

THE HISTORY OF THE NEGRO COMMUNITY IN CHATHAM, ONTARIO.

1787-1865

by

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CURRICULUM STUDIORUM

The author of this thesis attended the University of Toronto while registered in the Honor Music Course during the year, 1943-1944. From 1944-1945, the author, continuing his studies in music, philosophy and psychology, resided and studied at St Michael's College, Toronto. In the Autumn of 1945, he registered in the General B. A. Course at the University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario. This course was completed when the author received the degree, Bachelor of Arts, General Course, in October, 1947. He, then, registered for the Master of Arts Course in History.

After having finished the prescribed courses and having written his thesis, The History of The Roman Catholic Church in London, Ontario, 1626-1931, he received the Master of Arts degree in History in October, 1949. With his appointment to the staff of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Ottawa, the author began lecturing in English Literature and Composition in September, 1950, and began his studies for the Ph. D. in History. His courses for that degree were completed by June, 1952; his research for the thesis was done during the Summers of 1951, '52, '53 and '54.

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INTRODUCTION

A search amongst the thesis titles contained in The Publication, Canadian Graduate Theses in the Humanities and Social Sciences, prepared since 1921 by the Humanities and Social Science Research Council will reveal a dearth in the field of history of work done on the subject of the Canadian Negro. While the Negro in Canada, today, constitutes a minority of only a few thousand, one hundred years ago, he was one of a large group numbering possibly as high as 60,000 people in the midst of the United Canadas whose total population was around 1,842,265. A race, then, which once lived in such numbers in Canada, especially in what became Southern Ontario, and which had such a colorful background, deserves the attention of researchers in Canadian history.

The present thesis has covered, with some intensity, the first phase of the life of a particularly prominent Negro colony, that of the settlement in Chatham, Ontario, or as it was first, Chatham, Upper Canada, then, Chatham, Canada West. The period consists of a logical sweep of time since it begins with the first indication of Negroes in 1787 when, according to Chatham's historian, Victor Lauriston, an Indian woman brought several Negro slaves to her homestead in the Chatham area, and ends with the completion of the American Civil War in 1865. Southern defeat and slavery's death reversed the flow of the "black stream": from that time most of the refugees returned to their native country.

The first function of this thesis is to serve as a narrative of the Chatham Negro between the years 1787 and 1865. As a narrative, the thesis concerns itself with the peculiar circumstances of the Negro's arrival in Canada, either as a slave or as a refugee from American slavery. For a proper setting of this unusual story, the first chapter explores the existence of slavery in Canada during both the French and British Regimes.

Wherever the sources at the author's disposal allow, the thesis considers Chatham's importance as a terminal of the Underground Railroad, the reaction of white Canadians and immigrants to the Negro influx, Negro attempts to better themselves through religion and education, their interest in local politics, the efforts of religious groups to assist the refugees, the establishment of the Negro colonies of North Buxton and Dawn Mills, the economic position of the Negro refugees, and the question of inter-racial marriage. The second function of the thesis, then, is sociological.

The sources for the thesis were of four kinds: documentary, articles contained in learned journals, the early files of Chatham and Sandwich newspapers, and books related to the field. Because the Southern Ontario Negro seemingly has saved little evidence of his early history, what documentary sources there are, exist elsewhere. Although the author lived for three weeks in July, 1953, in a Negro home in Chatham, and visited in Amherstburg, Mr. Alvin McCurdy, who is endeavoring to preserve local Negro history, the data acquired

pertained more to the latter part of the nineteenth century and to the twentieth century, and, therefore, were of little value to the present thesis. Nonetheless, the material gathered provides a basis for further research, which it is the earnest intention of the author to pursue. The documents used, therefore, are largely contained in the Public Archives in Ottawa. Here the occasional reference to the Negro refugees found in the correspondence of Lord Sydenham or of Sir George Arthur were valuable to indicate something of the official attitude towards these new Canadians of the early nineteenth century. A mine of information was discovered in the microfilm copies of the records, occasional papers and minutes of the Anglican missionary society, The Colonial and Continental Church Society. These documents revealed much valuable knowledge concerning the Anglican missions to the refugee Negroes in London, Canada West, during the 1850's and 1860's, and, to a lesser degree, information about the Windsor and Dresden missions, with tantalisingly little about the mission in Chatham. About the only useful information, the author could find in the Provincial Archives in Toronto, was a letter from a Negro father in Dawn Mills, Canada West, attesting to the practice of racial discrimination in the school of that area in the 1850's.

