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Henry's House

A story of life in the Buxton Settlement

By Joyce Shadd Middleton



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September 2008

Henry's House



A story of life in the Buxton Settlement

By Joyce Shadd Middleton

*This book is dedicated to the memory of the owners of
Henry's House:*

*Henry Colbert
John and Eliza Anderson
Edward and Isabella Lampman
John and Margaret Atkinson
Albert and Helen Henderson
Ethel Henderson
Robert and Marjorie Pratt*

*With this book we pay tribute
to the life and accomplishments
of the first owner and builder of the log cabin
Henry Colbert,
and gratefully acknowledge its donors
Ethel Henderson, Marjorie and the late Robert Pratt*

The Buxton Historical Society

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Spring 1852—Meeting Henry



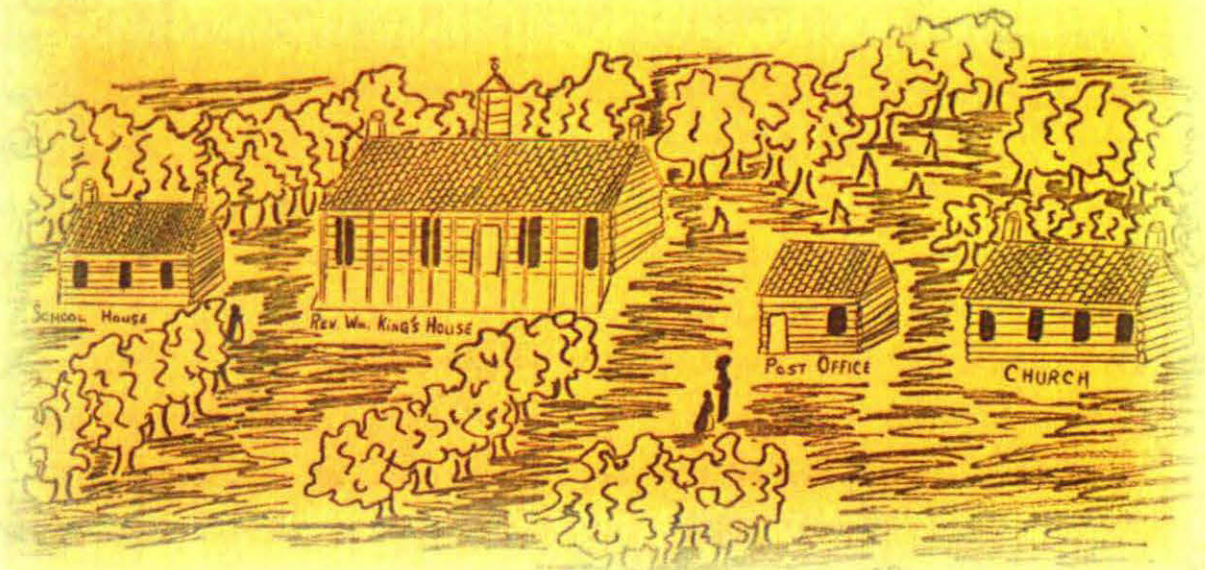
Henry stood at the edge of the bush and looked around. This is where he would build his cabin. He had passed several cabins in the bush as he made his way down the narrow roads that led from Rev. King's home to the property he had purchased. He had chosen a fifty-acre lot on Prince Albert Street. It was down near the eastern boundary of the settlement, near the Dillon Road. His lot was covered with a thick growth of oak, ash, walnut, beech, maple, and elm trees. It was the same all over the nine thousand acres of the settlement, except where the earlier settlers had cleared areas of their property for their homes and for crops. The first settlers had come to Buxton two years earlier, and much of the land near the center of the settlement had already been taken, but Henry was happy with the property he had chosen. He already had several neighbours on his road and more were coming to the settlement all the time.

The cabins he had passed on his way to his lot were all about the same size. Each cabin had a porch across the front, and a yard garden, surrounded by a picket

fence. When he first came to Buxton a few months ago, Rev. King, the founder of the settlement, told him about the rules for settling in Buxton. All cabins had to be at least 18 feet by 24 feet, must have a garden, and had to be built within a year of purchasing the land. Rev. King said that a down payment must be made before settling on the land, and then the rest could be paid off with payments made each year for ten years.

Henry had arrived in Buxton in the fall of 1851, and had saved up enough money so that he had been able to make his down payment by spring. He had spent the winter clearing some of his own land so that he could plant a crop in the spring, and by helping his neighbours Benjamin Richardson, and Peter Gray, to clear more of their land. By selling some of his logs and transporting them by sled to the lake for shipping, Henry had earned the few dollars he still needed to make his down payment.

Peter was Henry's closest neighbour to the west, and Benjamin lived across the road from Peter. Henry was just 22 years old, and much stronger than Peter who was more than twice his age. Peter's wife Sally, who was even older than Peter, cooked for him and took care of their home. They had been some of the first people to settle in Buxton, arriving in November 1849 even before Rev. King and the men, women and children he had freed and brought to Canada. Peter and Sally Gray had





chosen their lot, and then waited for Rev. King. There had been several people staying in the barn that Rev. King had bought, waiting for his arrival.

Rev.

King, who was born in Ireland, went to the United States to teach. He had become a slave owner in Louisiana, when he married the daughter of a rich slave owner and planter, but he had always known that slavery was wrong. After he became a minister with the Free Church of Scotland, Rev. King was sent to Canada as a missionary. He had made plans to free his slaves and bring them to Canada, where they could live in freedom without fear. Rev. King found other men to help him with his plan to start a settlement for his former slaves. He wanted the settlement also to be home to other men, women and children who escaped from slavery and came to Canada West. After Rev. King arrived with his 15 freed slaves, they formed cabin-raising crews to clear the land and build cabins. With 12 to 14 men and a team of oxen, they had been able to clear the land and build a cabin up to the roof in a single day. Peter had told Henry about the those first days, when the men and women all lived together in Rev. King's barn, worked together clearing the land and building cabins, and worshipped together in King's home. Their first church service had been in the district school not far from King's home, but some of the white neighbours had locked the doors to keep them out. Mrs. White, a kind neighbour had come and unlocked the door so they could worship. After that first meeting,

Rev. King decided that to avoid trouble with the neighbours, he would hold church services in his home until they were able to build their own church. The Mission church and school were some of the first buildings Peter and the other settlers had built.

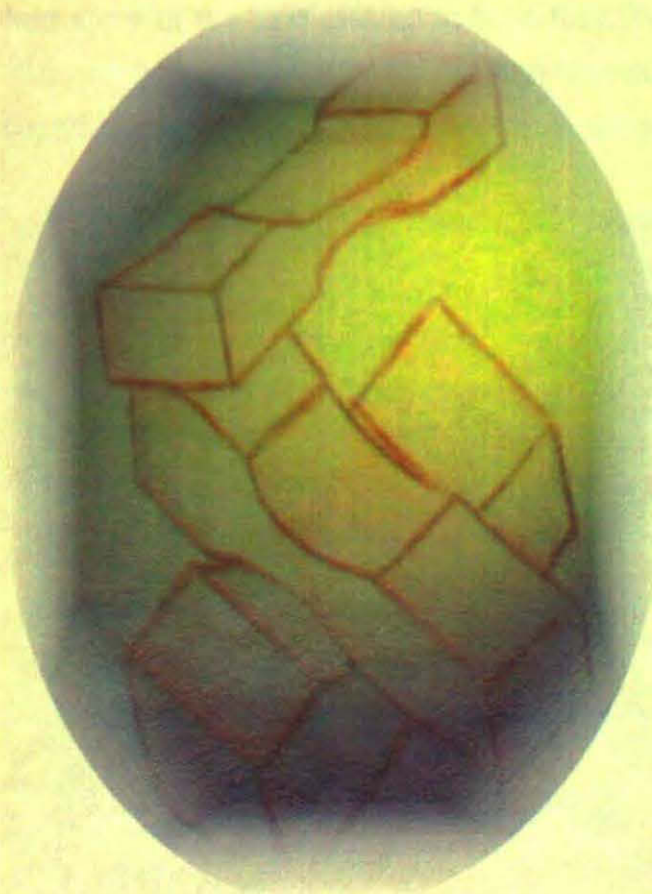
After Henry met with Rev. King and chose the lot he wanted to purchase, he had gone to meet with the Board of Arbitration. The settlers, to handle problems between the settlers, and to deal with other community matters, had elected this group of five men. They had taken on the job of making sure new fugitives coming to Buxton were housed and fed, until they were able to move into their own log cabins. Henry along with 25-year-old James Points, who had bought the property next door to Henry, were both unmarried and had spent the winter living with the Richardsons.

Benjamin and Margaret Richardson had come to Buxton a year earlier with Margaret's four-year-old son William Moore. They had built a very comfortable cabin on their property, with a barn to house their animals. In the spring, Henry and James would be able to move to their own property. Henry and James enjoyed their time with the Richardsons and liked to entertain little William, but they looked forward to the spring, when they would move to their own homes.



The work of clearing the land was very different from what Henry had done before coming to Buxton. He had spent the last few years on the lakes and the rivers, working as a sailor. He was not used to the cold weather in Canada West, and missed the warm days and nights he had left behind when he left Louisiana. He also missed the smell of the sea and the movement of the steamboats as they made their way up and down the Mississippi River. Henry had been born in New Orleans, Louisiana. He had been hired out by his master when he was just a young boy, and had been traveling up and down the Mississippi on a steamboat ever since. Henry loved "Old Man River" as the slaves who traveled and lived near its waters called the Mississippi. The Mississippi is the longest and largest river in all of North America, running from Lake Itasca in Minnesota all the way to the Gulf of Mexico near New Orleans.

Henry had learned that if he traveled the Mississippi about 1000 km. to the Ohio River, he would be in a place where there was no slavery. He had waited patiently for the opportunity to make that trip, and when it came, he made his



escape to freedom. After making his way to Detroit, Henry found work on a schooner, sailing the Detroit River and up the Thames River to Chatham and Wallaceburg. The ship carried grain and lumber from ports along the Thames and Detroit Rivers to Detroit, and brought goods from Detroit to these same ports along the two rivers. It was while he was working as one of six crewmen on this schooner, that Henry heard of the settlement and decided to save his money, so that he could move to Buxton, where he could live as a free man and own his own property.

Henry had just made his down

payment, three pounds two shillings and six pence, - ten percent of the total price of thirty one pounds five shillings for his fifty acre lot on the Tenth Concession or Prince Albert Road. He now had ten years to finish paying for his land, but he hoped that with hard work he could pay



it off sooner. He could not resell his land unless he sold it to another black person. He knew he had a year to build his log house, but he would not wait that long. He had some of the land cleared to build his cabin and from the timber he had cut; he had prepared several logs for building his new home. He and James had worked together on clearing the spaces for their cabins, and when they had taken their turn



to work with the cabin raising crew, had learned how to prepare the logs by cutting them to the proper lengths and notching them so that they would fit together as closely as possible when they built the cabins. Once their homes were built, they would be able

to sell all the timber as they cut it, while clearing the rest of their land.

As Henry stood looking at the spot, he had chosen for his log cabin, he could see his new home. It would have three rooms downstairs with a stairway to a loft. In the large one at the rear, there would be a large fireplace. He would use this to heat his home and to cook his meals. He would be able to make his fireplace using the bricks that were being made in



the new brickyard in Buxton. There would be a chimney in one of the front rooms so that he could have a stove to help heat his cabin. This room would have a stairway to the loft. The heat from the chimney would help to heat the loft. There would be two doors, one at the front and one at the back of the cabin. He would have a porch all the way across the front of the house, and a vegetable garden nearby that would have a picket fence around it to keep the animals out, that he planned to buy. He would have a few flowers in his garden because those were the rules Rev. King had told him. He was anxious to move into his own home. Although the Richardsons had made Henry and James feel welcome in their home, Henry knew it was time to begin his new life on his own. It would not be long now. At the cabin and barn raisings in Buxton, neighbours from a distance of eight miles around came and helped to build the houses and barns. Henry and James were both on the list to have their cabins built. Over the winter, they had helped other new settlers in Buxton to build their homes, and Henry knew that his cabin would be started within the next week. He had cleared enough land to have a barn built behind his cabin. Like most of his neighbours, Henry would have a cow, a couple of pigs and some hens. Henry also wanted to buy a horse to ride and an ox to help with the plowing

and heavy work, but he knew he would only be able to purchase one or the other this year. He was looking forward to raising the



animals, and had already spoken to a farmer near Chatham about purchasing his stock when the time came. He would have to wait until fall to purchase most of the animals, so that he could grow the grain he would need to feed them.

