we had proposed to him that if we could have advanced to us two hundred bushels of corn, we would return it as soon as we could, he was disposed for this, and said, yes, this he could and would do, and at once ordered his commissary to draw an order upon the commandant at Detroit to deliver us so much from the king's store so soon as we could take it away. His excellency asked to attend our worship and early service. It so happened that most of the brethren were at home, and he came with his officers, took good notice of everything, especially of the brethren's singing, which pleased him well. Afterwards he bade us, when the Indians came together again, to express to them his satis-



faction at their devout worship, and to say to them that he had been much edified to see Indians worshipping God so devoutly and humbly; they should continue therein, to grow and increase in God's glory and as an example to other Indians. Then he went to the Zeisberger's house, where he was alone, wrote an answer to our address, and gave it to us with these words, that he hoped to have occasion to show his favor and inclination towards us, more by deeds than by what was therein expressed. He took leave of us in a friendly and polite way, and continued his journey toward Niagara.

### FURTHER REPRINT: THEIR FIRST HARVEST.

Aug. 8, 1792. "Yesterday and to-day the brethren got home from the settlement, where they have earned something to eat until now soon they can live from their planting."

Aug. 20. "Brothers went out hunting, Samuel, Bill, Henry and others. Some went to the upper town for corn. They came (Friday 24,) back from there, where we heard there had been a severe frost, and that some fields were quite ruined: May our dear Father in heaven give us a good harvest, for our corn is very backward. We very well see that we are farther north, for the nights are very cool, yes, cold, though it is now dog-days."

Aug. 24. "We also made our buildings ready, Bros. Senseman and Zeisberger their ad interim houses, designed for tables, for they cannot get farther on this year."

Aug. 27. "We cut all the corn in our fields, which was still in the milk, on account of the night frosts, and put it into shocks. The Indians have learned by experience, if frost comes too soon, the corn not being ripe, that if they treat it in this way, it becomes ripe and hard."

Oct. 8, 1792. Mr. Dolsen came here from Detroit with goods for our Indians.

Oct. 10. Dolsen returned home having sold all he bought.

Oct. 25. "The river divides the townships which are surveyed below us on both sides."

*Fal 149*

John McMichael, a native of Ireland, who was associated with the municipal and educational affairs of Harwich, Blenheim, and the county for a period of half a century, came to Kent from Toronto in 1846, and settled on lot nine, second concession, W. C. R., Harwich. He was a Justice of the Peace, clerk of the municipality of Harwich, 1859-60, reeve for three terms, county warden in 1866, and member of the school board for forty consecutive years. He was also Captain of Militia. He married Martha Moore, and they had a family of five children, Robert, Alecia, Martha, Josephine and Frances.



JOHN McMICHAEL.  
An ex-Reeve of Blenheim and a Warden of Kent County, 1866.

Spence A. Reid is a native of Chatham, where he was educated. He entered the post-office service September 28, 1904, and became post-master June 1, 1921, succeeding Samuel Barfoot, who was at that time retired. In 1910, he was married to Irene Estelle Bradon, of Chatham, and they have two children, Robert Patrick and Harry Spencer.



SPENCE A. REID.  
1885 —  
Post-master,  
Chatham.



Angus Gillanders, a retired farmer of Orford township, now residing in Ridgetown, is a native of Kent county, the son of John Gillanders and Mary Matheson, natives of Rosshire and Sutherlandshire, Scotland, respectively. His parents settled first in Haldimand county, but moved to Orford in the early forties of the last century. He was educated in the schools of Orford where he followed after

A. GILLANDERS,  
Ridgetown,  
Chairman High  
School Board,  
Reeve of Orford,  
1901-2, 1904.

the vocation of farming until the spring of 1920, since which time he has been a resident of Ridgetown. He has been active in the municipal affairs of his native township, and member of the county council, as elected

commissioner for seven years. He has been chairman of the High School Board and took with his colleagues a very active part in having the Agricultural Vocational school established and located at Ridgetown. He was married to Helen Learmonth, of Norfolk county, Ontario; their children are, Gordon, a barrister of London, Ontario; Mary, on the Toronto public school staff; Isabel, Wellesley Hospital, Toronto; and James, just completing his High School course.



DONALD McCOLL,  
1865 —

Reeve of Harwich, 1911-1913.

Donald McColl, an agent of agricultural implements, Blenheim, Ontario, son of Dugald McColl and Effie MacMillan, who emigrated to Canada from Lismore, Scotland, in 1851. He was born on the homestead, lot seventeen, concession eighth, Lake Erie survey, which he now owns and farmed until 1916. He was twelve years a member of the township council, three years reeve, and seven, a member of the county council. He was married in 1897 to Theresa Mead, and they have two children, Ina May (Mrs. Roy Gray), and Rowena.



PHILIP J. HENRY,  
Mayor of Ridgetown.

Philip J. Henry was born in Alborough township, Elgin county in 1865, but moved in early boyhood with his father's family to Orford township, where he received his public school education, followed by a course in the Business College of Chatham, from which Institute he graduated in 1888. He follows farming and stock-dealing as his vocation in life. He settled first on the homestead farm in Orford, but in 1898 moved to Ridgetown, devoting his whole time to the purchase and sale of stock for the Toronto and Old Country markets. He has been a member of the Town Council for many years and Mayor for eleven consecutive terms. In both his business and public life, he has been pre-eminently successful. In religion, he is a Presbyterian, and in politics, a Conservative.

James Clayton was born at Kleinburg, York county, Ontario, in 1871, where he was reared and educated. He became a resident of Raleigh township in 1881, where he follows the vocation of farming, and also takes an active interest in the educational and municipal affairs of the township. He was first elected a member of the Township Council in 1897, since which time he has served five years as councillor and an

JAMES CLAYTON,  
Warden of County,  
1912.

equal number of years as reeve. In 1912, he was elected Warden of the county.

GAL ONE FORTY

GEORGE MORGAN was born in Howard township in 1839, his parents coming from England and settling near Morpeth in



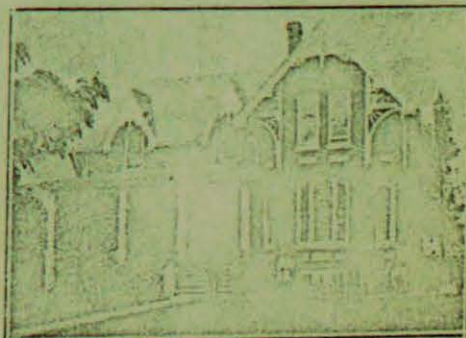
MR. and MRS. GEORGE  
MORGAN,  
Prominent citizens of Blenheim.

1835. After learning the trade of cabinet-maker, he became a builder and contractor for the western peninsula, and operated a large mill and manufacturing plant at Blenheim in connection

therewith. In 1892, he became associated with the Lake Erie and Detroit River Railway Company, and built the bridges, the stations and the interlocking switches along the track from Walkerville to St. Thomas and also the cement dock of the Lake Erie Coal Co. at the Erieau. He is reputed to be the builder of the first steam threshing machine in Canada which received an Exhibition medal for efficiency.

He was married to Jemisha Newcomb, daughter of Samuel Newcomb and granddaughter of pioneer Samuel Newcomb, born in Harwich, 1842. Their family comprised three children, Georgina, Pearl and Clara.

He took an active interest in the affairs of the town of Blenheim, and was fourteen years in municipal office as Mayor, reeve and councillor.



GEORGE MORGAN'S HOUSE  
Talbot Street, Blenheim.





CHAR. STEWART  
Pioneer.

Charles Stewart was born in Appin, Argyllshire, Scotland, 1830. At eleven years of age he came to Canada to live with an uncle, leaving behind him a widowed mother and one brother. After earning the means, he purchased a hundred-acre bush lot, which he later sold, and then purchased lot fifteen, concession five, in the township of Harwich, on which he erected a substantial frame house, and commodious—barn, to which his youngest son, Charles A., now residing on the homestead has kept on improving. He was twice married, first to Harriet Douglass of Scotland, and second to Mary Jane Sloan of Tilbury. His family consisted of six children,—Harriet (1st m.) and (2nd m.) William A., Martha C., Samuel, Kate E. and Charles.

Mr. Stewart lived to be ?? years of age, and died survived by his wife and all of his children save Samuel and Martha C. who predeceased him a few years.



DAVID CAUGHELL.  
County Warden,  
1884.

David Caughell, Harwich, was born in Elgin county, 1833, son of Peter Caughell, one of the early settlers of Yarmouth. He was educated in the rural school of his home district and after three years spent in Australia came back in 1854 and settled in Kent in 1856, becoming one of the leading farmers in South Harwich. In 1855, he was married to Mary Hill of Beverly to whom there were reared two children, Peter and Stata (Mrs. Douglas Campbell). He was a member of the township council of Harwich for twenty years, three of which he was reeve, and a member of the County council for ten years. He was elected Warden in 1884.



IDLE HOUR INN.

Situated at the North-west Corner Talbot Street and Communication Road.

The Idle Hour Inn, the oldest business block in the town of Blenheim, was built in the year 1846, from timber cut and hewn from oak and whitewood trees that grew on the lot where the building now stands. The construction of it was commenced by John Jackson, the pioneer of eastern Blenheim, but failing to complete it, for this reason, it was for many years popularly known as 'Jackson's Folly'. After passing through many hands, it came into possession of Mrs. G. F. Mott, at the death of her mother, Mrs. Buzzard, and it is now being remodelled and made into a modern, first-class tourists' hotel, with a bed-room accommodation for forty guests.



MANSON CAMPBELL.  
Mayor of Chatham,  
1893-1896.

Manson Campbell was born at Port Perry, 1856 and educated in the London and Chatham schools. He entered into his father's manufacturing business, The Campbell Fanning Mill Company, established in Chatham in 1865, of which he became General Manager in 1880. Under his management the business developed rapidly, and a branch factory was established at Detroit. He was also interested in other manufacturing concerns of Chatham, acting

on their Directorate, The Chatham Manufacturing Company, The William Gray & Sons Carriage Co., the Kent Canning Company, The Chatham Gas Company, and The Dowsley Spring and Axle Company.

He was married in 1884, to Flora McNaughton, daughter of Duncan McNaughton of Harwich, and to them have been born four children Duncan Roy, William Stuart, Dora May and Grace. He was several years member of the city council and Mayor during the years 1895 and 1896.





MR. and MRS. J. K.  
MORRIS.