Two Canadian historians only have dealt, in any detail, with the Canadian Negro. One is Justice William Renwick Riddell, late of the Ontario Supreme Court; the other is Dr Fred Landon, retired

Vice-President of, and Professor Emeritus of American History in, the University of Western Ontario. Justice Riddell has written the classical articles on slavery in Canada. In 115 pages of the July, 1920, issue of The Journal of Negro History, Justice Riddell recorded the result of many years research on the existence of Indian and Negro slavery in Canada during both the French and British epochs. His work forms the basis for the first chapter of this thesis.

Dr Fred Landon has written around twenty-five articles concerning the Southern Ontario Negro and related subjects for such journals as The Journal of Negro History, Transactions of the Royal Society, and the Ontario Historical Society, Papers and Records. A number of articles by Dr Landon are used throughout this thesis at appropriate points. The themes which predominate through Landon's writings seem to be the development of abolitionist and anti-slavery sentiments in Canada West, and the struggle of the escaped slave to find his destiny in a new land of freedom. The writings of Riddell and Landon are indispensable to a student exploring Canadian Negro history.

Such newspapers as The Chatham Journal and The Chatham Planet contributed a surprising amount of material concerning the life of the Negroes in Chatham as seen through items about their schools, Emancipation Day celebrations, political activities, and, especially, through the discussions carried on through their columns about the

different schemes to transplant the refugee Negroes in Haiti or Trinidad. The Negro journal, The Voice of The Fugitive, published by Henry Bibb in Sandwich in the early 1850's presented forcibly and intelligently the problems of the refugees and the solutions to those problems. All three newspapers were invaluable sources for sociological information.

Although limited in number, there are books which shed light on Negro life in the first half of the nineteenth century in Canada West. Important amongst these, is Benjamin Drew's report, published in 1856, and burdened with the title, The Refugee, or, The Narratives of Fugitive Slaves in Canada, Related by Themselves; with an Account of The History and Condition of the Coloured Population of Upper Canada. Having visited and investigated the Negro refugee in such centres as Sandwich, Amherstburg, Chatham, London, St Catherines and Toronto, Mr Drew draws an elaborate portrait of the Negro in Canada West. His case histories are especially useful. Twelve years before the publication of Drew's book, another humanitarian, Dr Thomas Rolph, published, Emigration and Colonization; Embodying the Results of a Mission to Great Britain and Ireland, During the Years 1839, 1840, 1841, and 1842. This volume is particularly valuable as an explanation of Dr Rolph's efforts to transplant the refugee Negro to Trinidad. The third most valuable work was written by an American civil servant, Dr S. G. Howe, The Refugee From Slavery In Canada West; Report To The Freedman's Inquiry Commission. Following in the footsteps of Benjamin Drew,

in the year 1863, Dr Howe carried out much the same investigations, but, perhaps, with more science and better organisation. For an insight into mid-nineteenth century, Canadian white and Negro opinions, the school situation, and such thorny problems as inter-racial marriage, the work is the best of its period.

One of the pressing problems of the mid-twentieth century is that of the conflict between races. Understanding must precede racial harmony. What task today has greater nobility than one which tries to contribute toward this understanding.

THE HISTORY OF THE NEGRO COMMUNITY IN CHATHAM, ONTARIO

CHAPTER I

SLAVERY IN CANADA

The rolling downs and flat marsh lands of Southern Ontario have known the tread of sons and daughters of the principal races of the world. First came the Indians, then the French, to be followed by the British, and at the same time as the arrival of the American Loyalists, the record begins of Negro immigration to the Chatham area.

The Negro touched the soil of Canada usually under one of two conditions, either as a slave of some white colonist or as a refugee from American slavery. In both cases, he was forced to this northern realm. Indian slavery was an accepted part of the French regime in New France. Negro slavery was introduced in Quebec in the latter part of the seventeenth century. In the latter part of the eighteenth century with the success of the American War of Independence, New England Loyalists fled with their household slaves to the Maritimes while a number of the Loyalists migrating to Upper Canada also brought Negro slaves with them. Although the origin of the Maritime Negro is largely from this late eighteenth century group of Loyalist slaves, the Ontario Negro stems mostly from the numerous refugees who, in the first half of the nineteenth century, used this part of Canada as a haven of freedom from the system of slavery in the United States.