Benjamin Richardson's wife Margaret had promised Henry and James to cook a large pot of stew for the men when they came to raise their cabins. She still had carrots, potatoes, turnip and onions in the root cellar under the kitchen, and they still had lots of venison hanging in the smoke house, from the deer Benjamin had shot a few weeks ago. They would use that for the meat in the stew, and Sally Gray would send some dried apples to add to the stew. The women said this helped the flavour of the stew and made the game meat a little more tender. Nancy Stone, who lived down at the next corner and Emily Jones, whose husband Richard had purchased the lot just west of the Richardsons would also help. The Jones family was waiting for their cabin raising too. Their cabin would be built just before the crew came to build for Henry and James. Richard, Emily, and their two young sons, nine-year-old John and 2-year-old James, were staying next door at the corner of the Tenth Concession and the Centre Road with their neighbours Thomas and Nancy Stone and their two-year-old son William. Nancy and all the other women were looking forward to the cabin raising bees, because it would give them a chance to

spend a few days visiting with the other women on their road. John Jones was already attending the mission school, but the other little fellows would have some new playmates to keep them busy while their mothers prepared and served the meals to the men. The women and children would also help clear away some of the branches and twigs, and help with burning the stumps.

Henry took the paper from his pocket that Rev. King had given him when he had made his down payment. He looked at it, and knew that it proved that he had made a down payment on his own land, today, May 5, 1852, but he could neither read nor write. It had been illegal to teach a slave to read in Louisiana where Henry had grown up. He trusted Rev. King, and he knew that he was in a land now where he would be protected by the law, so he must keep this paper safe. He would be in his own home by summer. He just wished his old master, and some of the people he had left behind in Louisiana could see him now. Henry put the paper back in his pocket. He would give it to Margaret Richardson to put in a safe place until he had his own home. It was getting late, there were chores to be done, and Henry was getting hungry. He knew one thing for sure. He would sure miss those delicious meals Margaret cooked when he moved to his own home, but he would learn to cook for himself, and perhaps he would be lucky and find a wife. Henry turned and headed back down the road to the Richardson's.

In Witness Whereof, the said parties hereto have hereunto set their hands and seals.

Signed, Sealed and Delivered
in the Presence of

John P. ...

Henry ^{his} *Colbert*
Mark

Fall 1854 A Walk To the Store



Henry had been so busy with his friend James out working on the land that he had forgotten to get the supplies he needed at the store down at Buxton Square. He had run out of kerosene to light the lamps, as it got dark when evening came. Henry lived in a comfortable cabin on his own land, on the south side of Prince Albert Street, also known as the Tenth Concession, between the Centre Road and the Dillon Road. Henry had finished harvesting his crop. His crop had been good and he had been able to sell it for a good price. He had been able to put away more than enough money to take care of his needs

and make his payment on the land. He and his neighbour James Points had started working in the bush, clearing more land for next year's crop. Instead of going back to the cabin and taking the road to the store, Henry took a short cut, walking southwest across the fields and through the bush. He crossed Queen Street and continued southwest through the bush until he reached the Centre Road.

As Henry neared the store, he could see Rev. King's home across the road. There was a long lane lined with maples on both sides, leading up to the house. Rev. King's home, one of the largest in the settlement, was a long, two storey, white building with several windows on the upper level. It had a large verandah with pillars that were covered with ivy. Henry could hear Rev. King's wife Jemima at the piano even from the road. She was probably giving lessons to one of the girls in the

settlement, who were learning to play the piano. Peter waved at Molly as she stepped out onto the verandah, calling out to Sarah, her daughter. Sarah was plucking a hen that her mother



would cook for supper. Molly was the King's cook, and lived with her daughter, in the King home. Sarah. Molly and Sarah had been Rev. King's slaves in Louisiana, but here in Canada West they were free and were employed by the Kings.

Mr. Sloan, the teacher at the Mission School, which was located next door to Rev. King's home, was just leaving the school. He was finished teaching for the day. He had sixty-three pupils when they were all at school. Most days there were only about forty pupils in class. Often the children, especially the boys had to help at home with planting or harvesting crops or clearing more land in the bush. The school was kept open for eleven months of the year. Mr. Sloan taught the children grammar, geography, history, writing, and music. Some of his students were studying algebra and geometry, and many of them were learning Latin and Greek. Mr. Sloan was not the only teacher in the settlement. There were two other schools, and in all, there were about 150 children attending school and learning to read and write. Most of the settlers were anxious for their children to learn the things that they had not had a chance to learn. Some of them were even attending school at night, to learn to read and write themselves.

Henry could see Rev. King coming up the road on his trusty horse "Ajax". He was coming from the direction of the Potash factory. Rev. King and Ajax were a familiar sight throughout the settlement. He spent time almost every day checking

the many busy enterprises in the settlement, including the potash factory, the brickyard, and the grist and sawmill. The settlers who owned and ran these businesses did a good job, but Rev. King liked to be involved in all the affairs of the settlement, and visited them all regularly. Rev.



King was always busy. He spent a lot of time out on the muddy roads of the settlement visiting with settlers, and he liked to stop and quiz the students at the school every once in a while. Last year he had made over fifty visits to the Mission school alone.

Henry finally reached the store, opened the door and entered. Robert Van Vrankin was the owner of the store located at Buxton Square. He was also a deacon in the Mission Church. Some of the settlers refused to do business with Robert because his prices were higher than the prices in Chatham, but Henry did not mind paying a little extra, so that he would not have to go all the way to Chatham to make his purchases. He could take care of many of his needs right in Buxton. The community also had two carpenters, a printer, a blacksmith and barber, and even had a post office and a hotel. Robert Van Vrankin's store was a meeting place for many of the settlers who would stop in there just to chat with their neighbours. Henry usually stopped and visited with Robert and the other customers who were in the store, but today he was in a hurry to get his kerosene and return home. He still had chores to do before dark. Soon after he had made his purchase, Henry chatted briefly with Mr. Van Vrankin, and left the store.

As Henry left Buxton Square and walked north on the Centre Road towards his property, he met his neighbours Isaac Malone and his wife Maria on their way to the store. They were trying to decide how much salt they should buy. Isaac had just butchered a hog and needed to salt the meat before he hung it in the smokehouse. They knew that it would take a whole barrel to take them through the year, but money was tight and they needed kerosene for their lamps too. They were also saving for a stove to help heat their cabin when winter came, and Maria wanted to get some fabric to make a blanket



for their new baby daughter Susan. The baby blanket they had used for their three older children was badly worn and needed to be replaced. Little Susan was only a few weeks old and Maria worried about keeping her warm and comfortable. Henry could hear Maria reminding Isaac that the heat from the fireplace was not enough to heat the whole cabin. She told Isaac that she hoped the children would not have to sleep on the floor near the fireplace to keep warm when winter came. Their neighbour Emily Jones, just across the road had come over with her one-year-old daughter Martha to care for the Malone children while their parents went to the store. This gave Isaac and Maria a chance to have some time together without the children. Sometimes Maria would watch the Jones children so Emily and Richard could spend some time alone too. Emily's sons John and James were out working with their father picking up the last of the corn crop that had fallen in the field.

After his visit with the Malones, Henry continued down the road. He passed other cabins belonging to his neighbours the Rileys, and the Thomas family. Each



cabin was set back a ways from the road, and both were about the same size. In Buxton, cabins had to be set back from the road at least 33 feet. As Henry walked on, he passed the farms of Jacob King on one side of the road and Robert Phares on the other side. Robert and Jacob had come to the settlement with Rev. King. They had been his slaves in Louisiana. Robert, Jacob and William King's other slaves had spent a year in Ohio with Rev. King's family before they came to Canada. This had given Rev. King enough time to

make his plans for the settlement and get the land he needed to sell to the settlers. While they were in Ohio, they had learned how to build cabins and clear land, and they had also learned some of the methods northern farmers used to raise and harvest their crops. The women had learned to prepare and preserve the food they would need to keep for the long winter months. The slaves had never lived where they had to worry about winter. In the south where they had lived, the weather stayed warm all year long.

Robert and Jacob had cleared a lot of land on their farms, and today they were busy working at digging the ditches along the front of their property. These were needed to help drain the swampy land so that they could grow better crops. The men often worked together on each other's farm, digging ditches, log rolling, and planting and harvesting the crops. It made the days go faster when there were others around to talk and joke with. When they had first come to Buxton and were clearing the land for their cabins, and building them, all the men had worked together. They were able to clear enough land for the cabin, and build it up as far as the roof in only one day with twelve men working, and a team of oxen to help

pull the heavy logs into place. The women would work together to make sure the fire was kept blazing, and cooking the food for the busy men. Some of the women also helped with the clearing of the smaller branches.

As Henry turned the corner onto Prince Albert Street, he waved to Thomas Stone who was out with his ox, ploughing their cleared land. It was a lot of work to bring in a decent crop here in the heavy clay fields of the settlement. It was

often late in the spring before they were dry enough to be planted. It seemed the weeds grew much faster than the corn and wheat seeds that the settlers planted. By summer, the ground was hard after being baked by the sun and the weeds were hard to pull out, and it was sometimes late in the fall before the crops were ready to be harvested. Then during the winter months, the men and the older boys went out into the bush and cleared more land to be planted the next spring. The work was hard and it was never done, but the men were proud to be working on their own land, and that their hard labour was for the good of their own wives and children.



As he passed the Malone farm, Henry waved to the young Malone children, Robert and Elmira. They were out in the garden picking up the potatoes and carrots Maria had

dug up earlier. Even though they were young, Robert and Elmira were old enough to help with the garden, feeding the chickens and gathering eggs. Robert who was seven years old also helped with shelling corn and gathering hickory and walnuts. This year he had helped his father pick the corn when it was ripe. Henry did not see little Mahala. He guessed that she was in the house with Emily Jones, her little daughter Martha and Susan, the new Malone baby. Henry knew that even though Robert and Elmira



were only seven and five years old, they were a big help to their parents. There was so much to be done to get ready for winter that everyone in the family had to help as soon as they were old enough.

Henry was not married and had no family to share the chores in his household. However, he was still young and strong and did not mind the hard work. His next-door neighbours, Peter and Sally Gray on one side and James Points on the other, had no one to help them either, so they often worked together on each other's farms to get the heavy work done. It was much easier now that Henry had a pair of oxen to help with the heavy work. His neighbours, the Richardsons had Margaret's son William who was now seven to help with the chores, Margaret was able to help Benjamin with some of the work and John and Caroline Jordan who lived across the road from Henry had their daughter, nine-year-old Sarah, who was a great help to her mother. Sarah not only helped outside with feeding the chickens and gathering eggs, she also helped her mother with washing dishes and setting the table. She would soon be old enough to help her mother with preserving food, salting the meat, making candles and preparing food. She was not old enough to

milk the cow yet, but she helped with churning the butter. Her mother was teaching her to sew and to quilt. She was making a new warm quilt for her bed out of some of their worn clothes. Both Sarah and Caroline were able to help John with the farm chores, but he had hired another settler, Henry Phelps to help him with the heavy work, clearing the land and harvesting the crop. Henry Phelps owned the land that the Malone's farmed, but they were buying the land from him. He collected their payment each fall after they had sold their crops. Henry Phelps was not ready to settle down and build a cabin for himself yet. He would rather live with other settlers and help them on their land. He had no wife or children and he put all his money in the Buxton Savings Bank, and was saving to buy some more land for himself later. He had told Henry that he enjoyed the company of John Jordan as they worked in the fields and in the bush.

Henry's neighbours Caroline Jordan and Margaret Richardson were both good cooks. They often brought him and his friend James over a bowl of their delicious rabbit or venison stew, or a loaf of freshly baked bread. As Henry neared his property, he saw young Sarah come out the door and walk toward the road with a pot in her hand. Henry knew what that meant. Today would be his lucky day. Caroline was sending over a pot of one of her stews for her neighbour across the road. As Henry accepted the pot from Sarah and sent his thanks to her parents, he could smell the



stew, and it made him hungry. He hurried to the cabin where he put another log on the fire, set the pot on the hearth to keep it warm, and headed back outdoors. He would have a real treat tonight when he finished his chores.

Late Summer 1856 Henry Goes To Church



Nancy Hatter

Henry tied his horse up to the hitching post. He tipped his hat to George and Nancy Hatter, as they walked past him and into the church. George and Nancy lived close by, and had only a short stroll to get to the service. George had come to Buxton from Niagara. Before that, he



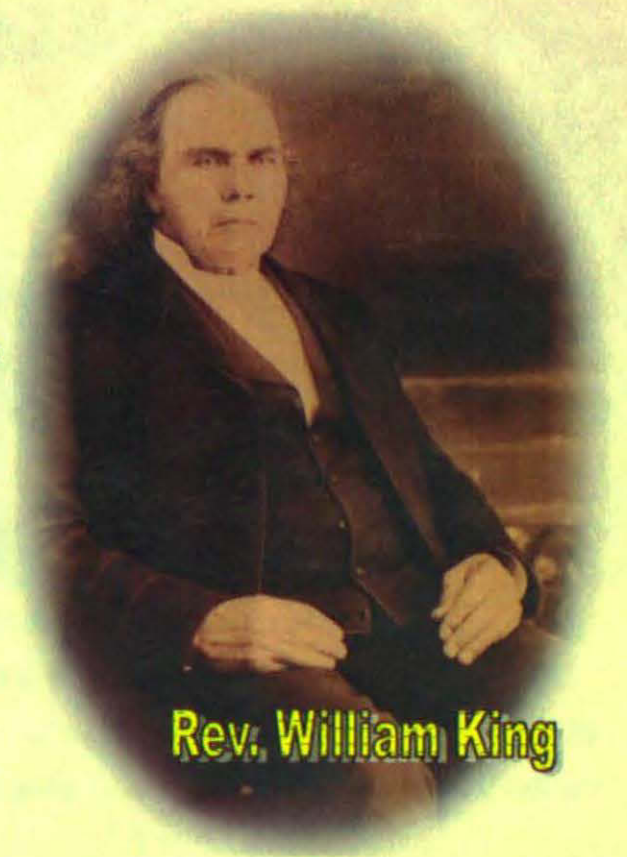
George Hatter

had been a slave in Virginia. He had told Henry about his escape to freedom. The first time he had tried, he had been captured, and as a punishment he was taken from his position as a house servant, and made to work long hours in the fields. His mistress had taught him to read, even though that was illegal, and George had read about Canada, a land where there was no more slavery. The second time he tried to escape, his brother came with him. This time they made it to the North. George said he had not felt safe until he crossed into Canada where the law would protect him from slave catchers. Although he had gone to settle in Niagara, he came to Buxton when it was opened up for settlement, so that he could send his children to school.