Helen Green. To his second wife he had eleven children, eight of whom survive.

J. K. Morris was born in Leeds county, 1832, and came to Blenheim, succeeding John Cavanagh as Postmaster in 1856. In addition to his postmastership, he carried on a lumbering and mercantile business and was issuer of marriage licenses for the town and district. Of public offices, he was reeve of Blenheim, a County councillor for twenty years and Warden for the year 1900. He was twice married, first to Hester Cavanagh; and second to

T. B. Shillington was born in Carleton county in 1852. After eight years as a public school teacher, he became a general merchant of Blenheim in 1880 and succeeded in establishing a successful and constantly growing business, which was reorganised in 1920, under the firm name of T. B. Shillington & Co. with Mr. Shillington as president, and his two sons, Algernon and Lindsay, and his brother John W. members of the firm. He was married

in 1880 to Agnes T. Lindsay, to whom has been born a family of four sons and two daughters, Algernon G., Percy S., Margaret G., Lloyd, Lindsay and Barbara. He was Mayor of Blenheim for four terms.

Samuel Barfoot, for fifty five years postmaster at Chatham and sixty two years in the service, was born in Chatham township in 1843. His father, a native of London England, came to Canada in 1837, and became postmaster at Chatham after the resignation of John Snow from that office, continuing in that position until his son Samuel was appointed in 1865.



SAMUEL BARFOOT  
Postmaster at  
Chatham, 1865-1920.

Samuel went into the office when a lad of about fifteen years of age, and spent his whole life in that service. He was superannuated in 1920, but is still enjoying life though incapacitated for work. He was twice married and reared a family of eight children; first, in 1868 to Elizabeth Morrish of Orillia; children, Minnie and Pansy; second to Mary Margaret Hewitt of Toronto in 1885; children, Clarence, Gladys, Jack, Joseph, Mary and Ellen.



A. W. ROSS  
the County council, 1915 and 1917.

A. W. Ross is a real estate business man of Blenheim actively interested in the advancement of the town and district. He was born in Renfrew county, Ontario, in 1864, and followed agriculture there until 1911, when coming to Kent, he purchased a 3-acre lot, which he farms in addition to his other business. He was town councillor for several years, and reeve and member of



WM. J. BAIRD  
Postmaster of Blenheim, Ontario, since 1916.

William J. Baird was a public school teacher for eighteen years, before he became postmaster for Blenheim, sixteen years of which he taught at Blenheim. He was born in Elgin county in 1877. David Baird and Elizabeth Hughson being his parents. He was educated at the Blenheim public school, and Ridgeway Collegiate Institute, receiving his teacher training at the Chatham Model School and the Ottawa Normal College. He married Miss Bertha E. Hall of Thedford, to whom he has had two children, Jean E. and Charles David. He also holds the offices of treasurer of Blenheim town, secretary-treasurer of the Board of Education, and is a member of the Public Library Board.

## L ONE FORTY TWO



WILLIAM DAVID  
COLBY

the family of George Oliver and Rhoda Stark.

William David Colby was born in Harwich, Kent county, in 1893; the only son of W. D. Colby and Grace Oldershaw; a grandson of Jacob Colby; and great-grandson of pioneer Charles Colby, who was born in the state of Maine, 1809, moved to New York state, 1818, and came to Harwich township, and was educated at S. S. No. 8, Harwich, the Chatham Collegiate Institute, and Queen's University, Kingston. Graduated in Civil Engineering, 1917; admitted as an Ontario Land Surveyor, 1922; appointed County engineer and road superintendent for Kent, 1924. Married Eliza Ann Oliver, youngest of



A pioneer mother who came from Argyleshire, Scotland in 1851, and with her husband and family settled on the 8th concession, Harwich, a sister of Dr. McColl, Tobermory, the Isle of Mull, Scotland. Though descended from a family of means, Mrs. McMillan was proficient in all the many requirements of spinning, knitting, tailoring, etc., of a Canadian pioneer mother, accommodating herself to

the living conditions which the middle of the 19th Century provided for incoming settlers. Of her seven children, four, two sons and two daughters, were married and reared families in Harwich where many of their descendants still reside.

MRS. JOHN McMILLAN.  
(Mary McColl)



A prominent lawyer of Ridgeway, son of Zenas W. Watson and Melissa Kern, and therefore a grandson of one of the pioneer settlers of the district, James Watson, who located in 1823 on the farm lot still remaining in possession of the family, and on part of which Mr. G. K. Watson has his home. He was educated in the Ridgeway Public and High Schools, and Toronto University, graduating from this institution as Bachelor of Arts in 1881. Studied law under Nathaniel Mills, barrister of Ridgeway, and admitted to the bar in 1882. Married in 1886 Jessie Bell of Waterford. Children, Veda, Aileen, Dorothy.

OMAR KERR  
WATSON (1880—)

Keith and Carl. Mr. Watson has occupied several municipal offices, and as secretary of the High School Board has done much to further the interests of education for the town. He has also contributed a number of useful studies bearing on the early history of the county.



carry. In this respect the County of Kent has been well-served by its officials.

The County officials for this Confederation Jubilee year are,—Surrogate Judge, Ward Stanworth; Sheriff, E. W. Hardy; Clerk of the Peace and Crown Attorney, H. D. Smith, K.C.; County Court Clerk, D. E. Douglas; Registrar of Deeds, J. B. Clark. S. B. Arnold is Police Magistrate for the city of Chatham.



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The HOME OF ALBERT E. RICHARDSON, lot twenty-seven, concession one, Creek Road, Harwich, grandson of pioneer William Richardson, one of the first settlers in this section of the township.

WILLIAM RICHARDSON, who settled on lot twenty seven, Concession one W.C.R. came direct from Ireland to Kent County accompanied by his family and his brother-in-law, James Reynolds. Mr. Richardson was a tradesman who worked in Chatham while his wife and her brother lived on the homestead. Unfortunately he died early in life at twenty nine years of age from typhoid fever leaving his wife with three children—Elizabeth, Mary, and William, the latter only three months old when he died. After her husband's death, Mrs. Richardson continued the farming operations, assisted by her brother. Their block of land contained two hundred acres one half of which was later given to Mr. Reynolds for his service in assisting his sister in the first troublous years of her pioneer life. Mrs. Richardson was a strenuous worker and with the assistance of her brother their small first clearance continued to increase and other improvements were added to their farm. She supervised the building of their home, which though twice renovated, once by her son, William, and this year by her grandson, Albert Edward, still stands a monument to the enterprising ambition of the early settlers of the county. She reared her family, giving them such education as the times afforded, until her infant babe grew to manhood, with whom she lived until the time of her death. William, their son, continued on the homestead until his death and it still remains in the family possession being owned and occupied as stated above by his son, Albert Edward. He was twice married, first to Ellen Gammage by whom he had one daughter, Mary Louisa. After her death he married Susan Chinnick of Raleigh Township, the children of the second marriage being Margaret, William, James, Elizabeth, Grace Maud, John Arthur, Edward Albert, Edna Gertrude, Blanche Alice. Of these ten children, all, save James, Grace Maud and Edna Gertrude, still live and are settled in various parts of Canada.

he problem of getting rid of the forest.

n export trade in white oak timber established.

n improved method of shipping the oak timber was introduced by D. R. Van Allen of Chatham.

he shipping of square timber followed by the making of staves.

he Basswood tree used also for making staves.

racking hoops' out of the black ash tree.

he last of the stave-mills operated at Mull.

he activities of Stoddard, an American, in South Harwich.

been labor provided by the "Skeedaddlers" from the country south of us.

mbitious enterprises established by Bates of Wallaceburg.

erguson Brothers, John and Robert of Thamesville.

enefits to the county from this short-lived industry.

he 'Ridge' and undulations provide the only hills of Kent.

lains or marsh lands were located on the western boundary of the county.

t first only the higher lands cleared and farmed.

rainage of lands, at first voluntary, later, became compulsory.

rchibald McKellar's great service to the district.

reat difficulty in distributing the just costs of a drainage system.

he municipalities and the province co-operated and produced marvellous results.

option of a pumping and embankment system necessary in some localities because of absence of waterfall.

ile-drainage of farm-lots is essential to complete the system.

one to farmers to drain their lands authorized in 1894.

ormous expenditure entailed to provide a tected drainage system.

inner tile-draining on the J. D. McPherson homestead.



THE Western District was the first field, when Petroleum was discovered in Canada. When Governor Simcoe made his first overland trip through this district, petroleum was discovered to them by some members of their party. But at this time the commercial value of this product was not yet discovered to the world. It was not until 1857 that, in Roumania, this discovery was made, the refining of crude oil begun, chiefly for illuminating purposes, and an industry of world-wide importance created. Only 'coal oil'—so named from a belief that it was a product from soft coal, and not from decomposed animal and vegetable matter as is the belief to-day—was saved. The residue, from which is obtained the gasoline, benzine, paraffine wax, white mineral oil, axle grease, lubricating oil, fuel oil, gas oil, road oils, asphalt and petroleum coke, manufactured from it to-day, was run off into creeks, or thrown as discard into holes in the ground. Yet with only this one product obtained from the crude oil, nevertheless it became in great demand for this one purpose. However, Roumania did not continue long enjoying a monopoly in its production. The United States followed quickly in its wake, discovered large deposits of the oil in Pennsylvania, and thus became the second nation to make the production and refining of the crude oil an industry of great commercial value. The discoveries of Pennsylvania drew attention to this Western District, and prospectors began to come in with a view to testing the possibilities that lay behind the surface evidences of oil in these regions.

The crude oil of the early Canadian wells had not as great a commercial value as that of some other countries. In the Canadian crude was a sour-smelling sulphur compound which greatly depreciated its commercial value, giving the kerosene an amber color which produced a similar tincture on the lamp chimney in a very few minutes. After much experimenting, a successful method of removing this objectionable feature was discovered in 1892, by Frasch, an obscure

chemist working in a small refinery in London. This discovery gave to this Western district crude-oil, a value almost equal to that of other oil-fields where this sulphur compound was not found.