Curiously enough, the first record of Negroes in the Chatham area is one not of slavery to a French or British settler but rather of slavery to an Indian woman named Sarah Ainse. Sarah or Sally Ainse was an Indian of the Oneida tribe who at the age of seventeen had married Andrew Montour, a crown interpreter. A few years later, her husband sent her and her son, Nicholas, home to her tribe. A self-reliant woman, she became a trader at Fort Detroit in 1774. Her fortunes increased to such an extent that she bought from the Chippewa Indians, "the entire north bank of the Thames from the mouth to the Forks to a depth of a 150 acres." The earliest historical reference to the site of Chatham was simply "the Forks"; the site of London, Ontario was originally referred to in a similar manner for at both places the Thames river is connected to a tributary. Seven years later in 1787, Sarah Ainse moved to this location, and, with the help of her Negro slaves, began cultivating two small farms, one for her son Nicholas,¹ the other for herself.

NEGRO SLAVERY

The modern Negro community in Chatham, Ontario, numbers little more than 400 souls in the midst of a white community of 21,218.² A century ago, the abolitionist, Benjamin Drew, estimated the white population at 4,000 while the Negro population he computed at 800 in the actual village and 1,200 in the surrounding country side.³ In other

¹ Victor Lauriston, Romantic Kent, Chatham, Shepherd Printing Co., 1952, C III, p. 26.

² Census of Canada, 1951, Vol. I, Table 3.

³ Benjamin Drew, The Refugee, Boston, J.P. Jewett & Co., 1856, p. 234.

words, the present Negro group in Chatham represents around 1.8% of the total population of the town of Chatham; the same group a hundred years ago was as large as 20% of the total population. The drain to the United States of the Negro inhabitants of Chatham, and indeed of all Ontario, began immediately after the abolitionist victory in the American Civil War. The trek to Chatham, and the rest of Upper Canada began early in the nineteenth century as soon as the Southern slave knew that in British North America, slavery did not exist. Since the movements of the American Negro to and from Canada depended so much upon the institution of slavery, a consideration is imperative of this important system of enforced labor.

From the very beginning, the new American Empires of Spain and England were faced with the problem of the exploitation of their resources with a suitable labor force. The first attempt to solve the difficulty was by the enslavement of the local Indian population. The English at Jamestown met with no success in this attempt. The aborigines of Virginia were too wild, too weak and too haughty to endure an enclosed life of daily toil and monotony. They either died or rebelled. The Spaniards had more success in their campaign to force the Inca, Maya and Aztec natives into battalions of slave labor. Yet, the brutal methods of the early Conquistadores created such a high mortality rate amongst their Indians that one of the Spanish missionaries complained to the Crown of Spain.

A man, whose father had accompanied Columbus on his second American voyage, and, who was a young law student originating in Seville, raised his voice in protest against the enslavement of the Indians in the Antilles. Bartolomo de las Casas knew the situation at first hand since he had settled in 1502 on the Island of La Espanola (Haiti). Having become a secular priest in 1510, he used his clerical office to further his campaign to remove the Indians from both slavery and from secular control. In 1517, he travelled to Spain, and, to the King, Charles I, he made the suggestion that Africans of Negro extraction be substituted for Indian slaves. The only two major results of the life-long campaign to isolate and exalt the Spanish American Indian by de las Casas were the transition of the Indian from slavery to a kind of benevolent serfdom and the introduction of Negro slavery into Spanish America by its rulers with a clear conscience. In time, de las Casas became a Dominican monk, and, later, Bishop of Chiapas in Mexico. His impractical schemes, violent propaganda against the Spanish treatment of the Indian, Rousseauian concept of the Indian and general inconsistency with and ingratitude to his royal patrons and sympathetic friends blighted much of the good which his noble sentiments might otherwise have accomplished. He died at the age of ninety-four in 1566 at Madrid embittered by a life in which his own personality had been mainly responsible for the limited success of his most cherished ideals.