George and his wife Nancy had been the ones to sell part of their land to the Baptists in the settlement, so that they would have a place to build their church. It was up on the Middle Road, not too far from the Mission church and school. George was a deacon in the South Buxton Baptist church and would be helping Elder Lacy with the communion service today. There were more people attending the Baptist Church in the settlement than the Presbyterian Church just down the road. Henry liked the services held in the Baptist Church much better. Elder Lacy, who led the services, liked to have lively music and encouraged the congregation to speak out when they felt "the spirit". Many would shout out encouragement to the preacher

during his sermon by saying things like "amen", or "tell us preacher". People would just start singing one of their favourite hymns, and everyone else would join in. Sometimes the congregation would clap their hands and tap their feet or sway to the beat of some of the more lively hymns. In the Presbyterian Church, the services were much quieter and Rev. King did not encourage the people to speak out or answer him when he gave the message.

Some of Henry's neighbours, like the Malones and the Richardsons, attended the Methodist Church. Last summer there had been a bee for the raising of the Methodist Church at the northern part of the settlement. The church had started out as an African Methodist Church, because some of the settlers had belonged to that church while they lived in the United States. There were several such churches in the northern states, and those settlers who had lived in the north for a while before they came to Buxton, had worshipped in the African Methodist Church. Just a few weeks ago, the names of the Buxton Methodist Churches had been changed to the British Methodist Church. The people wanted to show that they were loyal to the British Crown that had given them a safe place to live. Mr. Thomas Stringer, and Mr. Walter Toyer, both lived on the Centre Road, and preached at the Bethel British Methodist Church in the northern part of the settlement, and at the Zion Methodist Church just east of Buxton Square. The services at the Methodist Church were neither as lively as those at the Baptist Church, nor as sober as the services at the Mission Church. One of the main differences with the Buxton Churches was that some of the black settlers attended all three churches, but the White settlers attended only the Mission Church where Rev. King was the minister.



Rev. William King

The service was just beginning as Henry entered the church and took a seat on the bench next to Alfred West and his three older children, eleven-year-old James, nine-year-old Alonzo and seven-year-old



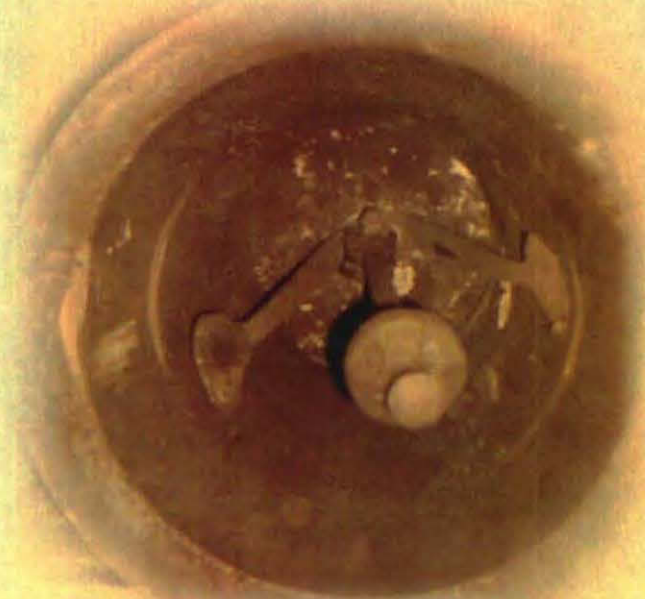
Margaret. His wife Emily had stayed at home with their two young children and the new baby. Alfred who had a two-storey hotel in Buxton was a trustee of the South Buxton Baptist Church. The hotel served no alcoholic beverages, so it was known as a temperance hotel. One of the rules of the settlement was that liquor could not be sold there.

After the singing, Bible readings, and sermon, Elder Lacy ended the service by asking the members of the congregation to stop in and visit with Mary Jane Brown



during the week. She had just lost her husband Isaac. He had been buried in the settlement cemetery just down the road from the church, only two days ago. Isaac, Mary Jane and their

children had come to Buxton shortly after the settlement opened. That was six years ago. Now Isaac and Mary Ann's children were mostly grown, and would be able to help their mother, but she was still feeling lonely without her husband. Henry decided that he would stop in and see if there was anything, he could do to help. She was still living in their home not far from the church, and probably could use some help with getting enough wood cut to keep her cabin warm for the winter.



Just before dismissing the congregation, Elder Lacy called another man to the pulpit. This man was new to the settlement. Henry knew that someone new had arrived safely in Buxton one day during the past week when he heard the Liberty bell ringing. The bell, which hung above the Mission School, was rung whenever another escaped slave reached freedom in Buxton. The Buxton Liberty Bell had been a gift from the coloured people of Pittsburgh, and was to be a reminder to the settlers of their brothers and sisters still suffering in slavery. It was also rung on Sunday mornings before service, and whenever there was an emergency such as a fire in the community.

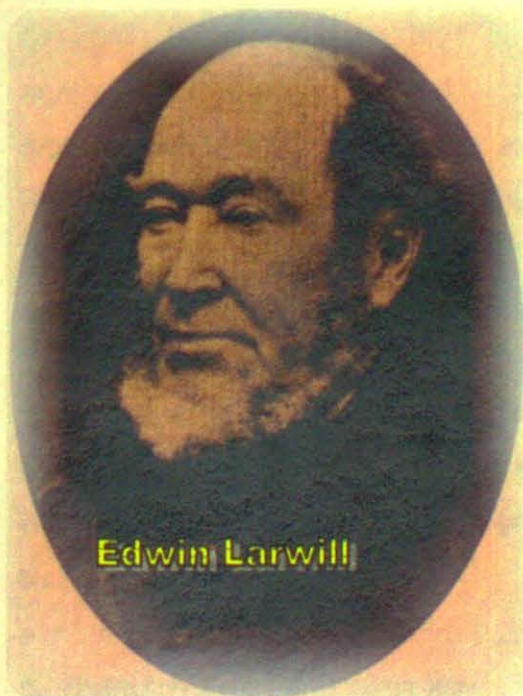
Daniel Duckett, the man who had just arrived in Buxton, had purchased the property at the southeast corner of the Centre Road and Prince Albert Street. Daniel had been a slave in Kentucky before he escaped and came to Michigan. In Michigan, he had purchased a farm, and had it well stocked. All the people in his neighbourhood had known that Daniel was an escaped slave, and many of them knew the name of his former master. When a slave hunter came into the area, someone told him about Daniel being an escaped slave, and told him the name of

Daniel's master. The slave hunter wrote a letter to Daniel's master, telling him to come and claim his slave. This way the slave hunter would receive a reward for capturing Daniel. Before the slave master arrived however, Daniel found out about the slave hunter's plan.



He took two of his best horses and with two hundred dollars ran to Canada, leaving behind his farm and all his other belongings. A man, who had claimed to be Daniel's friend, rode to Canada with him, pretending that he wanted to help Daniel. After arriving in Canada, Daniel went on to Buxton where he met with Rev King, who persuaded him to remain in Buxton where he would be safe. Daniel had given his money to Rev. King for safekeeping. Daniel no longer had any money and the man who had come with him,

soon realized that he would neither be able to get Daniel's money, nor trick him into returning to Michigan. He then rode back to Michigan on one of Daniel's horses. He knew that Daniel would not be able to follow him back to Michigan to get his horse, because if he showed up there again, he would be arrested and taken back to slavery in Kentucky. Daniel's farm and all his belongings in Michigan would go to his master, but Daniel was free and safe in Buxton.



Edwin Larwill

After introducing Daniel to the congregation, Elder Lacy said that the Board of Arbitration had arranged for Daniel to stay with

A photograph of a banner with the text "Welcome to BUXTON" written on it. The banner is curved and appears to be made of a light-colored material, possibly paper or fabric, with the text printed in a dark, bold, sans-serif font. The background of the banner is a light, mottled yellowish-brown color.

Talbot King at the corner of the Centre Road and Prince Albert Street. Daniel was purchasing the property across the road from Talbert. He asked everyone to welcome Daniel. Rev. Lacy then closed the service with a prayer.

As Henry left the church, he stopped to speak to William Spriggs. He was amazed at how spry Mr. Spriggs was. He had just passed his seventy-fourth birthday, and yet earlier in the year, William had joined the men from Buxton who had walked together to Chatham to exercise their right to vote. With the men from Buxton, the men in the surrounding areas, and the men who joined them in Chatham, there had been three hundred men who all arrived together to vote against Edwin Larwill as the Member of Parliament for their area. Larwill who had won the last election had always worked against the people of Buxton. Even when Rev. King was planning the settlement, Larwill had started a petition against it, saying that blacks were not welcome in this part of the township. He had stirred up so many people that when Rev. King came to Chatham he was warned that it would not be safe for him to be on the street after dark. Larwill had done all he could to prevent the settlement from starting, but Rev King and his supporters had succeeded in spite of Larwill's threats. In this year's election, Archie Mc Kellar had run against Larwill to be elected to parliament. Mc Kellar had always been a friend to Buxton and was a shareholder in the Elgin Association that had backed the settlement from the beginning. Rev. King had gone around the settlement and the surrounding area, and persuaded the men to march together as a group and vote

against Larwill, so that he would not be elected to office again. For many of the men it was their first chance to vote, because in order to vote, you had to have been a resident for at least three years. Henry who had qualified for citizenship a year earlier, had joined the group, and had watched as William Spriggs not only kept up with the other men, but also had marched near the head of the group. They had all gone in and voted for Mc Kellar. It was a shame that none of the women were able to go with them, but the law did not allow



women to vote. With the Buxton votes, Edwin Larwill had been defeated though, and Archie Mc Kellar now represented them in parliament. It was good to see Mr. Spriggs this morning. His wife was not with him because she attended the Bethel Methodist church.

As Henry walked to his horse, he passed a group of young people, including sixteen year old William Garrel and his sisters Eliza and Mary, and his brothers, Robert and Joseph, as well as Sarah Jackson's daughters sixteen year old Sarah and eleven year old Minerva. With the group was eleven-year-old Sarah Jordan who lived across the road from Henry, and seven-year-old William Stone who lived down on the corner of the Centre Road and Prince Albert Street. The children were still excited about the part they had played just a few days ago, when close to a thousand people came to Buxton for a celebration. This had been the idea of some of the earliest settlers who came to Buxton. A group of people was coming to the settlement to see how they were doing. Henry and his neighbours wanted to show them how much better they were doing than when they had arrived in Buxton with nothing but their freedom. They wanted to give a public dinner to those people



who were visiting and to invite the friends of the settlement.

Everyone had joined in making the plans and preparing for the special day. Henry and many of the other men got lumber at the mill and made an arbour in a grove of trees on Mr. King's farm just down the road. The children had been so excited when the arbour was finished. It was one hundred and twenty feet long, fourteen feet wide

and twelve feet tall, with a lattice on the sides, and boards across the top to make a roof. There was a kitchen with a cook stove, and a storeroom set up at one end of the arbour, and a platform at the other end. The arbor was decorated with mottoes and flags. At the entrance was the motto "Welcome to Buxton" and the Union Jack floated over the platform. Inside the pavilion were long trestle tables—enough for 800 people to eat. There were even more tables scattered on the lawn for the people who would not fit under the pavilion. There were flowers from the settler's gardens everywhere - on the arbour, on the tables, and on the platform.

When the delegation had arrived, there had been a brass band from Chatham on the platform playing music to greet them. All the people of Buxton and their guests enjoyed a meal of venison, wild turkey from the forest, beef, lamb and chicken from the farms, with all sorts of vegetables from the settler's gardens, coffee, ice water, and lemonade to drink, and a variety of pies for dessert. One of the women had been the head cook with several helpers, and another woman was in charge of the pies. Other women helped her. The children had been kept busy running errands, and peeling vegetables for the dinner and fruit for the pies. Eliza Garrel had helped her mother with baking bread, and Sarah and Minerva Jackson had helped their mother with making pies. The boys and the men acted as waiters, and young William had been appointed to help them. The band had played during the meal, and off and on for the rest of the afternoon, and after dinner, there had

been speeches. The celebration lasted from noon until five o'clock. When all their guests had left, the children had helped their parents clean up, and take down the tables and arbour.