In Kent County, the first producing oil-well was sunk by a Mr. John Lick, a Pennsylvania man, in 1863. The year before, a gusher had been obtained in Lambton County at the depth of 165 feet, and the excitement created by this discovery brought numerous prospectors from the United States, especially from Pennsylvania. Mr. Lick centred his main efforts on the boundary line between Kent and Middlesex, on the Colville farm, in Camden township. "There he continued his attempts," a chronicler informs us, "until everything but his health and faith were exhausted and with money gone and lack of enthusiasm on the part of the property holders, he was on the point of abandoning the territory when a few gentlemen formed a joint stock company and furnished means for the completion of the well." They continued boring until they reached a depth of three hundred and seventy feet, when oil in abundant quantity and good quality was obtained. The well, though not a gusher, produced regularly one hundred barrels a day until about thirty thousand barrels had been obtained, when it was blown out through the carelessness of the engineer in charge. The first thousand barrels of the production was sold at one dollar a barrel, but the price rose rapidly as the demand for it as an illuminant increased until it reached the maximum price of twelve dollars a barrel, when it again began to decline until it fell to almost its original price. The report of the discovery of so profitable an oil well spread rapidly not only throughout Canada but the United States as well. The immediate effect was, a rush to this field by an army of speculators, some of them with unlimited means at their disposal, and a keen competition for the purchase of neighboring lands was commenced. The price of property soared away up beyond reasonable bounds.



The speculators, who were successful in purchasing property organized Oil Companies, and agencies were established in every town of Canada and in many of the United States, for the sale of their stock at inflated prices. The stock sold rapidly and wells began to be sunk in quick succession. It was not long until the whole field from Lick's ravine where the first well was sunk, all along the London road to the town of Bothwell and south of it, was covered with derricks and pumping stations.

The town of Bothwell received an inspiration for growth, which caused it to spring up in one night, like Jonah's gourd, to a city with four thousand inhabitants. Both sides of its main street was built up with business blocks, some of them, three stories high and of brick. Hotels, banks, billiard halls, gaming houses, and numerous other institutions were established to make provision for the varied requirements of the transient

#### GAL ONE FORTY FIVE.....

multitudes which now made up the major portion of its inhabitants. The most outstanding of these new buildings erected was a magnificent public hall, which was named Gatling Hall, after the owner, a brother of the inventor of the famous Gatling gun, and an immense frame hotel built by John Lick.

But the day of Bothwell's prosperity was short-lived. The speculative side of the oil interests—being mainly supported by American capitalists—came to sudden end by the appearance of the war-cloud, connected with the Fenian raids of 1866, and the rush of these men away from the field was as rapid as that with which they came into it.

This exodus proved the turning point in the history of the enterprise. With so many wells sunk, it was not long until the whole field was practically pumped dry. While it lasted, it was in itself a profitable enterprise, but not profitable, however, to all persons who took part in it. Many fortunes were made and lost. A few rose up to the status of 'oil kings,' of whom an historian of the times singles out three for special mention,

John Lick, the original discoverer, B. J. Wells, and Mr. Reid of Hamilton. The district itself received no permanent benefit from the discovery. A boom, a bustle of business, then a decline in production and price of oil, followed by a panic which in turn was succeeded by a stampede from the territory, was the final chapter written in the story of the oil-boom of Bothwell and vicinity. A disastrous fire which totally destroyed the bomb-town was the last event in its story.

Profitable wells have been sunk since in the territory, and oil has been steadily produced during the sixty years which have elapsed since the first discovery of it in sixty three. In addition profitable wells have been sunk in the townships of Raleigh, Romney and Tilbury and it yet may be that a goodly supply of this valuable product may be discovered in these and other fields within the bounds of the county seeing that there are large areas which have not been prospected for either gas or oil.

Of more profit, however, to the county and its inhabitants, is the discovery of 'natural gas', in different localities, and the sinking of wells which have successfully tapped this source of so valuable a product both for fuel and illumination.

#### Kent Co Homes and their Careers BRUCE BEDFORD

THE advance in comforts of the homes of Kent county which has been made during the last century is well exemplified by the home of Bruce Bedford, lot nine, concession one, River road, township of Harwich. Mr. Bedford is a fifth-generation descendant of an early pioneer, Robert Bedford, of Welsh



descent, who came to Canada from Pennsylvania at the close of the American Revolutionary war. He settled first in Malden township, county of Essex, but came to Chatham township in Kent as early as 1800. As a loyalist, he was entitled to two hundred acres of a land grant of which he made choice in this township. He engaged in farming in summer and teaching school in winter, being one of the first school teachers in this section of the country.

Bruce Bedford is an example of the present-day, successful freehold farmer. In 1901, he started his career on this farm specializing in dairy farming and cattle. It is situated on the south bank of the Thames river, about three miles from Chatham city, a rich and fertile soil which lends itself to easy drainage. He was married in 1907 to Miss Jennie Ferguson of Harwich, and to the parents have been born two children, John William and Margaret Jean. The home was erected in 1919 and is now a monument to his industry and thrift, a modern home in every sense which yet may become a type of the general standard for comfort of the homes of families following farming as their vocation in life.

## GAL ONE FORTY SIX.....

### Kent Co Homes and Their Careers

**A**MONG the families arriving in the early forties which have occupied a prominent place in the community life of the Creek road settlement, Harwich, was that of Donald McDonald, a native of Scotland. Born in Inverness-shire in 1806, he began life as a tenant on a small farm of ten acres. In 1840, he was made a victim of the "clearances," his holding was taken from him, and with his wife and three children, he was compelled under the circumstances to emigrate to America. Arriving in Harwich by way of New York, he purchased in 1842, forty five acres of unimproved land, comprising a portion of a block of land, lots eight and nine in the sixth concession of

Harwich, Thames river survey, situated one lot east from the Creek or Communication road. To this, he added by later purchases, the remaining part of these four hundred acres. Starting, according to the necessary conditions of the times, by erecting a log-house with its split bass-wood timber for flooring and the open fire-place at the end, he went on improving his buildings as he increased his clearances, climaxing his building achievements by the erection in 1875 of the magnificent brick structure, the illustration of which accompanies this sketch. In the various homes he erected and occupied until his death in 1889, out of a family of eleven children, he reared eight, by whom, guided by the wise counsel of a hard-working and most exemplary mother, he was greatly assisted in redeeming his location from a state of nature, to be the magnificent and well-set-up farm lands which they have since come to be. All of these children, as they grew up, won for themselves highly respected and creditable careers in the various communities where they lived.

The north half of this block of four hundred acres passed over at the death of his father to Andrew, his son. On the occasion of his marriage to Miss Anna Lawton of Howard township, he erected for their home, a house, which for architectural appearance, interior finish, and comfortable conveniences, is doubtless second to no other in the township. Four children were born to the parents in this home, two daughters, both surviving, and two sons, Gordon and Lawton, both deceased, Lawton in young manhood at the threshold of a promising career losing his life by drowning at the Rondeau, June, 1923.

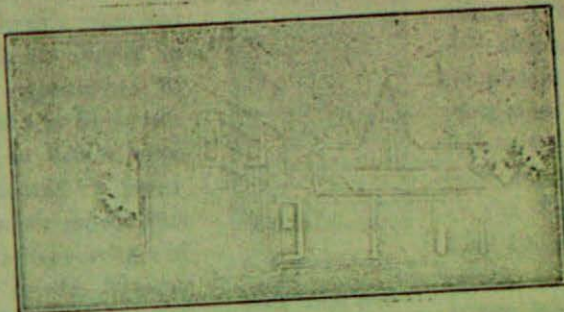
The original homestead and the south half of the four-hundred-acre block, after his father's death was occupied by his son James, who carried on extensive and successful farm operations until his death in 1913. He was married to Nellie Haylock, daughter of Rev. Haylock, a minister of the Methodist church, and to them were born five children, two sons and three daughters. After her husband's death, Mrs. James McDonald



continued to occupy the farm rearing and schooling her young family with commendable industry and devotion, until her sons, Donald and Murray, had grown old enough to cultivate the farm which they now are doing. James McDonald was an elder of St. Paul's Presbyterian church of which he was a generous supporter during his life time.

#### GAL ONE FORTY SEVEN.....

**T**HE occupant of this home is a descendant of one of the first Argyle families to settle in Harwich—the great grandson of Mrs. Neil McVicar, a widowed woman, who came out with her family of five children from Scotland in 1836, and settled on this homestead in 1838. It has been occupied continuously since by three generations—of her descendants,—Archie, her son; Neil, her grandson; and now by John, her great-grandson. The farm is a fertile clay loam, well set up with all modern buildings and improvements, a monument to the bravery and



THE HOME OF JOHN McVICAR,  
Tenth Concession Road, Harwich.

courage of the widowed mother of ninety years ago, and the industry and thrift of her descendants since.



**T**HE first farm to be located upon in the Creek Road Settlement, Harwich, was Lot six, in the sixth concession, Thames river survey. It was settled first by a certain Richard Toll, who after building a house and making some clearance upon it, discovered that there had been a miscarriage as to the location of his grant, and so the possession of it had to pass over to another, one Daniel Fields, who therefore became the second resident of the farm.

Daniel Fields was a disbanded soldier, a settler of the Thames river district, one of the Kent volunteers who joined Brock's army and assisted in the British attack on Detroit in August, 1813. After the capitulation of Detroit, and the freedom from war for a year which followed this success to British arms in the western District, he, instead of returning to his farm, as did the other militia-men from Kent, continued in the army service and accompanying Brock back to the Niagara frontier, took part in that other historic event of the conflict—the battle of Queenston Heights.

The block of land originally belonging to this soldier-settler and his brother, was eventually broken up into sections, the present owner, A. S. Maynard, coming into possession of the north-east part of it, in 1907. Mr. Maynard, gifted with the two-fold blessing of health and strength, has succeeded in making through his farm as distinguished a career for himself as is usually within the reach of one choosing agriculture as a vocation. Starting out in life, the eldest of a large family, he succeeded, by his own unaided efforts, of gaining in the public schools and business college sufficient intellectual attainments to qualify him to carry on successfully his chosen call-

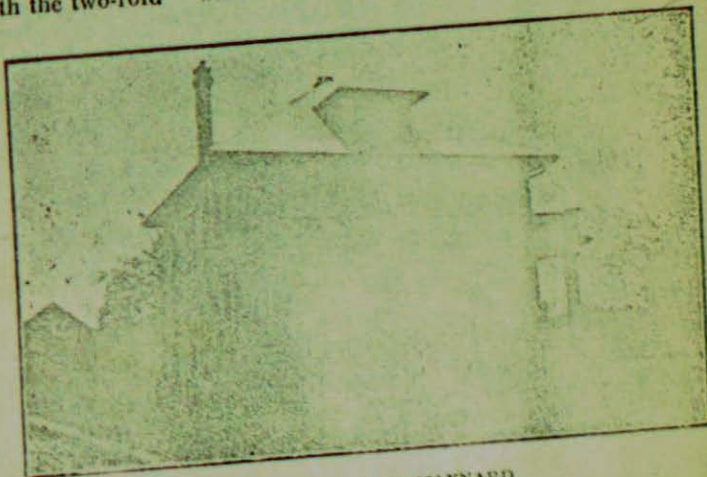
ing. After purchasing his present possessions he began at once to strike out for increased harvest, not by increasing the acreage of his crops, but by adding to the crop-producing power of the soil, through the under-draining of his whole farm and the generous use of fertilizers, natural and artificial. The results have justified his hopes and efforts. The sun of his life, now declining to its western horizon, sees results that have amply repaid both his aspirations and toil.