4 Ad. F. Bandelier, "Bartolomo de Las Casas", Catholic Encyclopedia, 1908 ed., Vol. III, pp. 397-399.

Although the devoted but tactless Las Casas has been burdened with the odium of having introduced Negro slavery to the Spanish American Empire, in all fairness, the fact is that Haiti or La Espanola knew Negro slaves fourteen years before the Dominican bishop formally made the suggestion to King Charles I. His suggestion merely had the effect of underscoring an experiment which had already been tried. Nor was his suggestion as strange to a sixteenth century conscience as it would be to a civilised twentieth century one, though we must remember this century has seen the revival of slavery on a widespread and brutally primitive scale. This Christian priest shared the mentality of the period which admitted the propriety of enslaving non-European populations such as the helpless Negro tribes of Africa. He was, also, so overwhelmed by the misery and mortality amongst the Antille Indians under Spanish slavery that he failed utterly to see the illogic of saving one race by enchaining another in the bonds of the same slavery. It was a case of choosing between a greater and a lesser evil. Bartolomo de las Casas suggested what he thought was the lesser of the two evils. Looking at the matter in this light, if someone had to be enslaved, the Negro, who was conditioned by nature to heat and hard work, survived the bondage amazingly well with a vigor and fertility contrasting sharply to the decadence of the Indian in the same circumstances. Again in all fairness, the fact must be stated that Bishop de las Casas, in later life, regretted that one race of men had been called into bondage to save another, physically weaker race.

Caught up in the dynamic expansion of the Spanish race, recently freed from servitude, itself, the first hapless Negro slaves reached Haiti, as early as 1503. They were followed by their brothers when, in 1510, the Crowns of Aragon and Castile decreed that fifty Negro slaves be sent to work in the American gold mines. This decree began the regular importation of Negro slaves into the Americas until the nineteenth century.⁵

THE BLACK STREAM

Since the salvation of the Indians and the economy of Spain demanded this new labor force, sources of supply and means of transportation were not lacking. Africa was the source of supply, and the Portugese merchant marine was to provide the principal transportation. Because Africa was under Portugese dominion and America (with the exception of Brazil) under Spanish influence by the historic treaty of Tordesillas in 1494 whereby Pope Alexander VI divided the newly found possessions between the two major Catholic powers, some agreement was necessary. This agreement was known to the world as the Assiento. By this Assiento or royal assent of the Sovereigns of Spain, a European power was enabled to supply the Spanish Empire with slaves and, sometimes, other commodities. The first country to hold this privilege of trading within the Spanish Empire was Portugal. The Portugese, who had landed the first cargo of Negro slaves at

5 John R. Spears, The American Slave Trade, New York, Charles Scribner & Sons, 1900, C. I, pp. 11-12

La Espanola in 1503, in 1518 contracted to import yearly 4,000
6
slaves into the West Indies.

As a sop to their Christian consciences, the slavers brought their slaves from Africa to America by way of Spanish or Portugese ports where the wretches received the benefit of the Christian Gospel in ceremonies of mass baptisms.

John Hawkins was the first English slave-trader. In 1562, he sailed for Sierra Leone with three vessels, and, there, captured three hundred Negroes, whom he sold in Haiti, or La Espanola, or, as the island was also known, Hispaniola. Although Queen Elizabeth I expressed disapproval of this venture, she compromised with the wickedness of the world by investing £500 and more in the following expeditions of Hawkins. As a shareholder in the new English enterprise of slave-trading, the Queen demanded one-third of the profits, and, very satisfied with Hawkins valorous conduct against the Spanish Armada of 1588, knighted him in that year. In 1564, Sir John Hawkins undertook a second slave raid, using as his flagship, one from the Royal Fleet, The Jesus. A third attempt at slave-trading in 1567 by Hawkins was so thoroughly rebuffed by the Spanish in the West Indies, in revenge for the depredations of the English sea-dogs, that Hawkins lost all his ships but one, and barely escaped with his life. This jarring incident closed any further attempts by the English at slave-trading
7
for a complete century.

6 W. Weatherhead, The Negro from Africa to America, New York, George H. Doran Co., 1924, C. IV, p. 76.

7 Idem, C. IV, p. 77.

The Company of Royal Adventurers into Africa was formed in 1660 for the resumption of the English slave-trade in the territories from Cape Blanco to Cape of Good Hope on the West African coast. Although in the first charter, slavery was not mentioned as the motive for the company's existence, the charter was revised to include this activity in 1663, and the name of the company was changed to The Company of Royal Adventurers of England Trading into Africa. The arrival of the English, on such a large scale, into the slave-trading preserves provoked a sharp conflict with the Dutch, culminating in the Anglo-Dutch War of 1665-1667. The English so outran their Dutch competitors that in 1713, by the Treaty of Utrecht, the privilege of the Assiento passed to the English traders. By this agreement, the British slavers were to supply the Spanish colonies with 144,000 slaves a year. Spain was to receive 200,000 crowns a year, and, in addition, a duty of $33 \frac{1}{3}$ crowns for each slave imported. In the first twenty years of the contract, England sold more than double the number of slaves specified and sent some to her own colonies in America.