Before the guests left, Rev. King took them to see the Buxton Mission Church and School, and the other churches. Rev. King told their guests about how much progress had been made in the settlement, especially in the school. He was very proud of the fact that four young students, who had studied Latin and Greek along with the other subjects, had completed their studies and had gone on to study at Knox and Trinity Colleges in Toronto. The young men had not been able to come back home for the celebration, but the children, heard their parents talking about how much Isaac and Catherine Riley missed their son, John, and how Henry Thomas missed his nephew James Rapier who had gone to study in Toronto. Some of the children talked about how they were studying Latin and Greek now too, and how they hoped to go away to study to become doctors, lawyers and ministers when they finished school. That was still a long way off for some of them, but that did not stop them from dreaming.

As Henry passed the children and mounted his horse to go home, he wished he had been able to get the education and have the opportunities that these children would have, but he was happy that he at least had been able to come to Buxton. He knew that his life in the community was much better than the men, women, and children who he had left behind in New Orleans. He had his freedom and the opportunity to make a good life in Buxton. He was even able to help the children of the settlement to get an education, because he and the other settlers had started last year to pay the teacher's salary. They no longer depended on the Mission to do that for them. Henry was proud to be able to help, and he would be happy with that.



Fall 1859 Harvest Time



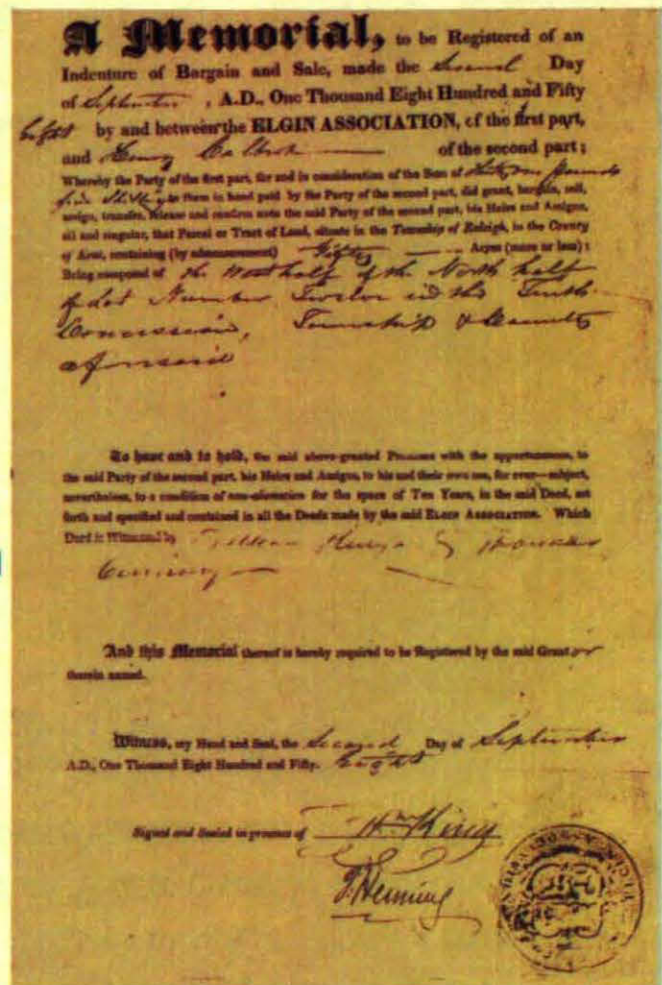
It was fall again and Henry was busy in the field bringing in his crop. This past spring he had been able to plant five acres with wheat, twelve acres with corn, three with potatoes, four with oats, one with tobacco, another three acres with hay, buckwheat and turnips. One acre was

used for pasture out behind the barn, and he had planted a large garden on the acre surrounding his home. He now had thirty acres cleared on his farm. This was a little more than was cleared on many farms, but Henry had cleared a lot of land last winter, working with his old friend James, and with the help of his new friends, Robert and William Black. He had only twenty more acres to clear.

Clearing all that land last winter had been a great advantage to Henry, because he had been able to haul a lot more lumber to the saw mill, and then on to the lake for shipping to markets in the United States and England. He had been able to use the tramway that went down the Centre Road all the way to Lake Erie. The tramway was like a wooden railway. It had been a lot of work for the men of the settlement to build, but it sure made getting produce to market easier. No more wagons stuck in the mud! He had also been able to sell the ashes from the burnt stumps to the potash factory. They used it to make lye and fertilizer. Henry had made more money than ever before from the lumber on his land, even with paying William and Robert for their labour. They had been so much help to him that he had asked them to stay. Robert and William had remained with Henry and were now helping him with the harvest. Because of all the help from his new friends, and the good prices he was able to get for his timber, Henry had been able to pay off his mortgage in May. He had only taken eight years to complete paying off his farm. He

had completed digging all the ditches along the front of his property a couple of years before, so when he made that last big payment, Rev. King had sent for Henry's deed and had brought it down to him. It had been registered on September 2, 1858. He would never forget the day he got the document in his own hands. He thought back to the days when he had been a slave in Louisiana. Then he had been the property of another man. Now he was the owner of his own property. How he wished that his old master could see him now. As Henry examined his deed, he saw the seal of the Elgin Association at the bottom. It had been designed to show what the Association saw as its purpose and the rising station of the African race. In the first section, he saw an African reclining by his hut, under the shade of a palm tree. Next to this, he saw an image of a slave in chains. In the third section, he saw an image of the British lion, and in the fourth, a free man reaping wheat in his own field. Written below he saw the words "By the help of God", and over the top was the British Flag. Henry felt proud, because he saw himself as that man in the fourth panel, harvesting in his own fields.

Robert and William Black, who had come to Canada from Ireland a few years earlier, had come to the settlement to find work. Henry, who had no other family, and no one to help on his farm, had hired both of them. He provided them with a place to live, food, and a small wage. In return, they helped him with planting, caring for the crops, harvesting, and in the winter clearing the land. Sometimes when Henry was all caught up, they would go and work for other farmers or help with ditching along the unsettled areas of the settlement. They received pay for this



work, and they were saving to purchase their own farms. Henry was not only happy to have their help, he also enjoyed their company, especially on the long winter nights when it was so cold out that he did not like to go visiting. They would just sit around the fire and talk, or sometimes they would play a game of checkers or cards. Henry had never learned to read, and he felt that he had too much to do on the farm to take the time to attend the night school that was held in the settlement. He especially enjoyed having Robert or William read to him from the newspaper. They had

learned to read when they were youngsters in Ireland, and had started to bring home the Chatham Daily Planet when they went to Chatham. Henry had enjoyed it so much that one day while he was in Chatham; he had purchased a subscription

to the "Provincial Freeman". Mary Ann and Isaac Shadd printed this anti-slavery newspaper in Chatham. Their parents Abraham and Harriet Shadd lived just northwest of the settlement. Henry had seen them many times in Buxton, and knew some of their children, especially young Abe, whom Henry knew quite well. Henry especially enjoyed hearing Robert read their articles about what the abolitionists in both Canada and the United States were doing to fight against slavery. Sometimes they put in articles about the Buxton Settlement or the Dawn Settlement, which was out near



Dresden on the other side of Chatham. Henry had met Mary Ann at an Emancipation Day Celebration in Chatham where her father was speaking, and he thought she was a real spitfire with all her accusations against people like Edwin Larwill, who were not friends to his people, and sometimes even about the behaviour of the new fugitives when she did not approve.



Henry often found out about news in the settlement, like when Josiah Gates and Pastor Thomas Stringer dissolved their partnership in merchandising; people were told that all debts had to be paid to Pastor Stringer. He had learned this by hearing Robert read about it in the Provincial Freeman. He had to make the trip to the post office up at Buxton Square every week to get the new copy of the Freeman, but it was well worth the trip, to hear Robert or William read the news from the United States, and from his own community.

Last year, Henry had learned about the new doctor who settled in Buxton, when he listened to Robert reading about Dr. Brazier in the Provincial Freeman. Henry was in good health and had not yet visited him, but he knew that many people had been overjoyed when Dr Brazier settled in Buxton. He had been more interested in the ad about Mr. Thomas Scott's new building where he was manufacturing boots, and about the second blacksmith shop down nearer to the northern end of the settlement when Mr. Carter came to town. Now he could get new shoes for his horses there or at Mr. Brodie's shop near Buxton Square, depending on which way he was traveling. He knew that Mr. West's advertisement in the Provincial Freeman had brought several more paying guests to his hotel when they came to explore the Buxton Settlement, to see how the fugitives were faring in freedom. It seemed as if many people were interested in the settlement, and Henry always felt he had to work harder and do better than

his white neighbours so that he would not let his own people down.

Henry, with William and Robert's help had taken off his wheat and oats during the summer months after it ripened. After they had cut, gathered, and tied the sheaves of wheat and oats, they had taken it out near the barn and had flailed it. They did not yet have a thresher. The wind had blown away the chaff, and he took the grain to the mill to be ground. Henry had received a good price for his crop, but had saved enough grain for planting in the spring, and enough of the ground wheat for flour for his own use for the next year. He had kept some of the oats for feed for his animals. He now had a horse, a pair of oxen, two cows and a calf, five pigs, and flocks of chickens, ducks and geese. Feeding the animals took a lot of grain, and was a lot of work for Henry, but it was worth it for the meat, milk, eggs, labour and transportation they provided, and Henry could sell some of his pork at the market in Chatham. The work was much easier now that William and Robert were working along with him. It had been a good summer, and Henry had grown a good crop of hay. The three men had cut it this summer, and piled the hay in the field to dry. After it was dry, they used his oxen and a wagon to pick up the hay and take it to the barn to be stored. The hay would be used to feed his horse, cows, and oxen. Henry had kept the straw from the wheat and oats for bedding for his animals during the winter.

Henry had grown a good crop of potatoes. He dug them up near the end of the summer, and had been pleased with his crop. Some of his neighbour's children had helped Henry to gather and clean them. He had prepared some of them to be stored over the winter, and had taken the rest of them to the market in Chatham to be sold.



The men had harvested the buckwheat earlier that fall. Henry had planted a small area in buckwheat for two reasons. First, by the time he had gotten to that part of his farm, it was too late in the season to plant other crops, and since buckwheat ripened rather quickly, Henry knew that it would still have time to ripen. As well, Henry knew that the white flowers that came before the seeds depended on bees to pollinate the plant. Henry had been lucky enough in other years to harvest the honey made by the bees. He had been lucky enough to gather the honey again this year. He had shared it with his neighbours on his road, and he was looking forward to the pies and cakes he knew the women would make with that honey, and which he knew they would share with him and his friends. Henry took some of the grain to the mill to be ground into buckwheat flour. He would especially like buckwheat pancakes with some of that honey on them for breakfast on a cold winter morning. On top of that, Henry was able to use the straw for bedding his animals and the rest of the grain to feed to his livestock.

After harvesting the buckwheat, the men had started to gather the tobacco leaves. Henry did not enjoy growing tobacco. Even though it was a good cash crop, he thought it was too much work. It had to be cared for all summer, and they had to make sure that it was not being eaten by the tobacco worm. Once it was cut, it had to be hung upside down to dry. Henry had decided that since his farm was paid for, he would not grow any tobacco next year. Henry and the other men would use some of the tobacco in their pipes after it had been dried and chopped up, but he would sell most of it. Henry, William and Robert would not miss all the work of growing the tobacco next year. Henry and the other two men had just finished digging the turnips. After the mud dried up on them, they



Corn husker



would have the neighbourhood children come and help them throw them into the wagon. They would store enough of them in their root cellar to use through the winter and spring, and then Henry would take the rest of them to Chatham to be sold. One day soon, they would stop and take in the turnips. They had to get them in before the frost hit them.

Starting early next week, Henry, William and Robert would start to harvest the corn. They would cut the stocks, gather them together, and bundle them in stooks, so that they would stand in the field. After all the corn was cut and stooked, they would gather it in the wagon and take it to the barn. There they would take all the ears off the stocks. The ears of corn would have to be husked. Henry planned to hire some of the young boys who lived in the

neighbourhood to help with husking the corn. He would save some of the husks to make cornhusk dolls for the little girls in the neighbourhood. He had promised the Malone, Jones and Stone children to make some dolls for them again this year.

After it was husked, the corn would be shelled. Henry had a small apparatus he used to help husk the corn, and a larger one with a wooden box attached to it to help with shelling the corn. Once the corn was shelled, it could be ground into corn meal.

Some of the settlers ground their own corn, but Henry did not grind his grain. He took it to the mill, just a couple of miles away, and had it ground there. He sold most of the corn before it was ground, but saved some to feed to his pigs and poultry. He saved some for seed for next year. The stocks and the husks were used to feed the animals, and some of the corncobs were used for bedding for the animals.

Some shelled corn was used to make a dish called hominy. Henry always made a large batch of hominy, because he liked it so much. To make the hominy,



he boiled the hardened corn in lye water, which loosened the outer part of the shell of corn. Henry was then able to take off the outer shell. When it was peeled off, it left the white centre. Henry thought this part of the corn was delicious. He usually took enough of it over to Caroline Jordan so that she could preserve some for him and some for her own family. Sometimes Henry made a dish with the hominy, green peppers, sour cream and cheese. Sometimes he used it with cornmeal, flour, and molasses or honey to make bread.