D. S. MAYNARD,  
Killed Overseas,  
Great World War.

Of his family, three sons and three daughters, the eldest, upon which the mantle of his father's occupation was to have fallen, received preparatory education to that end at the Guelph Agricultural College. Like many others of our patriotic young men, he enlisted

for service in the Great World War and now in a lonely grave in Europe he lies buried, and with him, not only his own aspirations and hopes but those also of his home and community, and this farm must seek another to carry on to higher attainments, the achievements and traditions now associated with its history.



THE HOME OF A. S. MAYNARD  
Lot 6, Con. 6, Township of Harwich.





JOHN WILLIAM WELLS.

Sept. 23, 1916. Son of John William and Mary Ann Wells, Dresden.



RALPH LAVERNE WEBSTER.

Canadian Militia as signaller. Enlisted December 30th, 1914 in 50th Canadian as Corporal of the Signal Corps. Killed in action at the Somme, November 18th, 1916 about one hundred yards from Regina Trench, by a shell.

William Lester Babcock, Private, 7th Battalion, British Corps. Reported missing after Battle of Ypres. Son of William and Mrs. Babcock, Dresden.



HENRY BADGLEY.

gassing.

Henry Badgley, son of Mr. and Mrs. Sandy Badgley, Dresden. Went over seas with 186 Battalion. Gassed at Vimy Ridge, served six months at the front and six months after the war in Germany. Death occurred after return, due to the



WILSON BABCOCK.

Wilson Babcock, Sapper in the Canadian Engineers. Died October 4th, 1918, in hospital. Age nineteen years. Son of James and Mrs. Babcock, Dresden.

Charles Breaton, Private, enlisted with the 149th Battalion. Died at his home in Dawn township, after enlistment.



JNO. WELLINGTON DAVIS.

John Wellington Davis, died in France.



EDWARD EVANS.

charged from there April 1918, as entirely disabled. Died from effects of this wound.

Edward Evans enlisted at Chatham Jan. 15th, 1915 in the 33rd Battalion. Trained in Canada fourteen months. Landed at LaHavre, France, July 5th, 1916. On May 21st, 1917, was wounded in the chest. Invalided to hospital, England. Dis-

Edgar C. Francis, 1st Canadian Battalion. Died in England.



LORNE D. FRENCH.

Passchendaele on the 30th.

Lorne D. French, Corporal, son of Mr. and Mrs. H. J. French, Dresden. Canadian Light Infantry, Princess Patricia's. Wounded in France, January, 1917; three months in hospital. Sent to Belgium, October, 1917. Killed in action at



JAMES GOODWIN.

James Goodwin, Private, No. 2 Construction Battalion. Died of war disabilities and was interred in the Dresden Cemetery.



**John A. Humphrey**, Flight Lieutenant, son of ex-mayor and Mrs. M. C. A. Humphrey. After long and valuable service at the front Lieutenant Humphrey was killed at the aerodrome of training camp, Oxford, in England, during manœuvre after the armistice. Born in Sombra township; trained in 71st Battalion; went overseas April, 1916. July, 1917, transferred to the Royal Flying Corps, training at Oxford College where he was killed.



**Robert Charles Kerr**, Private, a Baptist Minister, enlisted as a private soldier in the ranks of the 147th Battalion. He was killed in action at Vimy Ridge.

ROBERT CHARLES KERR.

**Frederick LaPointe**, Sapper, enlisted in 149th Infantry. Died in Toronto.



**John Latimer**, Private, died at sea on the way to England, October 8th, 1918, aged 23 years, 5 months and 13 days. Buried at sea.

JOHN LATIMER.



WILLIAM TRACY OGLETREE.

**William Tracy Ogletree**, son of W. T. Ogletree, of Dresden. Enlisted in the Essex Fusiliers 21st at Windsor, Ontario, in 1916. He went to England with the 70th Battalion. Then he was sent from England to France to reinforce A. Company, 58th Canadian Battalion, B.E.F., 9th Brigade, 3rd Division. He was reported killed on September 19, 1916, near Courcellette, after three months service in the trenches.



HUGH EDWARD POLLOCK.

**Hugh Edward Pollock**, Private, First Battalion. Killed 30th August, 1918, at Amiens. Son of Mr. and Mrs. William Pollock.



ROY SMALE.

**Roy Smale**, Private, enlisted with 70th Battalion, April, 1916. Served in France from the 6th March, 1917, with the 21st Battalion Canadian Expeditionary Force until he was killed in action on the 3rd November following with shrapnel shell, west of Passchendæle. Burial place not located. His name written on Memorial at Menin Gate near Ypres. Son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Smale of Dresden. His wife, Mrs. Annie Smale and daughter, Dorothy Audrey, reside in Chatham.



WARREN O. SMITH.

**Warren O. Smith**, Private, joined the United States Expeditionary Force. Died during influenza epidemic at Jefferson Barracks in Missouri. Son of Isaac and Sally Smith, Dresden.



JAMES WILLIAM McVEAN.

**James William McVean**, Flight Lieutenant. Signaller, 24th Kent Regiment while a student at Chatham Collegiate. Enlisted as a private in the Divisional Cyclists, London, Ontario. A Lieutenant in the 24th Kent Regiment. Recruited a platoon of Cyclists. Went overseas with Captain Kyle in command. In Old Country joined the Air Service, spending some time on the North Sea as a royal coast guard; later served in France; came back to England, fell fifteen hundred feet. Invalided to Canada. Began studies for law, attended Osgoode Hall in Toronto. Died from the effects of his fall, December 9, 1920.



Thomas Jackson was born in Armagh, Ireland, in 1797, and came at the age of twenty years to Canada and settled in Romney township. Possessed of considerable means when he came to the country, he accomplished more and wielded a wider influence because of this circumstance. He was a member of the old "District Council" before the formation of municipalities, and was the first reeve of Romney township on the occasion of the establishment of these institutions in 1849-50. He took a very prominent and creditable part in the municipal affairs of the county, in the first and formative period of its history.



THOMAS JACKSON.  
1797-1873.  
Member of the Old District Council.  
First reeve of Romney township.

James Gordon Clark, son of Alexander and Christina Clark, was born on the old Clark homestead in Howard, which his grandparents, natives of Argyle-shire, settled in 1842. He received his education in Kent county schools. On leaving school, he entered the drug business, graduating in 1906 from the Ontario College of Pharmacy. After graduating, he spent two years in Western Canada, but the lure of Kent County and Chatham was strong and he entered the drug business in Chatham in 1911. In September, 1911, he married Miss Winnifred James, of London, and they have a family of two boys and two girls: Kenneth, Winnifred, James and Edith.



JAMES GORDON CLARK.  
Druggist, Chatham.

Thomas Charles Warwick, born in London, England, 1875, was brought out to Canada, a lad of fifteen, under the Burchell scheme. This man, under pretence of owning an Agricultural Institute for training the sons of English gentry how to farm, collected in advance from their parents the total fees for a five years' course, £300. Benwell, one of the English youths brought out, he murdered in a lonely swamp near Woodstock, expecting to obtain for himself the moneys sent out regularly by Benwell's parents for his support. The plot was discovered and Burchell was hanged for his crime. A similar fate, but for the early detection of the crime, might have met the lad, Thomas Warwick. The first three years in Canada he spent an employee of a lumber camp in Dawn township, Lambton county. In 1892, he was joined by his brother, Edward, two years his senior. In 1894, with their joint savings, they purchased a bush lot of four acres at Guilds, and, later, one hundred acres of unimproved land. On this, the two youthful farmers built the last log-house of Kent county, and toiled in clearing their land with successful achievement. Thomas Warwick set out with corn as a specialty, for which their land was well adapted, aiming to secure for high-grade seed corn the market before this had been a monopoly of corn-growers in the United States. Soon he became not only a grower, but with an increasing demand and market, a contractor of high-grade seed corn. In 1912, he gave up farming, and entered into the business now being conducted by him, — a dealer in corn and lumber, and associated with the latter, a house-builder and contractor, which he is extensively carrying on with Blenheim town as his headquarters.



THOMAS C. WARWICK.  
Mayor of Blenheim.  
1925-1926.

Alfred A. Hicks, a dental surgeon of Chatham, is a native of Elgin county, where he received his public school and collegiate institute education. He received his training for dentistry at Toronto and Philadelphia, graduating in 1901. His degree of L.D.S. was obtained from Toronto, 1902. He has been an active member in Park Street United Church as president of the young people's work and superintendent of its Sunday School. In 1906 he was

ALFRED A. HICKS.  
L.D.S., D.D.S.  
Chairman Board of Education,  
Chatham, 1918.

married to Pearl Irene White, granddaughter of pioneer Stephen White. He was associated with the Board of Education, when it established the Vocational school, and added a school nurse to the staff of its public school employees.



Charles Buchanan, the son of pioneer James Buchanan of Harwich township, was born in London township and came to Kent county with his parents, when he had fifteen years of age, where he has resided continuously since, following the occupation of farming in South Harwich. He has been active in municipal affairs, fifteen years a member of the Harwich township council, and nine years its reeve.

CHARLES BUCHANAN.  
Reeve of Harwich.  
1904-05, 1907-07,  
1915-18, 1925.

Edgar Gillies was born in Alborough township, Elgin county, the son of Neil D. Gillies, and Barbara Crawford. He received his education in Ridgeway Collegiate Institute and Toronto University. He began his career as a public school teacher, following which he studied and graduated in medicine, in 1906, opening his present practice in Ridgeway the following year. He was married in 1908 to Ethel Isobel McLean of Ridgeway, and they

EDGAR D. GILLIES.  
M.D.,  
Ridgeway, Ont.

have three children, Margery Isobel, Catharine Maxine, and Donna Jean.