Oddly enough, neither the English nor the Portugese brought the first Negroes to the northerly English colonies. The Dutch, who had entered the business in 1595, landed twenty Negroes at Jamestown, Virginia, in August, 1619. These forerunners of the black race in North America were not used by the English as slaves. Instead, they

were treated as indentured servants. In time, these Negroes were freed, and were left to form the nucleus of the free Negro class in the British colonies. When the census of 1790 was recorded, 677,624 Negroes were slaves while 59,557 Negroes were free. One-half of this number resided in the Southern States, with two-thirds of this group living⁸ in Virginia and Maryland.

SLAVERY AS A SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC
INSTITUTION IN THE SOUTHERN STATES

The failure of the aborigines to respond successfully to forced labor and the ending of indentured immigration in 1688, compelled the Southern planter to depend entirely upon Negro slave labor. As a result, Negro slavery became a seemingly indispensable pillar for the Southern economy, an important part of New England and British trade, and an accepted social institution which no reasonable white Britisher nor American of the early and mid-eighteenth century would think of doing without. The statistics of the American Negro population from 1714 to 1810 are:

1714---	58,850	
1750---	220,000	
1760---	310,000	
1770---	462,000	
1780---	582,000	
1790---	757,000	
1801---	1,007,037	9
1810---	1,377,808	

The rapid growth in the slave population was caused partly by

8 Idem, C. IV, p. 77.

9 Idem, C. VI, pp. 118-119

the remarkable fertility of the Negro but largely by the increase of the slave trade. The three-cornered trade of the American colonists was simply the exportation of New England rum, made from West Indian molasses, usually from Newport, to the West African coast where it would be exchanged for slaves. The slaves would be, then, transported to the West Indies or to the Southern sea-ports, and exchanged for sugar, more molasses and other commodities. Any slaves left over would be sold at Newport.

Racially, the slaves imported into America were from one or other of the following tribes: Sengalese, Mandingoes, Ibos, Efik, Iboni, Koromontis, Wydyahs, who hail from the West or Gold Coast; some Negroes were from the Bantu tribes of the regions of Kameroun, Gaboon, Leango and Angola. So disrespectful was the slavery system of human life, that usually only a minority of slaves survived to the actual slave markets in America. The actual process of slave-catching and of the middle passage was so wasteful and cruel that anywhere from eight to fifty percent of the human cargo might die. The tale of the pathetic capture of whole Negro villages, and the horrors of the middle passage is amply told in the works of Buxton, Spears, and
10
Weatherhead.

Once in America, the slaves became mostly field hands on the huge tobacco or cotton plantations of the Southern States, or household servants in both Northern or Southern homes and estates. The

10 Thomas Fowell Buxton, The African Slave Trade, Philadelphia, Merrihew and Thompson, 1839, pp. 124-126; vide pp. 88 and 64.

most unlucky were bought for the fatal rice plantations of Louisiana and South Carolina. While 104,689 barrels of rice were exported from Charleston in 1754 and 125,000 barrels by 1774, the profit thus made by white entrepreneurs accrued over countless dead, black bodies. The production of indigo, after that of rice, tobacco and cotton, absorbed the economic energies of the South.

The great slave marts were in such Southern coastal cities as New Orleans, Savannah, Charleston, Norfolk and Baltimore. The average value of slaves in 1789 was \$200; in 1815, \$250; in 1840, \$500; and by 1860, \$700.¹¹ The price of the individual slave would depend upon sex, physical qualities and the laws of supply and demand. At each slave market, the prospective owner was privileged to examine the naked slave in booths provided for such purposes. Assured of no physical defects, the buyer would, then, often have the slave run or walk in order to observe his or her mobility. Teeth were examined and muscles felt to insure that the prospective owner was getting his money's worth. Once purchased, the average slave cost \$20 a year to maintain.