What he liked best was the rock stew made with hominy. He had learned this old, old recipe from some of his friends in the Huron tribe. They lived just a few miles away, near the edge of the settlement. He often met them when he was out hunting, and they would sometimes come back to his cabin with him and stay for a meal. When they made rock soup, they would put three or four smooth clean rocks in the water and boil it before they added the hominy and other vegetables. After the soup had cooked, they took out the rocks, cleaned them, and put them away to use again at another time. Henry had learned this method of making soup when one of his friends came to visit, and he was getting ready to make a pot of soup. He had made all of his soup this way ever since.

Tomorrow, Henry and the Black brothers were going to take the day off. Some of his neighbours on Prince Albert Street, or the Tenth Concession as it was more commonly known, were getting together to make apple cider and apple butter. The



settlers often gathered for "bees" and visited while they worked together. This time the bee would be held at the farm of Joseph and Julia Laison. Joseph and Julia lived on the Tenth, west of the Centre Road, next door to Daniel Duckett. The men would stop work early today and load up the wagon with their apples, kettle, crocks and jugs. Henry was ready to take a day off from his hard labour in the fields. He was looking forward to a relaxing and fun day with his friends and neighbours.

Fall 1859 Making Apple Butter

Henry, Robert and William awoke early the next morning, even before the rooster crowed. As soon as they had washed up and dressed, they headed out to the barn to hitch up the wagon. They did not stop for breakfast, because they knew the women would prepare breakfast for everyone, and that they would all eat together shortly after five o'clock. They had already loaded the wagon, so as soon as the horse was hitched up they left.



Some of their neighbours had already taken home their cider and apple butter the last time they had an apple butter making day. That day, James Points, Amir Scipio, the Malones, the Grays, and the Jones family had taken the apples and brought home preserves. Today it would be Henry, the Jordans, the Richardson family and the Laisons who would bring the apples and take home the preserves. The rest of the families, the Goodsons, Scotts, Washingtons and Daniel Duckett, would have the next turn. Most of his neighbours who were not bringing apples were walking to the Laison farm, but Henry stopped to pick up Sally Gray who was now seventy-six years old. Even though it was less than two miles to the Laison farm, Henry who always thought of his mother when he was with Sally Gray, hated to see her walk when he could give her a ride. Sally, whose daughter Catherine was still living in slavery in Kentucky, loved to look after two year old Sarah Jones and Malseny Malone. Maria Malone had a new baby boy, Isaac, and Emily Jones was expecting to have her baby in the next few weeks, but they went with their

families to the apple butter making, because they did not want to miss the fun, and they knew that everyone's help would be needed at some time during the day.

Everyone brought some food to help with the meals that would be served during the day. Henry brought some pork sausage, eggs, potatoes, carrots and a chicken. The pork sausage and eggs would be cooked for breakfast and the rest for lunch or dinner. It would take all day and into the evening before the apple butter was finished and put up. The ladies of the neighbourhood would have a busy day keeping up with the apples and with making the meals, but they looked forward to working together, and enjoying each other's company.

As Henry and his friends arrived, the Laison's yard was a beehive of activity. John Jordan and Benjamin Richardson had arrived ahead of Henry and were unloading their wagons. Peter Gray was helping Joseph Laison to cut and split wood that would be needed to keep the fires going. Henry unhitched his horse from the wagon and took him to the pasture with the other animals. Robert began to unload Henry's wagon while William went to join Isaac Malone who was preparing to set one of the huge kettles on the tripod so that the fire could be started under it.



Some of the young girls helped Sally Gray take Henry's food, along with her own to the house, where she would help the ladies cook breakfast for the crew. Julia Laison and her daughter Julia were busy at the hearth cooking biscuits, while other women were busy cooking in heavy skillets over an open fire in the yard. There was a pot of fresh, steaming, hot coffee hanging on the tripod above their fire. Henry and the other men could smell

the food cooking and were anxious for the women to call them to eat. It was so early that some of the children had curled up on the ground near the fire, and were sleeping. The younger ones had been taken into the house, and most were sleeping soundly on the floor in Juliann Laison's front room.

All of the neighbours had arrived, the apples had been unloaded, and the cider mill was set up and ready to be used. All of the men set about working on getting the apples moved, some near the cider mill and others up nearer to the house so they could be peeled, cored, and quartered. They would be making the apple butter in four large kettles. Two pots were hung over sturdy ten-foot poles. They were supported on each end by forked props, and held by a tripod of heavy iron. Two others sat on an iron stand. Each pot was at least a foot above the wood, which the men would soon light. Those fires would be burning for many hours



today.

Breakfast was every bit as good as Henry had thought it would be. They had bacon, sausage and ham sliced thick and fried in a heavy skillet, hominy grits boiled over the open fire, scrambled eggs, fried potatoes with onions and peppers cut up into them, and biscuits with preserves that the women had brought from their cold cellars. There was coffee for the adults and lots of fresh





milk for the children. Most of the neighbours brought their own tin plates, forks, knives and cups, to these gatherings because they knew most families did not have enough for all the people who would be eating.

After breakfast, Sarah Jordan, Hannah Scipio, Mary and Minerva Washington and Elmira Malone who were the oldest girls, got busy cleaning up the dishes and the cooking utensils, while some of the women began the job of peeling, coring and dicing apples. The other women went to

make sure their babies and young children had eaten properly, were cleaned up and ready for the younger girls to look after them. Seven year old Juliann Washington would watch her little brother James while their mother fed little baby Victoria. Eight-year-old Hannah Goodson would keep an eye on her little neighbour, two year old Robert Scott while Eunice Scott took care of her baby Henry's needs.

Some of the men set about starting the fires under the kettles while the others headed toward the cider press. They would need to press about twenty bushels of apples to make twenty gallons of apple butter. Since there were four families taking home the preserves today, they would need to press about eighty bushels of apples just for the apple butter. They would press another twenty bushels so that each could take home ten or twelve gallons of apple cider. The families would use some of this to drink. More would be left to age so that it would turn into vinegar. The vinegar would be used in some of their other preserves, in cooking, in the rinse water to brighten their clothes, as a medicine, and some people added it to their drinking water in hot weather to make a cooling drink. They would need another eight or ten bushels to be peeled, cored and quartered. These

would be added to the cooking cider, once it had cook down to half. The women had already started on this task, and the older girls would join them once they finished clean up.

First, the apples had to be washed. The boys had been given this job. They knew that it was important to get the apples very clean, or the cider and apple butter would spoil. Robert Malone, James Jones, William Moore and Moses Scott had been given this job. They carried water in buckets from the well, filling the washtubs. They then put the apples into the tub, washed them and put them back into the bushel baskets.



The apples were then carried to the women, older boys and men.

John Jones who was seventeen and fifteen year old Amariah Scipio were as strong as any of the other men and were helping them. The cider press was a large wooden apparatus. It had been placed up on a platform that was open in the centre. Henry and the other men used large knives and a chopping board to cut the apples into smaller pieces so they could be ground up easily. They were then poured into the top of the cider press. The board, which

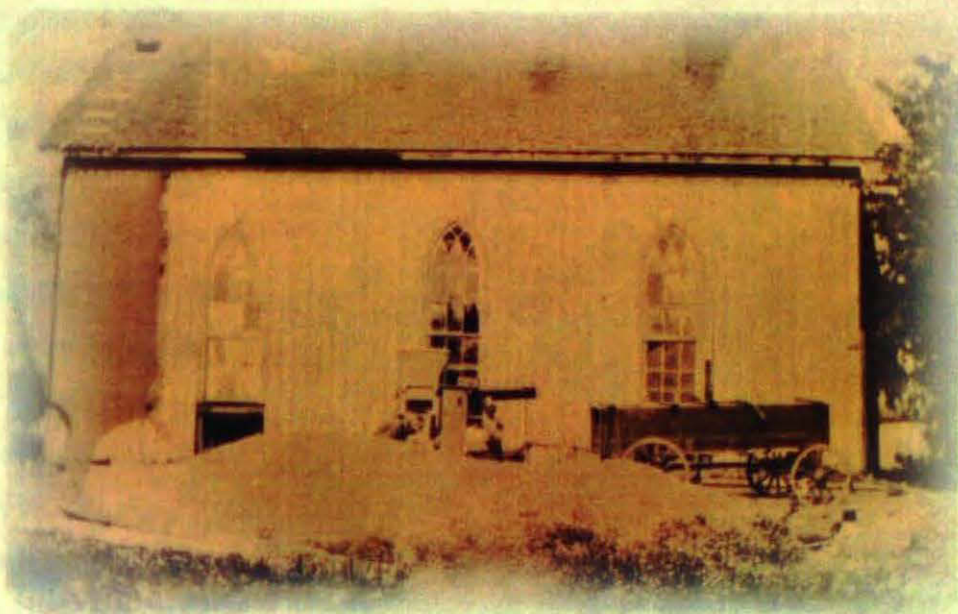
covered the apples as they were being pressed, was then lowered. One man worked on each end of the top bar of the press, turning it around. As they turned, the board went deeper and deeper into the press, and the apples were squeezed between the top board and the bottom of the press. As they were squeezed, the apples became pulp. The juice was squeezed out, and was collected in a barrel placed under the press. When the barrel was filled with apple cider, the men would carry it over and pour it into one of the kettles. The pulp was saved in a barrel, some of it would be fed to the pigs, some would have water and honey or molasses added to it and would be pressed again for a sweeter drink.

Once the kettles were heated, they had to be stirred constantly. To stir the pots they used long handled paddles that had to be as long as the kettle was deep. The paddle had large holes drilled into it that allowed the pulp to flow through the paddle, and helped to keep it moving. Sometimes cornhusks were tied to the paddle to help scrape the bottom of the kettle, to keep the mixture from sticking. It was important to keep the mixture moving, or it would stick and burn in the kettle. The paddle had a long handle so that the person stirring could stand back away from the fire. The men and boys, and sometimes the women and older girls took turns stirring the kettles. The mixture was cooking over a small, slow fire. The cooking would take at least ten hours after it started to boil, and all four pots had to be stirred that whole time. It was tiring work. However, having the whole neighbourhood working together made it feel more like a party than work.

After the women had started peeling the apples,



Juliann Laison and Sarah Gray returned to the house to get back to the cooking. They seasoned, tied up a large piece of venison, and put it on the spit over the fire in the fireplace. It was



put into its place on the trammel, where it would be turned occasionally and cooked slowly throughout the day. They washed potatoes and prepared them so that later in the day, they could be placed in the coals of the fire to cook. They peeled and sliced a large pot of carrots and turnips and left them to sit until it was time for them to be placed on the lid of Juliann's new cooking stove. Then they both began to mix dough to make bread. It would be set beside the fireplace to warm so that the dough would rise. Later today, they would form it into loaves, and bake it in the oven in Julia's wood stove. The other ladies had brought pies and cakes for dessert and cookies and doughnuts for mid morning and afternoon snacks. They would all enjoy them with some of the fresh apple cider.

Joseph and Juliann Laison had one of the nicest homes in Buxton. Joseph, Juliann, and their daughter had been slaves in Kentucky. When their daughter was four years old, they had escaped to Indiana where they lived for many years. They had a lot of property there in Indiana, but when the Fugitive Slave Law was passed, they were afraid to stay there, so they sold everything, loaded all their belongings in a wagon and came to find true freedom in Buxton. They started in the settlement with some money so they had made progress more quickly than many of the people. They had a nice home with more furnishings than many people had, including a beautiful new couch and rocking chair they had ordered from the United States. Their daughter Juliann Munroe lived next door to them

with her young daughter Lucinda. Juliann had lost her husband John a year ago, and she was glad to be living near her parents, who were getting older. Juliann Laison was a midwife. She helped at most of the births in the community. She was happy to be able to teach her trade to her daughter. Both mother and daughter had been with Eunice Scott when her baby Henry had been born and with Maria Malone when her baby Isaac was born a few months ago. They expected that Emily Jones



would have her baby within the next few weeks. There were so many young children in Buxton, and many of the young mothers named their new daughters Juliann after the midwife. After they had finished their preparations, Sally Gray went to see how the mothers and babies were doing, while Juliann Laison sat on the front steps with her handwork. She would stay nearby so she could tend to the meat that was cooking in the fireplace, and the bread that was still rising. Soon she and Sally would stop and set out the morning snack, and then they would prepare sandwiches, fruit and cookies for their family and neighbour's lunch. Some of the other women who would be finished peeling apple in the afternoon would come and help them with the rest of lunch and dinner preparations. The older girls would make sure all the jars and crocks were washed and prepared for the apple cider and apple butter when it was finished.

It would be a long day, but the men and women would have the chance to talk about what was happening in Buxton. Juliann and Joseph were members of St. Andrews Church. Joseph had been named one of the elders after they closed the Mission Church and built the new building. Their new church was now called St. Andrews Presbyterian Church. They were all so proud to have their own church, and to know that they no longer needed the help of other churches to keep their

church going and pay Rev. King a salary. Only a few of Juliann's neighbours attended St. Andrews, and she wanted to tell them all about how they were fixing up the inside of the church. All of them had helped with the building of St. Andrews, just as they had helped to build the buildings for the Baptist and the Methodist churches. Juliann knew they would be interested in how things were going. The women also liked to talk about the way things were going in the schools. They were now paying their own teachers, and felt that they had more voice in what was happening in the schools of the settlement.