GEO. W. WANDS,  
1867 —  
Supt. Canadian  
Employment Service,  
Chatham.



Geo. W. Wands, superintendent of the Employment Service of Canada, Chatham, is a native of Kent, and a resident of Chatham, since 1900. He is a prominent member of the Independent Order of Foresters, president of the Chamber of Commerce, 1914, and the Board of Trade, 1924. He has also acted as Chairman of the Hydro-Electric Commission, of Chatham, the Social Service Council, and in 1914, was president of the Mechanics' and Workmen's Board of Trade.

*His 2nd wife was Sarah Estelle Liberty R. whom he married June 12-1920*



FOUNDED IN 1840, BY COLONEL JAMES W. LITTLE  
OF RALEIGH  
A MAGNIFICENT FOREST DEPARTED AND BECAME  
PAST ONLY  
THE COUNTY'S DRAINAGE SYSTEM: ITS GREATEST  
ACHIEVEMENT. MALARIAL SWAMPS  
TRANSFORMED INTO FERTILE FIELDS  
THE EARLY SETTLERS ERECTED THEIR OWN  
HOUSES, MANUFACTURED THEIR FURNITURE,  
AND CLOTHING AND PROVIDED OTHER  
OF THE ARTICLES REQUIRED FOR  
THEIR DAILY USE  
GAL ONE SEVENTY FOUR

C. R. Charteris, M.D., C.M., was born in Chatham township, county of Kent, July 22, 1863, and was educated in the central and high schools of Chatham. His medical course was taken in the Toronto School of Medicine and Victoria University, from which he graduated in 1887. After a year of practice in Chatham, and a post-graduate course of one year in the hospitals of London and Edinburgh, he settled at Florence, Lambton county, where he built up an extensive practice. At the end of four years he moved to Chatham, where he practiced until his death. In 1900,



C. R. CHARTERIS,  
M.D., C.M.

he was appointed physician to the county house of refuge and county jail. In 1896, he became a member of the Library Board, and chairman in 1897 and 1903; and in 1904, chairman of the Board of Health. On November 19, 1890, Dr. Charteris was married to Miss Margaretta Webster, daughter of John Webster, postmaster at Florence, and to them were born three children, Gwendoline Isabella, Charles Maxwell and Walter Francis. In religion, he was a Presbyterian, and in politics, a Liberal. Socially, he belonged to the Sons of Scotland and to the I. O. O. F.



JACOB SMITH, M.D.,  
First Reeve of  
Ridgetown,  
Warden of the County  
1880.

Jacob Smith, the first reeve of Ridgetown on its incorporation in 1877, was born at Beamsville, Lincoln county, in 1830. He removed with his father's family to Kent county in 1844, and after several years as a public school teacher, he studied medicine, graduating from Toronto University in 1856. He began practise first at Bothwell, but after two years located at Ridgetown where he remained until his death.

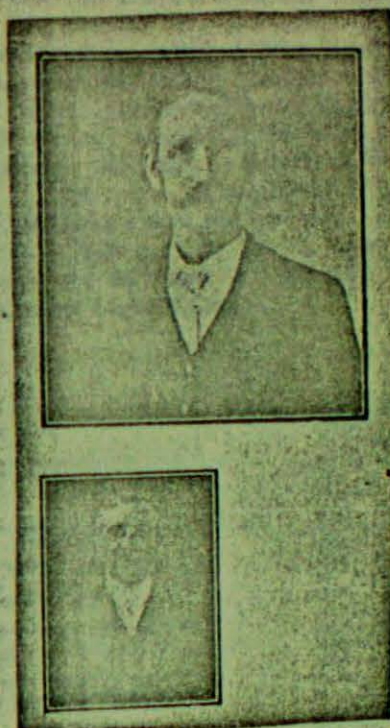
The Smith family were United Empire Loyalists. The great-grandfather of Dr. Smith served in the British army during the Revolutionary War, and was one of those who came over and settled in the Niagara peninsula, in 1874, where many of his descendants are yet to be found. Dr. Smith was not only the first reeve of Ridgetown, but held that office for several successive years. He was Warden of the county in 1880.



HUGH DAVID  
CUNNINGHAM,  
First Mayor of  
Ridgetown.

Hugh David Cunningham was born at Duart, Orford township, September 11th, 1834, where he lived until he moved to Ridgetown in 1879. In 1845 he was married to Altha Ford, also of Duart. He owned and operated a saw-mill at Duart, and in Ridgetown was engaged in the lumber business also, but to which he added a grain and real estate business. He died in the prime of life, June 10th, 1888.

In municipal affairs, Mr. Cunningham took always an active interest. He was an early reeve of Orford township, a member of the County Council for many years, and the first Mayor of the town of Ridgetown.





**Whittington, John C. (1860—)**—Native of Harwich township; son of George Whittington, from Tyrone, Ireland, and Sophia Chambers, from the Orkneys Islands, Scotland, pioneer settlers on the Eleventh concession of Harwich; farmed in Harwich until 1912; township treasurer for sixteen years; police magistrate and clerk of Fourth Division Court in the town of Blenheim.

**Grist, Reginald (b. 1879—)**—Farmer, Harwich Township. Native of Blenheim, Ontario; son of James H. Grist, native of Wiltshire, England, one of the earliest residents of Blenheim, Ontario. Occupies since 1914 and successfully farms, north-east half Lot 18, Concession 8—Lake Erie survey, formerly the homestead of Donald McColl, pioneer, Ridge road. Married 1900, to Miss Salina Appleford, daughter of George and Mary Inez (Smith) Appleford. One daughter, Mary, married to Harold Burk of Oury.

**Andrew Denholm (1856—1918)**—Native of Middlesex county, son of Andrew Denholm and Jessie Campbell, both of Scotland. Learned the printing trade in London, Ontario—was the publisher and owner of the 'Kincardine Review', 'Standard' the first daily in Woodstock, and the Blenheim 'News Tribune'. Served on the School Board of Blenheim, the town council and was Warden of the county in 1916. A devoted member of the Presbyterian Church and an ardent Liberal in politics. His family are; J. Mercer, Blenheim, Horace McC., Chicago, Dr. Kenneth A., Parry Sound, Mrs. Geo. O. Robertson, Wheatley, and Mrs. Edward Chambers, Petrolia.

**Charles Edward Brunner**, of Thamesville was born at Seaforth, Ontario, in 1897, son of John Brunner and Phillipina Bunch, native of Huron county. He established a hair-dressing and shaving parlors in Thamesville, 1921; married Ruth Watts, daughter of Nelson Watts of Tecumseh farm, Longwoods Road.

**Alex. Jeffrey (1875-????)**—The proprietor of an automobile sale and service business in Thamesville, was born in Campbellford, Ontario, both of his parents being natives of Scotland. He moved with his family to Harwich in 1882, and was a successful farmer on the Creek Road in the near neighborhood of Chatham until his removal to Thamesville in 1925, where he became proprietor of his present business. He was married in 1896, to Della Burk and they have the following family, Bina, Stanley, Reba, Lloyd, Lee, Frederick, Grace, Alma and Jean.

**Bnia Jeffrey (1887-????)**—The eldest son of Alex. Jeffrey, is partner with his father in the automobile sales and service business in Thamesville, under the firm name of A. Jeffrey & Son. He was educated in Harwich schools and married in 1918 to Ethel Mead, a native of Kent county.

**John Orval Hubbell**, municipal councillor and hardware merchant of Thamesville, continuing a business in partnership with his brother, which was established by their father in 1878. He is the son of Ezra Sherman Hubbell, and Maggie Jackman, both of whom were direct descendants of the first pioneers of the Thames River settlement. He was married to Zoetta Frances Canton of Wyoming and they have one child, Marion C. Hubbell.

**M. J. Mulhall (1892-????)**—Harness merchant of Thamesville, was born in Proton township, Grey county, his parents being native Canadians. His present business in Thamesville was established in 1919. In 1917, he was married to Ida R. Redmond, of Grey county and they have two children, Dora and Vernon.

**Humbrid Graves (1866-????)**—Merchant of Thamesville, and village councillor. He was born in Howard township, of English and Scotch descent; educated in the public schools of Harwich; and became a resident of Thamesville in 1898, where he conducted a general store, and later, a flour and feed store. He was married in 1888 to Idella Purser, River Road, Harwich, and they have had one child, Virginia Irene, (Mrs. Leslie Mitton).

Neil Watson was born in Harwich township, Kent county, in 1853, the son of James Watson and Jane Ferguson, natives of Argyllshire, Scotland, who came to Canada in 1830. He was educated in the public schools of Harwich and commenced the timber business in 1873 as the purchaser of shipping staves and heading bolts for H. C.

NEIL WATSON,  
Mull.

Reese of Buffalo, N. Y. In 1885 he contracted with Sutherland & Innes of Chatham, for the getting out of timber to be manufactured at Mull, continuing this until he purchased the plant from the firm in 1896. He was the pioneer postmaster at Mull, and along with his lumber business carried on a general store there dealing especially in grain and produce which he handled through his elevator erected on the Michigan Central line at Mull. After the cessation of the stave business, he purchased a planing-mill at Ridgetown and established a lumber yard and building business under the firm name of Taylor & Watson. He was married in 1906 to Isabella McCorvie, also of Harwich, and continues his residence at Mull, where he has spent over sixty years of energetic business life. In politics he is a Conservative, and in religion a supporter of the United Church.

Isaac Swartout founded a thriving village on the town-line between Howard and Harwich, which he named Troy after his native town in the United States. Nothing now remains of the village but the name, which, like many others, flourished only while the lumber business lasted.

ISAAC SWARTOUT,  
Harwich.



Orval Iden, born 1893, son of Mr. and Mrs. T. Iden, Dresden. Enlisted at Winnipeg, November, 1916, with Tenth Battalion, C.E.F. Killed at Vimy Ridge. Easter morning, April 9, 1917.

## ORVAL IDEN.

George Eberlee was born at Thamesville, 1897; enlisted November, 1915 at Dresden. Sergeant-major in 91st Battalion. Transferred from the 91st to the 186th in 1916. Went overseas, 1917; to France, March, 1918, reverting to private

with 58th Battalion. Killed in action at St. Pierre, April 23, 1918.

Walter James Lucas, Private, son of Horace and Julia Lucas, Dresden. Enlisted at Dresden with Number Two Construction Battalion, October, 1916. Served with the 37th Company, C.F.C. as an electrician. Contracted bronchitis in the Front Line, France; died in the hospital at Bradford, Yorkshire and was buried in England.