In spite of the evils of the actual capture, the middle passage and of the callousness of the slave mart, it would be grossly erroneous to believe that cruelty and degradation were the marks of every Southern plantation and of every Northern home which possessed slaves. With the establishment of the slaves on a plantation or in a home, usually very close relationships sprang up between the slaves

11 Harold Faulkner, American Economic History, New York, Harper and Brothers, 1942, C. XVI, p. 325.

especially the household slaves, and the masters. The spirit of paternalism penetrated the system. A plantation was a self-contained unit revolving around the beautiful mansion house. Weatherhead describes the feudal nature of plantation society:

The South was always a planter society. Men settled on their land, not with reference to the nearness of neighbours, but with reference to natural advantages. Good springs for water supply; appropriate building sites, the proper lay of the land for farming....As a result, most of the early settlers lived in complete isolation and the plantations of necessity became more or less self-sufficient little kingdoms. On the larger plantations, the clothing and furnishings for "the big house" were imported, but all other articles of daily use were manufactured by the slaves. Mrs. Smede mentions, 'two millers, two blacksmiths, two carpenters, a tanner and a shoemaker, together with five seamstresses and two laundresses', as continually employed on her Father's plantation in Southern Mississippi. 12

Since many of the original plantation owners were of English stock, often junior branches of noble families, the aristocratic traditions of gracious living, generous entertainments, and chivalrous conduct flavored Southern society with an unique charm and culture. Obviously, household servants held the highest rank amongst the slave population. And of these, the famous Negro, "Mammys" possessed the most prominent position because it was they who suckled, nursed and raised the master's family. While the white children undoubtedly respected and loved their parents, their warmest affection was often reserved for the devoted Negro nurses.

The butlers, valets, personal maids, barbers and cooks, all enjoyed responsible positions. Unlike the classical system of slavery wherein Greek scholars were the teachers of Roman families, the American system rarely permitted Negro slaves to become literate.

At first, the effects of the ignorant African slaves on the plantations were so painfully bad that the masters at once began to improve the religious and mechanical lot of their charges. Some schools were established, as a result, in the Southern States for free and slave Negroes under the auspices of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. This was in 1744. The work of this society and of the Quakers raised somewhat the literacy of the slaves. Gabriel's slave rebellion in Virginia in 1800, and Vesey's plot in Charleston in 1822, however, caused both States to forbid the education of slaves. North Carolina followed suit in 1831. Georgia in 1829 forbade the teaching of any Negro, free or slave, under penalty of a \$500 fine and imprisonment. Delaware passed a similar law in 1831; Florida and Alabama in 1832; Missouri in 1847; Connecticut in 1833, while other Northern States discouraged Negro education.

Regardless of these prohibitions, many masters and mistresses continued to teach their household slaves at least how to read, particularly the Bible. Yet, the fear of slave rebellions which prompted the state legislatures to outlaw Negro education also prevented less pious owners from teaching their slaves even the rudiments of learning.

From the beginning, however, Southern masters made attempts to Christianise their slaves. Even the first indentured Negro servants in Virginia were received into the Anglican Church. In time, the theory seemed to be, "the religion of the prince, is the religion of the subject." Generally, then, slaves of an Anglican master became Anglican, of a Catholic master became Catholic, of a Methodist master became Methodist and so on. Nonetheless, conversion of the Negroes was carried on independently of the master's religion, in some places and at different times, by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. This society was formed by evangelical Anglicans under the patronage of King William III in 1701. The first missionaries of this society, Reverend George Keith and Reverend John Talbot, and their successors, were most welcome on the plantations of English Anglicans. The interest of eighteenth century Anglicans in the spiritual welfare of the American Negro was to continue into the nineteenth century by the establishing of a mission to refugee Negroes in London, Canada West, in the Autumn of 1854, and of a branch of that mission a little later in Chatham, itself.

The non-Conformist element in the South was strengthened by John Wesley's visit in 1737. Consequent Methodist preachers, with their strong, emotional religion, won thousands of black and white converts to their banner. This religious change had a marked effect on the character of the growing South.

Very early in Southern history, around 1623, Negro personal servants were worshipping in white churches in a special gallery. In time, slaves and poor whites worshipped together in Methodist and Baptist chapels throughout the land while most plantations had some form of chapel for the slaves. As a consequence of the profound religious instincts of the Negro and of the consolation value of religion, various forms of the Christian religion served as the principal cultural medium of the Negro slave. This is evident in the breathtaking beauty of the Negro spirituals.