As the men worked, they talked about how the new drainage ditches were coming. Money had been allotted by the government of Canada West for better drainage in the settlement last year. Many of them had helped with some part of that new drainage. They were looking forward to better drainage for next year's crop. That would help them to get into the fields earlier. It would also help prevent the rotting of their potato crops, which had been a problem last year. It would also help with the water standing in their fields after a heavy rain, and the rust that had plagued their crops last year. They also talked about their schedule for getting together to butcher some of their hogs in the next couple of weeks. Three or four of the men would work together to butcher, hang the meat, cut it up and salt it for curing. Of course, the women would also help with the salting and preserving of the meat.



The older boys and girls were enjoying their time together as well, as they took their turns with the pressing, stirring, peeling, clean up and other work. Now that the settlement had one school for boys and another for girls, they did not see each other as often as they had before.

They looked forward to these gatherings, and the concerts and programs, debates, picnics and suppers held at the schools and at the churches. They passed along all the news they had heard from James Rapier, the Riley boys, and Anderson Abbott who had gone on to study at the University in Toronto. They also wanted to find out how the others who had left Buxton and gone to other small communities to teach in the schools were doing.

The younger children were enjoying looking out for the toddlers, while they ran errands for the adults, and played with their friends. When the time came to feed the animals

and the poultry, the young children volunteered to help. They gathered the eggs for the Laisons, and carried the wood and water into the house as it was needed.

The apple butter thickened as it cooked, filling the air with a mouth-watering aroma. Finally, when they tested the apple butter, it did not drip from the paddle when it was lifted above the slowly cooking fruit in the kettle. The cooking was done. The women added spices; cinnamon, cloves and sassafras, and now all that remained was to ladle the apple butter into crocks and jars and cover it with paper. Henry, the Jordans, and the Richardsons could now take their apple butter home and the Laisons could carry their preserves to the attic to be stored. The cider had already been put into a barrel for each family and loaded on the wagons. It had been a long, busy day. The neighbours had all enjoyed the work, and the fun, but they were tired now, and they all said their good byes and taking their lit lanterns headed for home along the dark roads.



Summer 1861 The New School

Henry stood back with the other men and looked at the building. They had finally finished. They had spent several months building the new school on the Centre Road between the Eighth and the Ninth Concessions. It had taken two petitions to get the Township Council to agree to build a new school in the settlement. There were two schools up at Buxton Square. One was for the girls and one was for the boys. These schools were the pride of the settlers, and some were afraid that changing the boundaries to build a new school would not be good for their school system. In the girls' school, they were taught the regular courses, and were taught music and homemaking skills as well. At the school for the boys, the classics, Latin and Greek and the higher levels of mathematics were taught. Students attending there were prepared to go on to a higher education at the university in Toronto.

By July, a petition had been prepared and presented to Raleigh Township Council asking for a new school at the northern end of the settlement. Abraham Shadd who had come to Buxton from Pennsylvania, and Thomas Stringer, the preacher at the Methodist church, had been elected to the Township council, and made a

motion that the council consider this petition. By the next council meeting Robert Van Vrankin and forty other settlers, had put together a petition to the



Thomas Stringer



Abraham D. Shadd

council letting them know that they did not want the new school. However, Pastor Stringer and Abraham Shadd were determined to have the new school for the settlement, and made a motion that the new school be established. When the voting was finished, it had been decided to start the new school in Buxton.

Henry knew that his neighbours supported the new school, even though their children did not have as far to go to school as those who lived down at the far end of the settlement. They had many friends whose children missed many days during the bad weather, because it was such a long ways to go to get to school. They were happy that the new school would be built, and would send their children there when it was finished.

Henry had spent many days with his neighbours that summer and fall building the new school. It had one large classroom, and two cloakrooms, one for the boys and one for the girls. By Christmas, Henry and the other men had finished building the school, and had gone back to the Township with another petition, asking to borrow forty dollars so that they could furnish the school with desks and benches. The Township had loaned the people of Buxton the money and the school was able to open in January.

It had been an exciting year for Henry. In January, eleven of the southern states had left the Union. They had been upset when Abraham Lincoln who was against slavery was elected president of the United States. They had formed their own government. Even though President Lincoln told them that he had no plans to end slavery, the new southern government attacked one of the United States forts in South Carolina. This had been enough to start a war between the North and the South in



President Abraham Lincoln

the United States. The people of Buxton knew that this was really a war to end slavery, and wanted to join the north to defeat the south and end slavery for good.

President Lincoln and his government wanted to bring the southern states back into the Union. They did everything they could to make people think that the war was not about slavery, and would not

accept black soldiers to fight with the Union. Henry and his neighbours were so disappointed that they could not go to fight to help their people in slavery. They had spent the year feeling very helpless as they heard of the defeat of the Union army in battle after battle.

Last year Henry had joined with many other young men of the settlement in preparing to go to Africa. Rev. King and some others had formed a group called the African Aid Society. They were preparing to send men from Buxton to Africa to act as pioneers of a Christian Colony that they would start. By the time, the war had started in the United States, Henry and his friends had been ready to be sent out to Africa. The war in the United States had changed all those plans. Henry had been a bit worried about going to live in Africa. It had been hard to start over again in Buxton, and now that he had his farm paid for, and he was doing well, the thought of starting over again in a new country was a bit frightening. Now that the war had started Henry and his neighbours thought, it would not be long before slavery would be ended, and they dropped their plans for the new settlements in Africa. They all hoped that soon black soldiers would be welcomed, so the men, who had prepared to go to Africa, started to prepare to go to fight for the liberty of their



people instead. Henry and the other young men joined the Buxton Militia, and began learning and practicing to join the Union army when the opportunity came. Henry had been a sailor and if he had the opportunity to fight, he would join one of the naval units.

The past summer had been one of the hardest since Henry had come to Buxton. There had been more rain than usual, and many crops had been lost to water damage. William Parker had lost his entire crop. He had come to Buxton several years before after escaping from Christiana Pennsylvania. William and two other men, Abraham Johnston and Alexander Pinckney, had been involved in an incident where a slave master from Maryland had come to try to recapture his runaway slave. The men of the neighbourhood had decided that they would not allow the fugitive to be captured and had put up a fight. In the gun battle that followed, the slave master had been killed. William, Abraham and Alexander had escaped, and with the help of some friends on the Underground Railroad, made their way to Buxton. They all had bought property and were now raising their families in freedom. William Parker had even been elected to the Raleigh Township council. This had not been a prosperous year for many of the settlers. The problem was that some of the land was not yet drained, and the water did not run off as

well as it should have in the drained areas. As well, the farmers had to deal with worms, hail and early frost. Henry had been luckier than most. Because he had Robert and William to help him, he had gotten his crops in early. He had lost some of his potatoes to rot, and his buckwheat was a failure, but the rest of his crops had been good. He, Robert and William had even been able

THE
Buxton Savings Bank,
IN CONNECTION WITH
THE ELGIN SETTLEMENTS.
OPEN every TUESDAY and FRIDAY Evening
From Six to Seven o'Clock.
Sums of 10 Cents and upwards received.

to take jobs away from the farm. He had spent a few days working for John Roe, who owned the farm just behind him. The money he had made would come in handy during the winter. Henry had put all his extra money in the Buxton Savings Bank. It would be used as needed next year for the help he got on the farm.

William Black had decided to leave Henry's house and had found work closer to Chatham. Robert decided to stay and work with Henry for another year. He had met a young woman in the neighbourhood whom he liked and with whom he wanted to spend more time. William had taken an interest in the Native people who were camped in the woods on the way to Chatham. He had visited them quite often. There were about thirty men in the camp with their families. They were living in their teepees, which were set up in a circle. William enjoyed hunting for deer, turkey and pheasants with the men, and often stayed overnight rolled up in a blanket on the ground in the middle of the teepee near the fire. William had decided to spend more time with his friends in the bush, so had left Henry's home. Henry had also made many friends in the tribe. He had learned a lot from them. He often used some of the remedies he had learned while visiting his friends in the bush. He knew that to cure an earache, you could roast a small onion, take the outside off until the centre would go into your ear. You had to put it in as hot as you could stand it. He



knew that you could chew honeysuckle leaves and then put them on a bee sting to take away the sting. This was a new remedy for Henry. When he had been in the south, they had used a wet tobacco leaf to take away the sting. He knew how to use many

herbs for healing, some taken directly, some mixed with other beverages or food, and some taken as tea. Most of the settlers knew how to get rid of a cough with wild cherry bark, relieve pain with white willow bark and get rid of heartburn with a tea made from dandelion



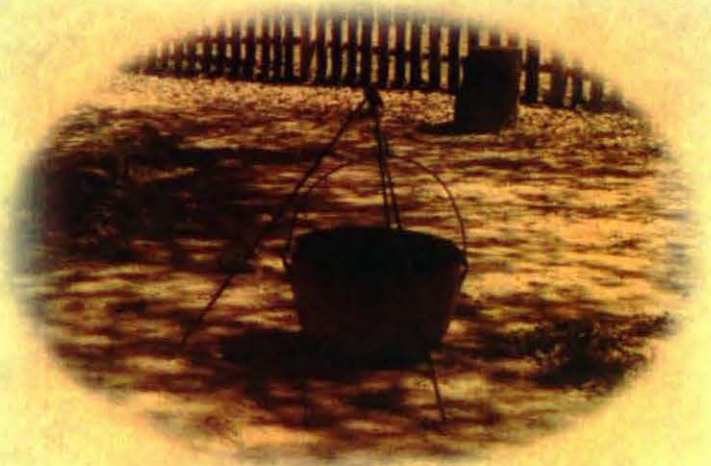
roots, but Henry had learned from his friends in the bush how to boil the inner bark of dogwood in water and use the tea to get rid of a fever.

Henry had learned a new remedy for burns when his neighbour across the road was doing her wash this past summer. Henry knew that washing in the summer was a very hot job. He always had sweat pouring down his face, and his shirt became soaked when he did his wash during the summer months. Most people took the washtub outside during the summer so that they could at least get a breeze.

Caroline and John's daughter Sarah had been stirring the boiling tub with a heavy stick. The tub had been sitting over a fire and Sarah had been careful to keep her skirts away from the fire. She had left the clothing to sit in the hot water for a while she helped her mother hang up the clothes from the last load on the clothesline that had been strung between two trees. It had taken longer than she had planned because Henry had come over for a visit and they were all chatting. When Sarah went back to wring out the clothes so that she could put them in the rinse water, she put her hand into the tub without testing the water and had burned her hand.

Usually when Henry had a burn like that, he had put a rag dipped into cold milk on the burn to take away the sting. Caroline Jordan went into the house and

got some raw eggs. She took the egg whites and spread them over her daughter's burn until it hardened white, then slowly rolled it off. She had told Henry that if it did not make the burn stop stinging she would have had to do it again, but for Sarah's burn, it worked the first time. Sarah had not kept a scar from that burn. Henry would remember to try that if he burned himself badly again.



Henry thought about the many times he had passed by the Malone farm and seen Maria out in the yard doing the family wash. She had several small children and they were usually right out there with her while she worked. Her baby Zemeniah was just months old and she had a two-year-old son Isaac, and three young daughters Malseny, Susan and Mahala. He knew that even though the older



children, fourteen year old Robert and twelve year old Elmira were a big help, their parents did not keep them out of school to help unless it was planting or harvest time, and then only if it was absolutely necessary. Henry thought that it must be a real worry to Maria and

Isaac keeping the little ones safe while they worked. He knew that it would not take but a minute for one of those young ones to fall right into one of those hot wash tubs. Maria could not take her eyes off them for a minute.

Henry had stayed and helped Caroline finish with wringing out the clothes, and rinsing them. Sarah had not been able to

put her burned hand back into the hot water and could not help her mother. Caroline reminded her daughter that she should have removed the clothes with the stick rather than her hand, and just put them into the second tub of water for rinsing. She did not usually wring out her clothes between the wash and the rinse. Her husband John's shirt had not come as clean as Caroline liked, so she took some of her lye soap, and rubbed it on the stains that had not come out. Then she rubbed the shirt on the ridges of the washboard until the stain disappeared. Wash day was hard work for the women, but Henry enjoyed washday at his house. He enjoyed having his hands in the hot soapy water.

Henry washed clothes so often, and used so much soap on his clothes, that he had to make more soap than most of his neighbours. He usually made his soap during the fall and winter months. He used his ash hopper to collect the lye he needed for making the soap. He collected all the fat and scraps of meat in crocks and kept them in the root cellar where it was cool until it was time to make the soap. To make the soap, he put the lye and fat into a large kettle that he had hanging from a tripod in his back yard. He made a fire under it and boiled it until it was thick like soup. After it had cooled some he poured it into a flat container to cool some more. He cut it into squares and let it dry. Sometimes he



had to boil it a second time and add more lye to the mixture. He always made enough soap to last him until the next year.