Benjamin B. E. Tassie, Captain, was born in London, Ontario, 1887. Trained as private in the 24th Kent Regiment; obtained the rank of Captain at the London Military School. Reverted to Lieutenant to cross to France, December, 1916, with the first Canadian Battalion, B.E.F. Enlisted August, 1914, at Dresden, and died of wounds in France, Sept. 3, 1918. His wife, Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Tassie resides at Dresden, Ontario.



ANGUS McMILLAN  
Reeve, 1924.

Angus McMillan, councillor, 1919-1923, and reeve, 1926, of Harwich, is a son of the late Angus McMillan, of Creek Road, Harwich, a native of the Isle of Mull, Scotland, who came to Canada in 1851. Mr. McMillan married Mary Richardson, Creek Road, Harwich, and to them have been born four children, three sons and a daughter, William, a physician of Thorold, Ontario; Edward and Dell, farmers of Harwich; and Eleanor, Mrs. Henderson of Cleveland, U.S.A. He followed farming, handling cattle extensively, and is now in addition Road Superintendent of Harwich township since 1925.



ALEXANDER McVEAN,  
Dresden.

Alexander McVean was born at Weston, Ontario, in 1829, the son of Alexander McVean, one of the first white settlers in the Gore of Toronto. After establishing his sons in various lines of business he retired from active undertakings in 1890. He was married to Sarah Henney of Kingston; their family consisted of five sons and one daughter. He died at Dresden in 1897.





THOMAS POILE.

built the residence at 16 Victoria Ave., 1907, which he and his family now enjoy. Master of Wellington Lodge, A. F. & A. M., No. 40, G. R. C., 1912. "Count that day lost whose low descending sun views from thy hand no worthy action done."

Thomas Walter Poile, Optometrist and Optician, youngest son of the late Henry and Mary Poile, born March 31, 1874, at Chatham, Ontario, in the same building he now occupies as an eye clinic. He enjoys the distinction of being the first graduate optometrist in Kent County, and began practice in Chatham in his present location in the year 1895; he also conducted a jewellery business in the Town of Tilbury, and one located in the Garner Block, Chatham. Married Mattie Sloan, daughter of William and Abbie Sloan, of Chatham, in the year 1898; one son was born, William Henry, in the year 1906; William Henry, in the year 1907, which he



HENRY POILE.

Walter. Married Eliza Jane Dolson, daughter of William Dolson and widow of Charles McKeough, with two children, Frank and Carrie McKeough. One daughter was born, Otta Bell Dommino Poile.

Henry Poile, native of Ebouy, Kent County, England; came to Chatham, Ontario, in 1811, at the age of twelve years; learned the baking trade, later learned the trade of harness maker; engaged in that business until his retirement; built and occupied the brick block known as the Poile Block, King street, opposite Market street; died November 15th, 1900. Married Mary Twigg, native of Tanstey, England, who passed away this life in the year 1874 at the age of 35 years. Six children were born: Mary Ellen, Charles Henry, Sarah Elizabeth, William George, Annie, Laurie and Thomas

United Empire Loyalists were originally American citizens, and not regular British soldiers.

Regular British soldiers were induced to come to Canada by promises of generous land grants.

Some disbanded soldiers, though not many, made good settlers.

Soldier immigration followed also after the later wars of 1812 and 1819.

Inexperience brought increased hardships into the lot of the soldier-settler.

A distinguished Moravian established the first Christian Mission in the County.



GEORGE F. REYCRRAFT.

Reycraft, George F. — Native of Orford, son of James Reycraft and Philicia Shannon, pioneers of Orford township who came to Kent county from county Cork, Ireland, in the early forties, and were married in Howard township in 1855. They raised a family of ten children of which George F. Reycraft was the eldest son. This son became a leading farmer in Orford township, was a member of the town-

ship council for years including the office of reeve. He retired to Blenheim and served several terms on the town council, elected mayor in 1921. Later he retired to Blenheim and there served on the council board, both as reeve and mayor, and now chairman of the Board of Education. In religion he was a Methodist, and in politics, Liberal.

He married (1) Elizabeth J. Snobelen 1880. (2) Mrs. Melinda (Moore) Vester. His children by his first wife are: Grace, Edith, Phyllis, Clara, Alva, Frank (deceased) and Russel.



## THE SUGAR BEET INDUSTRY OF CANADA

**S**UGAR beets were first grown for industrial purposes in Canada in 1881 and during the two years following that date, plants were erected at Coaticook, Berthier and Farnham, in the province of Quebec. Each of these plants proved a failure after a short trial, due mainly to insufficient beet acreage, incompetent factory management and the small size of the factories, the largest of which was only 200 tons daily slicing capacity. The operating methods of these factories also were obsolete and impracticable.

However, annual experiments at the Ontario Agricultural College from about the year 1889, demonstrated the suitability of the soil and climate of Ontario for the production of sugar beets, with the sugar content and coefficient of purity practically equal to those grown on the continent of Europe.

The beet sugar industry in Canada received its first real start in the year 1901, at which time four factories were constructed and made ready for operation the following year. These were at Wallaceburg, 700 tons daily slicing capacity; Dresden, 600 tons; Berlin (now Kitchener) 500 tons; and Wiarton, 500 tons.

Even at this time the experience in beet sugar manufacture was far from encouraging as the obstacles to the success of the industry in its early stages were still extant. At the commencement of operations in the year 1902, a great number of supposed expert sugar men were secured from Germany and Holland to operate the various factories. These men did not understand local conditions, which were altogether different from those in their own country and it was therefore not until the Canadians learned the business thoroughly that any progress was made in the efficiency of operation.

For the first five years of operation (1903-1907) the Ontario Government granted a bounty on domestic beet sugar of one-half cent per pound. Notwithstanding this assistance, however, the factories at Dresden and Wiarton were unable to survive the trying period of experience. The Wiarton factory was closed after two seasons and the machinery was removed to Santa Ana, California, in 1903. The Dresden factory was dismantled and removed to Janesville, Wisconsin, in 1901.

The factory at Raymond, Alberta (erected in 1903) also succumbed after a few years of unsuccessful operation, and in 1917 the machinery was removed to Cornish, Utah.

The Berlin (now Kitchener) factory drifted along until the year 1909, when it went into liquidation and was taken over from the bondholders by the Wallaceburg Sugar Company, now the Dominion Sugar Company.

In 1916, the Dominion Sugar Company (with headquarters at Chatham) erected another factory, located at Chatham, Ontario, with a daily slicing capacity of 1800 tons of beets.

There are thus three factories in the East, all owned by Dominion Sugar Company Limited, as follows:

Location	Erected	Present Capacity
Wallaceburg, Ontario	1902	1,400 tons
Kitchener, "	1902	800 "
Chatham, "	1916	1,800 "

During the year 1925 the Utah-Idaho Sugar Company erected a factory at Raymond, Alberta, with a daily slicing capacity of 800 tons of beets. However, the plant at Kitchener has been idle since 1921 so there are only three active plants at this time.

In the Western Ontario Peninsula the area planted each year to the sugar beet runs from twenty to thirty-five thousand acres with the former figure prevailing in late years, owing to the reductions which have been made in



the protection afforded the industry by the Customs Tariff. During the years of high sugar prices the tariff on sugar entering the country was not so important to the growers but of recent years the low prices of sugar have made the amount of protection given by the tariff of very great importance to the farmers and the successive reductions in the tariff have impelled many of the farmers to give up the growing of beets.

All sugar beets in Canada are grown by farmers under contract whereby the growers are guaranteed a certain price and in addition receive a bonus of so much per ton. In Western Ontario this bonus is in accordance with a sliding scale based on the sugar content of the beet and on the market price received by the Company for the product of the crop. The sugar content is ascertained by a polariscopic test made from a sample drawn from each load of beets delivered. Under this contract the gain or loss resulting from a rise or fall, respectively, in the price of sugar is shared by the farmers and the manufacturer of the sugar. In Alberta no attention is paid to the sugar content of the individual grower's beet deliveries, the average test of all the cosettes (sliced beets) being taken as the basis of settlement together with the average price received by the manufacturer for the product of the crop.

In Western Ontario, where the industry has been established for over twenty years, there are many substantial farmers, especially in the vicinity of Wallaceburg, who, a few years ago came out to Canada as immigrant beet laborers from Belgium and Holland. These men by their industry and thrift, were able to save enough in a few years to settle on farms and many of them now have their farms clear

and substantial assets in addition. At least several hundred of them are now well established on their own farms which are kept well stocked and, needless to say, cropped with a considerable acreage of sugar beets each year.

The plant at Kitchener, Waterloo county has been idle for several years and is now partially dismantled. This is because sufficient acreage could not be secured in the vicinity of Kitchener and increasing freight rates on sugar beets shipped in from the Western Ontario peninsula gradually reduced the margin of profit on the product until it became unprofitable to operate.

The production of beet sugar runs from thirty to eighty million pounds a year. The campaign, as it is called, lasts for an average of 100 days each year. Beets are delivered by trucks, wagons, scows and railways. By-products of the process are dried beet-pulp, a high-grade cattle food which has met with great favor among dairymen and feeders; and mother liquor, a splendid fertilizer containing twelve percent. potash and four percent. nitrogen. The latter product was of particular benefit during the war years when potash was scarce and much sought after.

In 1922 the industry was threatened with extinction by the imposition of an excise tax on the home production of beet sugar. The Dominion Government was finally persuaded of the pernicious effect of this tax and repealed it but, at the same time, reduced the protection, so that the industry is not early in so good a position as before. There is room for great expansion of the industry but with the cost of a modern plant running about two million dollars (as compared with one-half million twenty years ago) and with other uncertainties associated with the industry, there is very little temptation to the capitalist to enter this field of promotion.



# CHRONOLOGY TABLE

**1701.** Detroit was founded by Cadillac and became the capital of the Western District under British rule.

**1763.** The Treaty of Paris which ceded Canada to Great Britain ratified.

**1774.** Quebec Act passed, by which the entire British possession, west of New York, north of the Ohio, and east of the Mississippi river were incorporated into the province of Quebec and made subject to its government, and ruled by French law.

**1775.** Henry Hamilton sent as Lieutenant-Governor to Detroit. The western region under martial law.

**1788.** First courts established in Upper Canada called Courts of Common Pleas.

**1783.** Treaty of Peace passed granting Independence to the United States of America.

**1788.** Lord Dorchester, by proclamation, created four districts in Upper Canada, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Nassau and Hesse.

**1789.** Hon. William D. Powell appointed first Judge of Common Pleas for the district of Hesse.

**1788.** Gregor McGregor appointed first Sheriff, and Thomas Smith first Clerk and Commissioner of the Peace for the district of Hesse.

**1788.** Duperon Baby, Alexander McKee, and William Robertson appointed Justices of the Court of Common Pleas.

**1791.** The Constitutional Act passed dividing the province into Upper and Lower Canada and Colonel John G. Simcoe named as the Lieutenant-Governor. British laws introduced for Upper, but French laws for Lower Canada.

**1790.** The first requests for land grants in the Thames river settlement filed with the Land Board at Detroit.

**1792.** Colonel John Graves Simcoe took over his duties as first Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario, and organised his Government in July at Kingston.

**1792.** The first Parliament of Upper Canada met at Newark, and enacted that the laws of England instead of the laws of Canada, were to govern in matters of property and civil rights in Upper Canada, September 17th, British laws.

**1792.** Rev. David Zeisberger established a colony of Christian Delaware Indians on the Thames river, and named the Mission, Fairfield.

**1792.** At Kingston in July of that year the name of La Tranche river was changed to the Thames by order of Governor Simcoe.

**1792.** On October 15th the name of the District of Hesse was changed to the Western District by Governor Simcoe.

**1793.** In February of that year, Governor Simcoe visited the Indian Mission at Fairfield and the Thames river settlement, on the occasion of his overland journey for military reasons to Detroit from Newark and return.

**1793.** Chatham selected as a town-site by Governor Simcoe and named it after the elder Pitt, whom he greatly respected.

**1794.** A blockhouse erected at Chatham, and a government ship building plant established with W. E. Baker of Detroit as Superintendent.

**1795.** The survey of Chatham into town lots commenced, one hundred and thirteen of one acre each mapped out by Surveyor Iredell.

**1796.** Americans given Michigan and the Ohio district by the Jay treaty, Detroit evacuated by the British and Sandwich became the capital of the Western District



The above is information compiled  
by the late Rev. Hugh Cowan about the year  
1926 and extracted by the Kent Historical  
Society 1 947.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THE obtaining of the material out of which to write "The Story of Kent" has been no small task. The sources were widely scattered. From the Dominion and Ontario archives, from Government departments and church records, from family documents and files of local newspapers, from the memories of people still living and the written memoirs of the dead, from the books of travel and the diaries of public men, from these and many other sources, the story had to be gleaned. This required much reading and sifting. It would be impossible to enumerate all the persons unto whom our Society is under obligation for the assistance which they rendered and without whose co-operation this volume, in its present form at least, would not have been possible.

The value of this assistance is all the more enhanced since the sole reason for their co-operative effort is found in an unselfish desire that there should be recorded and preserved the story of the deeds, adventures and achievements, not only of 'our illustrious dead', but also of all that army of men and women who were instrumental in laying the foundations of our national institutions, and made the first contribution of successful achievement towards the attainment of our nation's future destiny and wealth. Though we would fain name each person of these individually, we must be content to acknowledge our indebtedness to them in a general way and trust that each contributor may find a sufficient acknowledgement in that the book has been brought to a successful completion through the cheerful and voluntary efforts of those who have thus contributed their quota to this end.

We trust, also, that the work may commend itself to a wide circle of readers, and be a source of information to many coming generations. If this volume serves in a measure to commemorate the triumphs and achievements of those first generations of Canadians, the story of whose enterprise, industry and perseverance we all feel it our duty to record, then each contributor, we are sure, will find in that accomplishment, their ample reward.

This volume is the first in a series which we are undertaking to publish covering every county within the province.

THE EDITOR.



## THE BALDOON

- repeat of pp 74-79

The well-meant but disastrous venture of Lord Selkirk to assist his tenants - to found for themselves new homes in Canada.

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With the opening up of the Nineteenth Century, the Thames Settlement had made considerable progress and now numbered more than a hundred families. As the flotilla of canoes, which carried back Zeisberger and his thirty Indians to the United States in 1798, floated down the Thames, wonder and surprise was expressed by the departing missionary, as he saw the progress which had been made in the settlement from what it had been six years before, when he preached to the vanguard of them, an historic, because the first, sermon to the White Settlers in the County of Kent. Not only had the original number of families been increased by more than five hundred per cent, but there was also a gratifying increase in the extent of the clearings made on their farms and the number of houses erected on them. "The improvements which everywhere presented themselves filled him with astonishment. Sixteen miles below Fairfield was a flour-mill; near by a saw-mill; and fourteen miles farther down, Dolsen's Place, an inn and a farm, the proprietor of which was a warm friend of the Mission." With such progress to its credit, this first settlement in the County could well be considered as having been permanently established before the close of the first ten years of its history.

### Emigration of Scottish crofters to Canada.

The first movement of the Nineteenth Century towards further settlement was the well-meant, but ill-fated, effort of Lord Selkirk to establish a colony of Highlanders on the prairie lands lying adjacent to the mouth of the Sydenham River. Emigration of the crofters of Scotland, as the small land-holders or tenants were called, had in this period become an economic and social necessity. The country was greatly over-populated, and these crofters had to divide and subdivide their holdings as their descendant families increased until the holding became too small to provide sufficient land for a living for their ever increasing numbers. In addition, the landed proprietors had begun to put in force what were called "clearances". A new system of farming was being inaugurated. Instead of small holdings and intensive farming, sheep ranches were being established. Larger acreages with increased rentals were put into the hands of a few holders and the rest were ordered off the estate. Some of the proprietors were more heartless than others and the fate which might befall their erstwhile tenants gave them no concern. Others were more humane and sought to assist the evicted tenant to find for himself another home. Of this latter class was the young nobleman, Thomas Douglas, the only son of the fourth Earl of Selkirk who was born in 1771 at St. Mary's Isle, mouth of the Dee, in Kirkcudbrightshire, Scotland. When his father died in 1799, he inherited the estate and became the fifth Earl of Selkirk. Immediately he took



possession he began to put into effect his scheme for the amelioration of the hardships of his over-populated tenantry. Patriotic as well as benevolent, emigration to Canada appealed to him as the solution. Instead of being crowded together on one estate in Scotland he would create three estates in the New World, and on these would find for his tenantry new and more profitable homes. One of these estates he established in Prince Edward Island, a second at Kildonan and the third in this County.

Journey from Tobermory to Kent  
by sailing vessel and open boats.

In 1803, he began to make preparation to bring out this third colony. They were gathered together at Tobermory, a port of Mull, twenty-six families comprising one hundred and eleven persons, some from the Isle of Mull, some from Terce, some from the mainland of Argyll and one at least from Glasgow. From Tobermory they set sail for Kirkcaldy but hearing that war had been declared between France and England, and fearing they might be molested by French privateers, under counsel of the young Earl, they remained for the winter at this port. In May, the following year, they set sail in the ship "Oughton" of Greenock arriving within sight of the banks of Newfoundland within five weeks' time after their departure and at Montreal one week later. The trip might be said to be uneventful save for the death and burial at sea of one of their numbers, a young farmer by the name of Buchanan, an incident which cast a gloom over the whole company and might be said to presage the many other misfortunes which were to befall them. From Montreal they were conveyed by French carts to Lachine where batteaux awaited them. By means of these they were conveyed safely to Kingston, the men of their party rowing these unwieldy vessels successfully up against the swift stream of the St. Lawrence. Here they were joined by the Earl, who had preceded them to America by way of New York coming overland from thence to Kingston. A small ship was chartered to bring them across Lake Ontario to Queenston. After their effects were conveyed a safe distance above Niagara Falls, their men again took batteaux and rowed themselves along the shore of Lake Erie to Amherstburg and from thence by open boats to their destination.

After four months they arrived at  
Baldoon, September, 1804.

It was now September, more than four months having been expended in making the journey, when they landed at the farm which had been selected by the Earl for his settlement. It was a triangular piece of land containing about nine hundred and fifty acres between the Chenal Ecarte and the Sydenham River, a part of the low-lying and treeless prairie of thirty thousand acres bordering Lake St. Clair. They named it Baldoon after a parish in the Highlands of Scotland. The appearance of the place was from the first a rude disappointment. Ship-carpenters and others had been sent in advance by the Earl to provide dwellings, but notwithstanding none had been erected. Tradition informs us that these, afraid of Indians, had betaken themselves to Sandwich, leaving the future settlers of Baldoon and their children to their unsheltered fate. The days were shortening, rains were frequent, cool nights had already come. Without equipment or material, they had only a short month left to provide for themselves sufficient shelter to meet the requirements of a Canadian winter. They had settled where flat creeks, stagnant pools, and abundance of decayed



vegetable matter made malarial fever a certainty. Their food was only of the poorest and coarsest kind, and in no case could be over-abundant. To the North and East they were surrounded by a dense forest, most of it swamp lands. The Thames Settlement, the only other white settlement in the district was seventeen miles away and could only be reached by devious Indian trails through the woods. Little help could be expected from that quarter. But with earnestness and some enthusiasm also, for these hardy Highlanders did not soon allow themselves to become the victims of despair no matter how untoward the circumstances, they set themselves bravely to wrestle with the problems immediately facing them.

Owing to their inexperience and unpreparedness, and the ravages of diseases, many of them perish.

The inevitable happened. The lack of dwellings was not their greatest problem. From near copses of elm, walnut or willows on the plains, or from the neighboring forest, they collected small timber and erected for themselves temporary huts. But an epidemic of fever and dysentery visited the colony and before they were there one month, Donald McCallum and his wife and his daughter Emily, aged ten, died from its ravages within five days of each other. A little knoll in that monotonously level country was selected and there the three were laid away the first tenants in that pioneer cemetery, now neglected and forgotten, where they were followed by thirty-nine others of their number before the year was out. Those who escaped or recovered from the epidemic continued their brave fight against adverse circumstances and succeeded in establishing a fairly prosperous settlement. But they had two other enemies yet to face - the one was the American Nation and the other the moody waters of Lake St. Clair.

Hardships increased and the settlement robbed of its sheep and cattle by American soldiers in the war of 1812-14.