As Henry returned home from the new schoolhouse, he waved to his neighbours as he passed by. Abigail Doo was out on the front



porch of her home. She had just finished churning her cream into butter and was pouring off the buttermilk into a container to take into the house. Henry knew all about making butter. It was one of his favourite chores around his house. He always scalded his churn and dasher to clean them before he used them, and then rinsed them with cold water to cool them down. It always amazed him to see the smooth white cream turn into butter. He knew that when the cream was put into the cool churn, you had to churn fast at first, and then as the butter started to form you churned more slowly. When his butter had come, he took it up with a wooden ladle, and drained off all the liquid. After his butter had set for about an hour to harden up some, Henry usually just sprinkled salt over it. He used about a tablespoon of salt for a pound of butter. He worked the salt into the butter and smoothed it into a ball. Henry knew that most of the women put it into butter molds or prints, but Henry did not have a wife to do all the extra things. Henry and Robert both liked the taste of the buttermilk that was left over, and drank it with many of their meals. Caroline Jordan and Sally Gray used some of their buttermilk to make biscuits, and often sent Henry and Robert over a fresh batch of buttermilk biscuits at suppertime.

Henry waved to Abigail, and then hurried on his way. There was to be a meeting tonight at the new school to talk about hiring a teacher. Henry did not want to miss the meeting, but he had to do his chores and have his supper first. Robert had gone home earlier to start the chores and heat up the stew they would have for supper. Henry was surely getting hungry, and he hurried on his way.

Winter 1861-62 The Children of Buxton



Christmas was over. Henry, Robert and James along with James' brother Edward who had recently come to Buxton, and lived up near the school, had enjoyed a beautiful Christmas meal with the Grays. Sally had cooked a wonderful meal of roasted goose with cornbread dressing, venison, and pheasant. For vegetables, they served potatoes with gravy, turnips, carrots, sweet potatoes, hog jowl and turnip greens from the greens Sally had preserved

hominy grits and beans baked with molasses. They had eaten lots of fresh baked bread and corn bread with freshly churned butter and apple preserves. For desert they had apple pie made with dried apples, mincemeat pies, molasses cake and bread pudding.

Sally did not have a cook stove like Juliann Laison, and had cooked the whole meal in her fireplace. In her fireplace a cheerful fire was roaring. She had hung on the walls garlands of dried apples, onions and corn. and hanging from the ceiling in the open loft, the men could see crook-necked squash, smoked hams, and dried venison from the deer Peter had shot in the fall. Sally had roasted potatoes in the coals in the fireplace, and had boiled the other vegetables in her big old pots that swung on the cranes over the coals. She had used heavy iron skillets with big, thick, tight-fitting lids, cast iron Dutch ovens, and long handled frying pans to cook the rest of the meal. She even baked her pies in the fireplace, in the heavy Dutch ovens. Sally was a good cook. She had spent many hours cooking for her master's family back on the plantation in Tennessee. They had drunk the last of the apple cider with the meal, and large cool glasses of

fresh buttermilk with their dessert.

After dinner Henry, Robert, James and Edward had gone home to stoke up the fires so that they would keep burning for the rest of the day, and then they had gone to visit several of their other neighbours. They had enjoyed more pie, eggnog, and some ginger cake and molasses taffy. Henry had really liked listening to all the children talk about what they got in their stockings. The children were very excited about the oranges and the hard candy. They were both very special treats. Some of them got a new scarf, and some new mittens that their mothers had knit. The Jones children had gathered all the neck bones left from their Christmas dinner, and their mother, Emily Jones was soaking them in lye water to clean them and make them white. They would use them later after they had cleaned and dried them, to play a game of knuckles. To play the game, they would throw the bones on the floor, then throw a stone in the air, and try to pick up the bones, and then catch the stone before it hit the floor. Two of the younger children,



Foot warmer



six-year-old Peter and eight-year-old Martha wanted to have their own set of knuckles when they started at the new school after the Christmas holiday. Henry took a special gift of a new cornhusk doll to each of the little girls, and a whistle he had whittled from wood to each little boy.

Early in the afternoon, Robert had left, and gone to visit with Rev. King. His family had come from the same town in Ireland as

the King family. Robert's family was spending the day with the Kings and then Henry would travel home with them. Robert would be gone for the rest of the week. There had been a fresh new snowfall last night, and they already had a heavy covering of snow. Henry did not have a cutter, so he and his friends were traveling in



the bob sleigh that Henry usually used to carry logs. His horse was able to pull the sleigh, but Henry did not want to travel any distance today because he had not brought along the blankets and the foot warmer to help them keep warm while they were traveling.

Henry, James and Edward returned home before dark so that they could feed the animals, and bring in the wood they needed before dark. Henry had not been feeling well for a few days, so after sitting for a while beside the roaring fire, he put out the candles and went to bed. He was coughing more and more all the time, and he was suffering from headaches. He had been drinking tea made from the bark of the willow tree to help with his headaches, and another tea made from the bark of the wild cherry tea to help with his cough, but neither seemed to be getting any better. He decided that if he did not feel better within a couple of days, he would see Doctor Brazier.

After a few days of rest, Henry was feeling better. Robert had returned from his visit to his family. The Christmas holidays had ended and the children had returned to school. It had been a big change for many of the children, because the new school had opened in the northern part of the settlement. It was known as School Section # 13 Raleigh. The school boundary lines had changed so that all the children on the Eighth, Ninth and some on the Tenth were now going to the new school. Some of the parents in the settlement were not happy with this change.

They were afraid that the change in the school that the parents would pay their taxes, to would make it difficult for the schools to maintain the high standards they had always kept in their school. They would be getting less money to pay the teacher, and were afraid that they would not be able to hire as highly qualified teachers as they had been accustomed to hiring. They continued to operate both a school for the boys and a school for the girls in the centre of the settlement. The new school in the north, would house both boys and girls together. This was a big change for the students going to the new school and they did not know how well they would like it, but still, they were excited about going to a brand new school with a brand new teacher.



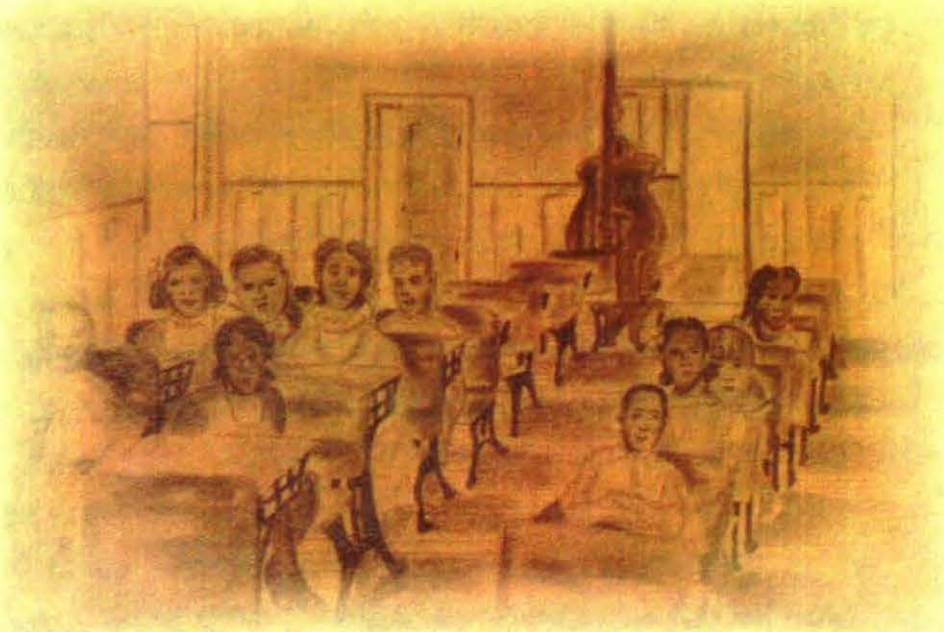
The new teacher was not so new to them, because they had known James



Rapier all their lives. He had grown up and gone to school right here in the Buxton Settlement. He and his brother John had lived with their uncle and aunt, Henry and Maria Thomas. They remembered when John had left and gone to study to become a doctor, and when James had left to attend Knox College in Toronto. He had not gone on to normal school, so he would be teaching with a second-class certificate. James Burfitt, Robert Garrel, Minerva

Jackson, Sarah Jordan, Selena Anthony, Hannah Scipio, were all fifteen and sixteen years old, and they remembered when James had tried to start his own pearl ash business. It had not been such a great success. Now he was back in Buxton and would be their teacher in the new school. They would no longer be able to call him James. Now they would call him Mr. Rapier, and they knew he could discipline them if they did not do as he told them to do. Their parents had warned them that there would be severe consequences at home if they did not obey Mr. Rapier. James was back living with his aunt and uncle, and the older Thomas children, Sarah and Henry were sure glad that he would not be their teacher. They were staying in their old school, and could not imagine having to obey their cousin James. Although Henry's cough was not as bad, it had not gone completely, but he was feeling better after having spent two weeks in the cabin resting. Robert had kept up with the chores, and had gone out to the bush to start to clear more land. He had suggested that Henry stay near the cabin, do the chores and prepare the meals, because he was still not well enough to go out into the bush to do the heavy work of clearing more land.

One evening after Henry finished the chores, and was preparing their evening meal, he had a visit from James Rapier, the new teacher. He had heard that Henry was not well, and had come to see if there was anything, he could do to help. He brought with him a sack with two loaves of his Aunt Maria's fresh baked bread, and a pound cake she had made for Henry that afternoon. Henry was happy to see James. He had not seen James



or any of the children since school had started, and he was anxious to know how things were going at the new school. James told Henry that



he had eighty-two students, and that he had to work hard to stay ahead of them. It was a lot of work for the two hundred twenty eight dollars a year he earned as their teacher, but he enjoyed working with his students. He said that the year before there had been sixty-five children in the school area that were not attending any school, mainly because of the distance to get to the nearest school. He was happy to tell Henry that these children were now enrolled in S.S. # 13 where he taught. He said that he expected to keep the school open all year except for two weeks at Christmas. James said he taught the children arithmetic, grammar, both general and Canadian geography, history and writing. He said that he had a few adult students who were learning to read and write and to do sums, but most of his students were between the ages of five and sixteen.

Henry asked James what he thought of the new building and furnishings. James said that it was a good sturdy building and kept the heat well, once the fire was burning good. He liked the fact that it was bright, because of the three huge windows on each of the side walls. He liked the large double desks that would hold two students, but thought that when they replaced them they should get single desks. He said that sitting so close together, the students did a lot of chatting when they should be working or listening. He was happy with the large chalkboards, and the books that the trustees had been able to purchase, but he hoped that they would soon be able to afford to buy globes, geometrical forms and



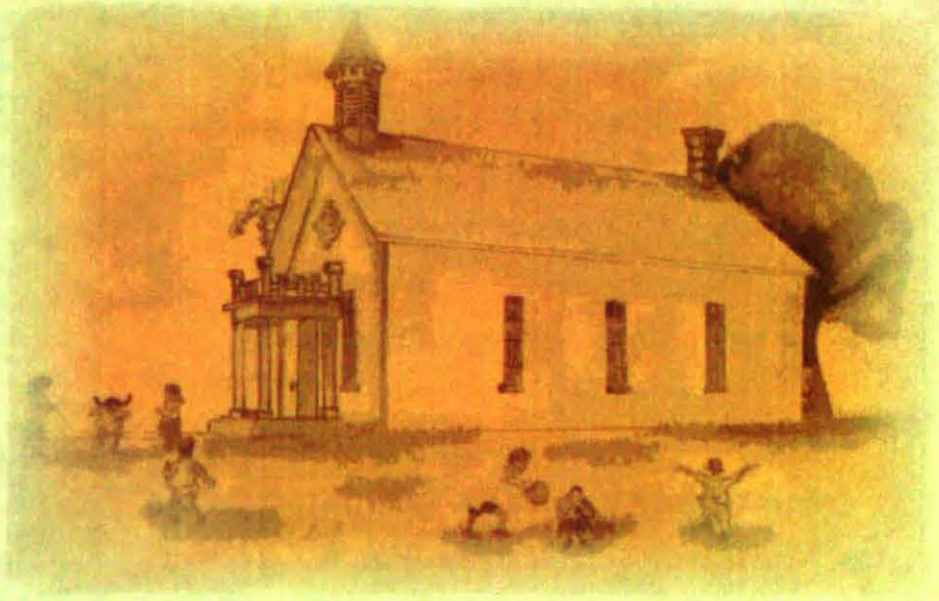
a complete set of school apparatus. He said that he needed these to prepare his students for the public examinations.

Henry asked James how his neighbour Sarah Jordan was doing in school. James said he was really pleased with the way Sarah Jordan and Minerva Jackson,

worked with the younger students when their work was done. They were the oldest girls in the school. Sarah and Minerva who were both sixteen were in their last year. He said the girls were finding this year's schooling much different from what they had been used to. They had gone to the school for girls and had been learning domestic skills like sewing, quilting and knitting. They had also had a music program at their school. James was going to suggest to the trustees that they get Lydia Bond to come in once a week to give music instruction to the children.