If this venture of Lord Selkirk failed, it was not from any lack of motive or effort on his part. Among other undertakings for the benefit of the colony, a ship-load of one thousand sheep were brought out by him from Scotland. Lionel Johnson, a native of Northumberland, England, a shepherd of Fenton Farm, Woller, came out to America the previous year, 1803, and settled at Albany, New York State. This man was engaged by Lord Selkirk to take charge of these sheep. With his family, consisting of his wife, one daughter and two sons, he accompanied the Earl to Kingston and joined with him there the other members of the colony. At Hamilton, he and his eldest son, James, a lad of eight years, awaited the arrival of these sheep and drove them from there all the way through the woods to the Baldoon farm. A large pen, or fold, was built for them on the South-easterly part of the farm fronting on the Sydenham, where they were placed every night to protect them from wolves or other wild beasts and a section of the surrounding prairie set apart for their pasturage. In addition to this successful sheep ranch, the Earl had procured a herd of several hundred cattle, which also found plenty of pasturage on the treeless plains in the immediate neighborhood, but on the opposite side of the river, from the colony. When the war of 1812 broke out, several raids were made by detachments of American Militia on this little and helpless colony. Their stores of grain were pillaged, their cattle driven off, and their sheep taken off by Captain Forsyth to Detroit under instructions from



General McArthur, a blow to the struggling settlement from which it never apparently rallied.

Finally they were flooded out by the overflowing waters of the Thames and Sydenham.

But the biggest obstacle to progress was the nature of the site chosen. It was in a section of the country so low as to be scarcely above lake level. Every Spring, as the waters of the Thames and Sydenham and numerous creeks became swollen with the increased volume of water made by the melting snow of the district which they drained, they overflowed their banks and the plains became inundated. A steady rise of the lake level above that which it was in 1804 made these conditions to become permanent. What had been before arable land became a sea of water over which canoes and boats of considerable draught could be easily floated. These conditions grew worse as the lake level continued to rise which it did to its greatest height in 1825. One by one the settlers became discontented and moved off the Earl's estate leaving at least not one descendant of the original hundred and eleven behind.

Old Country conditions did not find a favorable soil for continuance in Canada.

But had the conditions been favorable, it is doubtful if the venture would have succeeded in the form which it had been attempted by the Earl. It was an effort to reproduce Old Country conditions in this new land and although the motive was benevolent and generous above reproach, it could only succeed by the lands of this country getting into the hands of a monopolistic class as they had in Scotland and other European countries. All around the Baldoon section, the country was being opened out and surveyed into 200-acre lots, of one of which a settler might obtain possession on condition of paying only registration of Patent fees after doing needful settlement duties. Gourlay, an historian, writing of the conditions of the settlement in 1817-18, says, "From an original roll of one hundred and eleven souls who had settled in 1804, through death, desertion and war causes, it had dwindled down to about ten families and fifty souls." James Soutar, writing in 1882, says, "This is not quite correct. In spite of the causes named, the settlement - now partly spread over adjoining lands at the date referred to contained all told, perhaps including a very few not original emigrant settlers or their descendants, one hundred and fourteen souls." The Parish Records of Dover Township of that year substantiate this latter statement, showing an increase of three over its original number in the population of the settlement at the end of the thirteenth year of its existence.

The Earl's venture, undertaken at so great a pecuniary cost to himself could be counted a failure only in the form originally planned by him. As a benevolent movement in behalf of his tenantry, it was as great a success as could be expected under the circumstances. Of Donald McCallum's family, so sorely stricken by the epidemic, five of

Note: In Scotland, 1700 landlords were represented at that time as holding 17,000,000 acres of land, that is, an average of 10,000 acres each.



his family survived, a son and four daughters. Hugh, his son, became founder of Wallaceburg and its first postmaster. Lionel Johnson, a grandson, was Reeve of Chatham Township for several years and Warden of the County in 1863. A great-grandson, Norman Gurd, is a respected citizen and eminent barrister of Sarnia and a writer of considerable merit. If the story of each other family were written, it would doubtless show an equally creditable record.

To Lord Selkirk himself, the venture brought no gain. The patent to the Baldoon Farm was granted to him in 1806. He also owned, besides several other lots in Dover Township, lots 1 and 2, Chatham Township, comprising 389 acres, this land now forming a part of the City of Chatham North of the River. Twice only, after his initial trip to Baldoon, did the Earl pay a visit to his Kent County estates, once in 1816 and again in 1818. On the last trip, he sold his Baldoon Farm and other Dover Township lands to John McNab, a Hudson Bay trader, and his Chatham estate to James Woods of Sandwich, his solicitor, the father of the late Judge R. S. Woods of Chatham, and went back to the Old Country in shattered health, two years afterwards to die. He received for his lands but a trifling sum, not sufficient to pay interest on the money spent, but the country to which he brought his tenants received in these colonists an asset of inestimable value.

Note: Dover Parish Census, 1817, Baldoon Settlement.

	Males	Women	15 years and Upwards.		Children		Hirelings M F.	
Alexander McDonald	1	1	0	0	2	2	1	0
Nancy McDonald (Widow)	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	0
Mary McClain (Widow)	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	0
Angus McDougall	1	1	0	0	2	1	0	0
Angus McDonald	1	1	3	0	2	2	0	0
John McKenzie	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0
Margaret Morrison (Widow)	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	0
Daniel McDonald	1	1	3	1	4	0	0	0
Catherine Brown (Widow)	0	1	4	2	4	0	0	0
John McDonald	1	0	2	0	0	2	0	0
Laughlin McDougall	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0
John Sians or Genence	1	1	0	1	0	4	0	0
Angus McDonald	1	1	0	0	1	2	0	0
John Brown	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Lionel Johnson	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	0
Charles Fisher	1	1	0	0	5	1	0	0
Russel McCary	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Archy McDonald	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Frs. A. Cadotte	1	1	0	0	1	2	0	0
William Jones	1	1	0	0	0	1	3	1
Hector McDougall	1	1	1	0	2	0	0	0
In all								
114	17	17	19	6	24	25	5	1



THOMAS DOUGLAS  
the Fifth Earl of Selkirk,  
Born June, 1771, at St. Mary's  
Isle, Kircudbrightshire,  
Scotland.

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The founder of the Baldoon Settlement was a scion of one of the old and noble families of Scotland, the seventh son of Dunbar, the fourth Earl of Selkirk. He succeeded to the family earldom at twenty-eight years of age, being the only survivor of seven brothers at the time of his father's death. In his personal appearance, he has been described as pleasant in countenance, tall and spare, fully six feet in height, energetic and resourceful, 'a remarkable man who had the misfortune to live before his time'. He was a contemporary student with Walter Scott at the University of Edinburgh, a man of literary abilities, the author of several books and possessed a kindly and generous disposition which led him after inheritance of the family earldom to devote himself to the assisting of the poor of his own countrymen to better their economic conditions by emigrating to Canada. Although a Southron, he learned the Gaelic language and during frequent visits to the North of Scotland he became extremely fond of the Highland people. Moved with compassion by the distress caused by the Napoleonic wars and the landlord "clearances", at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century era, he laid plans for a systematic emigration policy which he deemed as the best solution for the removal of the economic distress from which the British nation was at the time suffering. In August, 1803, he brought over three shiploads of Highlanders to Prince Edward Island, where they settled and became a prosperous colony. The next year, the Baldoon Settlement arrived, and the Prince Rupert and Red River Settlements followed soon after.

In addition to the establishment of these colonies, to remove the obstacles to settlement and improvement arising from lack of facilities for communication, he offered to build a road at his own expense from York to Amherstburg at an estimated cost of £40,000 sterling, payment to be made by a grant of wild lands on which he would be able to settle other immigrants. This offer was turned down by the Government. Had it been accepted, we would have had a "Selkirk Road" corresponding to Talbot's, and settlement of Western Ontario would have taken place fifty years in advance of what it did. The Baldoon Road was built between his two properties, at Chatham and Lake St. Clair, but his Canadian undertakings, though highly beneficial to the immigrant poor of his own country, proved unremunerative to the earl himself. He died in early life, April 8th, 1820. "I never knew in my life," Sir Walter Scott wrote of him, "a man of more generous and disinterested disposition, or one whose talents and perseverance were better qualified to bring great and national schemes to conclusion".



**JAMES JOHNSON**  
of the  
**Selkirk Settlement, 1796-1873.**

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James Johnson was born in Northumberland, England, in 1796, the son of Lionel Johnson, the shepherd whom Lord Selkirk engaged to look after the ship-load of sheep which he brought to the Baldoon Settlement in 1804. James Johnson is of special interest to us, since as a boy eight years of age, he accompanied his father and walked with him as his assistant in driving the sheep (1000) through the woods all the way from Niagara to Baldoon with only Indian trails at best for their guidance. He married Margaret McCallum, also of the Selkirk Settlement, and followed farming on the Baldoon tract as his occupation in life. The illustration shows him dressed in the military uniform which he wore in service as a volunteer in the Kent Militia during the war of 1812-1814. His son, Lionel, became a prominent merchant in the Village of Wallaceburg, was postmaster, a Warden in Kent County and held other important public offices. Henry E. Johnson, a grandson, was clerk of the Town of Wallaceburg for many years.

**MARGARET MCCALLUM**  
wife of James Johnson,  
1797-1891.

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Margaret McCallum was born on the Isle of Mull, Scotland, in 1797, daughter of Daniel McCallum and Mary Morrison, who came to Canada in 1804 as a part of the Selkirk Settlers. Her father, mother and one sister died within three weeks of each other, the first of the forty-seven of the settlers to perish because of the hardships met within their first year in Canada. She married James Johnson in 1817, and they settled on a farm, a part of the Baldoon tract, where was born to them a family of ten children, all of whom became prominent citizens in the pioneer days of the Western District.

**LIONEL JOHNSON,**  
County Warden,  
1863.

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Lionel H. Johnson, of Wallaceburg, was the eldest of a family of eight children of James and Margaret Johnson, born at the "Baldoon Tract" in 1818. He spent his younger days on the farm; was educated at the Upper Canada Academy; moved to Wallaceburg in its primitive days, and entered commercial life. He was married in 1839. During the time that the Chatham Gore belonged to Sombra, he was chosen, first in 1845, as its representative in the District Council of Essex, Kent and Lambton. On the establishment of municipalities in 1850, he was elected its first Reeve and continued to hold the office of Reeve, or Deputy Reeve of Sombra or Chatham Township for over twenty-five years. He was Warden of the County in 1863. In 1837, he joined the militia, and served on the frontier till the restoration of peace. He was postmaster of Wallaceburg from 1840 until his death. His son, H. E. Johnson, was town clerk and librarian of the Public Library, Wallaceburg.

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