Jemima King had taught her to play the piano, and she loved to sing and perform at all the concerts. Lydia had come to Buxton with her parents from West Chester, Pennsylvania, where they had



been free. They had come to Buxton at the same time as Abraham Shadd and his family, and had settled near them on the seventh concession. It would be wonderful for the children if they were able to continue their music lessons that they had started at the settlement school. James also told Henry about how much help the older boys, sixteen year old Robert Garrel and fifteen year old James Burfitt and John Doo, were at the school. They kept the water buckets full, and emptied the waste water after the children had washed their hands in the morning, at lunchtime and at the end of the day. They carried in the wood, and kept the fire blazing in the large stove in the middle of the school. James said he did not know how he would manage to teach the children, make them behave and keep up with all the chores without the help of the older boys and girls. The new school was also a change for the boys. They were not used to having girls in the classroom with them. Some of the boys were shy about speaking in front of the girls, and others liked the new audience. They liked to show off in front of the girls, and sometimes got into trouble because of this. Some of them said they missed hearing some of the children in their studies of Latin and Greek, but none of them missed that long, long walk to the centre of the settlement to go to school.

Attendance was still a problem for some of the boys who had to help their families out on the farm. During the planting and harvest season, attendance was



quite a bit lower than in other seasons. James understood the need for the children to help at home and did not complain about their attendance. He would be holding school for the full year, so it would not be too difficult for the students who missed some days at school to complete the required studies in the time they had. Many of them, who were not able to attend during the day, attended the night classes held at the school. This also helped them to keep up with their classmates who did not have to stay at home to help. When a new baby was born in one of the families, usually the oldest girl would stay at home for a few weeks until her mother was up on her feet and able to keep up with the new baby and all

the other children and household chores. Education was very important to the people who had not been allowed to learn to read and write when they were in slavery. Most of the people in Buxton were anxious that their children get a good education, and did not allow them to be absent from school unless it was necessary.

James told Henry about the debate he would be participating in soon. It was to be held at the school in the evening. The debate would be about *"which have suffered most in Canada— the Indians or the Colored men"*. James, William Harris and Julius Rector would defend the Indian, while William Scott, Peter King and Reverend Moore would defend the Colored man. James was having his students help him put together his defense. Some of them had come up with some very good ideas. He was also planning to have a spring concert just before Easter. His students had already started working on their parts. It would be held in the evening, and they would put a curtain up in front of the teacher's platform so that

the children would have a stage for their performances. They were all very excited about performing for their parents and neighbours. They were also busy preparing for their first public examination in the school. They had not yet had a visit from the school superintendent, but Rev. King and several of the school trustees including Mr. James Steele who was the head trustee, had stopped in for a short visit, and to quiz the students. This would help them prepare for the public examination. It kept the children on their toes.



Henry got a good laugh when James told him about some of the antics of his students. He got a real kick out of the story about ten year old James Garell throwing his friend George Rann's hat down the hole in the outhouse. James had made him stand with his nose against the blackboard for a few minutes, and then made him write out lines and apologize to his friend. He knew that Robert Garrell would have more punishment waiting for James when he got home. The family was going through a difficult time right now because of the death of Robert's wife, and mother of James and his six brothers and sister. James was the youngest, and although James had to punish his student, he was happy to see that young James was beginning to laugh and enjoy himself again after losing his mother.

James and Henry chatted for a long while, about the progress of the Civil War in the United States. Henry had not been able to keep up with his duties with the Buxton Militia since he had become ill, but James said the men were still drilling, in hope that President Lincoln would open up the northern army, allowing black men to join. The war was not going so well for the North. Both Henry and



James knew that allowing black men to bear arms in the struggle to end slavery would make a huge difference to the success of the northern Union army. They prayed that Lincoln would soon announce plans to allow blacks to join the fight. James said that although he enjoyed teaching in Buxton that he would leave to help in the fight to end slavery if he were given the

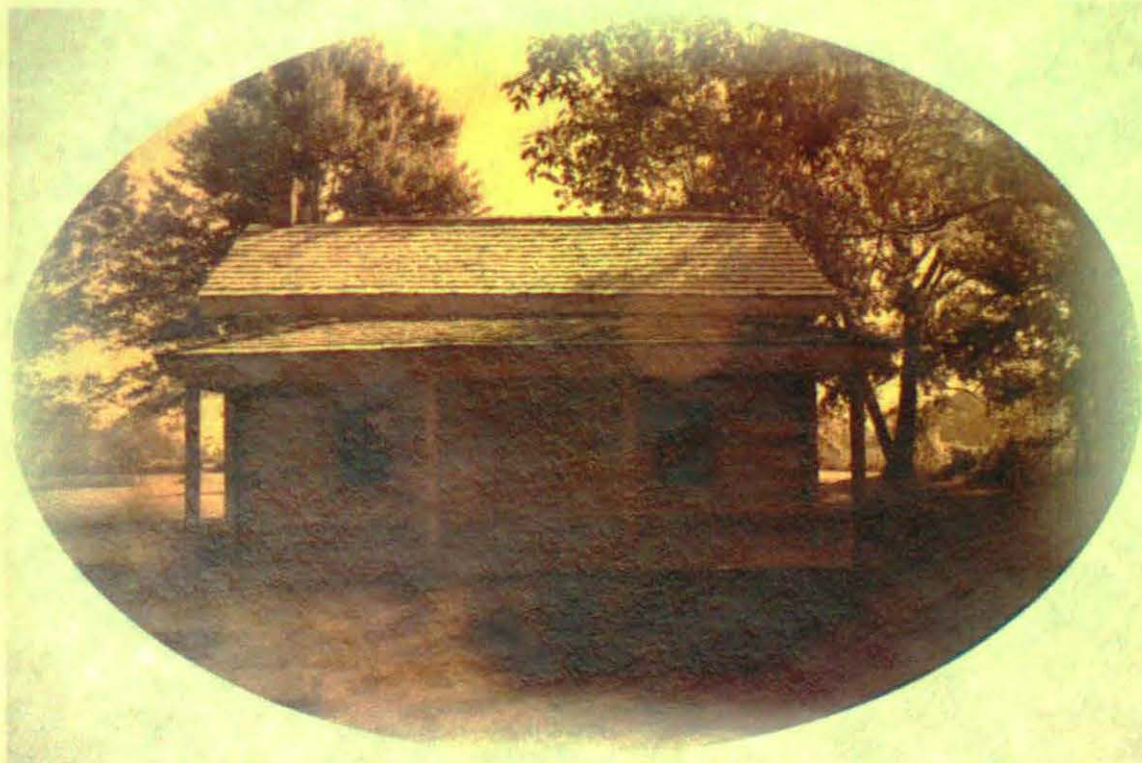
opportunity. He knew that many of the young men of Buxton felt the same way and were preparing for that opportunity.

As James got ready to leave, he mentioned to Henry that he would be going into Chatham to do some shopping on Saturday, and asked if there was anything he could get for Henry. Henry gave James a list of some supplies he needed. He knew that Robert was planning a visit to his family on the weekend and would not be going to Chatham soon. He told James that he was welcome to take his horse and buggy, and asked if he would bring him back a bag of flour, a gallon of molasses, five pounds of rice, and two pounds of tea. James took Henry's money for the items he wanted, and headed to Chatham.

Henry did not know what he would have done without all the good people who were his neighbours in Buxton. He had never really had a family that he knew, because he had been sold away from his mother when he was quite young. He had not had many friends in slavery. Everyone was worked so hard, and had little time for themselves, and he had been sold several times before he had left New Orleans to find freedom. In Buxton, it was like all his neighbours were his family. They all cared about each other and helped each other out when it was

needed. As Henry waved good-bye to James and closed the door of his house, he knew that there was no place on earth he would rather be than in his own house here in Buxton

Henry had heard some of the men talking about going back to the south after the war ended. Henry knew that would still be a while yet. The war was still not going well for the North, and Henry expected that President Lincoln would soon let the men of colour join the fight to give the north a better advantage. However, if he left to help in the war effort, Henry would come back. No! He would not leave the land that had welcomed him. Henry loved the land, and the community. He cared about the people who were now his family, and he had decided long ago that he would not leave this little house that he had built with his own hands, and that had become his home.



2006—The Final Word About Henry's House

Henry was true to his word in that he never left Canada. However, the last evidence we can find of Henry living in his log cabin was in 1861, when he lived there with his friends Robert and William Black. Although Henry still owned the house, Robert Black was listed as living in the cabin in 1866, but Henry is no longer living there. We have found that Henry lived in Harwich later in the 1860's. Henry wrote his will in 1874, in which he left all his belongings to his beloved friend Robert Black. Henry passed away on October 2, 1877 at the age of 48. He had never been married. Henry died of a ruptured blood vessel, after having been unwell for several years. He was living with his friend Robert Black at the time of his death.

Before his death in 1877, Henry sold his property to John and Eliza Anderson for \$2400.00, and bought a strip of land from Robert Black across the road from his home, where his neighbours John and Caroline Jordan had lived.

John and Eliza Anderson later sold the farm to Edward and Isabella



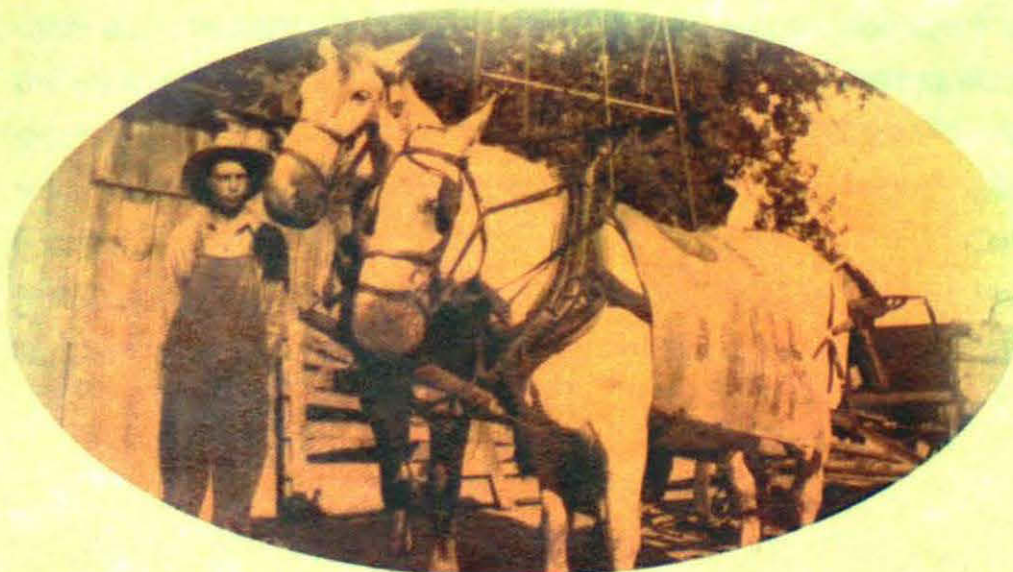
Lampman, who moved into the cabin on November 19, 1881. The Lampmans struggled to pay for the farm, and in 1883 were forced to get another mortgage on their home. This proved to be too much of a financial burden, and the Lampmans returned the deed to John



Anderson in November 1888, and then moved to the town of Chatham.

John Anderson sold the property to John Atkinson in April 1885. John Atkinson moved to the cabin in 1885, and shortly afterwards married Margaret Guy who was a sister of Robert Black's wife Jane. Robert and Jane lived next door having bought the property from James Points. They later sold the property to Jane's father, Watson Guy, and moved to Chatham.

John Atkinson sold the farm to Albert and Helen Henderson on March 3, 1920 for \$5300.00. Albert and Helen were married in 1920, and shortly after moved into Henry's house, which was their new home. In the cabin, Albert and Helen raised their daughter Ethel, and Helen's nephew Robert Pratt, after the death of Robert's mother. They remained on that property and lived in the log cabin until their death.



Ethel Henderson continued to live in the home until 1986, when a new home was moved onto the property,



next to Henry's house. Robert Pratt and his wife Marjorie lived on the next farm just west of the Henderson property. Robert, whose mother had died when he was still a baby, had grown up in the cabin with his Aunt Helen and Uncle Albert and his cousin Ethel

Robert and Marjorie Pratt and Ethel Henderson became the owners of the cabin after the death of Helen and Albert Henderson, and donated the log cabin to the Buxton Historical Society in November 2001. It was moved to the Museum grounds in the late summer of 2004. The Buxton Historical Society began the restoration of the cabin in the summer of 2005. It was completed in 2006 with financial assistance from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, Services Canada (HRSDC), and with the encouragement and support of the Municipality of Chatham Kent, the North Buxton Community Club and the entire Buxton community.



Henry's house is now open to visitors.

Henry's House

Was written for the

Buxton National Historic Site & Museum

By Joyce Shadd Middleton

Researched by Joanne Hartley

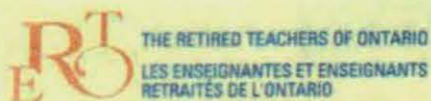
Edited by Lori Gardner

With financial assistance from
The Ontario Trillium Foundation

and

Services Canada (HRSDC).

The book was published with financial assistance from
The Retired Teachers of Ontario.





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