As time went on, slave-holding in the South, and, where it existed in the North, became crystallised into a society with a certain code and certain traditions. Not only did the Negro receive spiritual attention, but he received, on the whole, decent housing, clothes and food. As plantations became rooted, Negroes were still bought; but they were not commonly sold from one plantation to another unless a plantation suffered financial difficulties or experienced a surplus slave population. On such an occasion, most masters would exercise discretion through selling in family units or by selling single adults, now capable of leaving their homes. Cruelty became the exception rather than the rule. Slave owners who practised or tolerated cruel punishments were shunned in plantation society.

On most plantations, the white children of the master's family played with black companions, and many lasting friendships

were formed between members of the slave and owner classes. Further, slaves frequently had their own plot of garden which served their domestic needs. When the great house celebrated, which was often, the slaves shared in the work and the rejoicing. Festivals, such as weddings, births and homecomings in the master's family, meant lavish entertainments and banqueting. Amongst the slaves, themselves, their own festivities were frequent and gay.¹⁴

Apart from any Christian motives in the treatment of their slaves, it must be remembered that the plantation owner was conscious of an investment which to be profitable had to be kept in good working condition. The greatest abuses in the system lay with uncivilised overseers. The overseer, usually drawn from the poor, white class, was the official directing the work of the field hands. On a large estate, where relations between master and slaves were mostly impersonal, or, on an estate where the landlord was absent, the overseer had tremendous power. His uncultured background and his wages dependent upon production often brought him to inflict cruel beatings and other hardships on his charges. The overseer occupied a low place in the social structure, but the lowest, most contemptible place, ironically, was held by the all-important slave-trader.

The truth is usually not black nor white but in varying shades of grey. However glamorous and secure the plantation existence might have seemed, at some times and in some places, the starkly cruel aspects of slavery drove the Negroes to flight and rebellion. One of the

¹⁴ Idem, C. XII, pp. 298-307.

earliest instances of a projected slave uprising occurred in 1712 in New York. A Negro plot to exterminate the whites was discovered and thwarted. A similar incident threatened at Rappahannock, Virginia in 1722. Something like twenty-four minor insurrections happened from 1712 to 1822. A serious one in Virginia was the Gabriel rebellion of 1800. The leader, a slave named Gabriel and thirty-six other Negroes were executed at Richmond for an attempted massacre of the whites. Another serious rebellion, this time in Charleston, was led in 1822 by a free Negro, Denmark Vesey. The plot was revealed by a slave, and Vesey with thirty-four others was executed.

Nat Turner's rebellion at Southampton, Virginia, in 1831, was the most serious of them all. This Negro preacher led a slave army which killed thirty-six white people. When order was restored, Turner and twenty of his men were hanged. The ancient instinct of men to be free, to manage the conduct of their private lives, stung by the injustices of slavery led some to battle, but many thousand others to flee from the republican South to the monarchial colony of Canada, where slavery had lived tenuously and died early.

SLAVERY IN FRENCH CANADA

"The land of the True North, strong and free" was not always so free. New France had a limited amount of Negro slavery, and an undetermined number of Indian slaves. Since the Canadian Indians, themselves, were accustomed to using prisoners of war as slaves, the early French settlers bought from the local tribes some of these captives. The Indians thus used as slaves were known as "Panis". Justice Riddell, who had done the most research on this subject, states that the name "Panis" may be synonymous with the English "Pawnee". This would suggest that the Indians enslaved were captives from the Pawnee tribe. He mentions, however, that some authorities prefer to regard the "Panis" as a distinct tribe.

16

Recorded history notes that the first Negro slave to arrive in Quebec was a young man from Madagascar brought in 1628 by the Huguenot, Admiral David Kertk, who had conquered Quebec for the English. In 1688, Denonville, the Governor and DeChampigny, the Intendant of New France, wrote to the French Secretary of State, complaining of the expense and scarcity of both agricultural and domestic labor, and made the suggestion that the solution might be the importation of Negro slaves. Should the King agree to that proposal, the royal officials guaranteed that some of the principal inhabitants would buy their supply of Negroes in the West Indies upon the arrival of the Guinea ships. The King's Secretary replied in 1689 that such

16 Riddell, William Renwick, "Slavery in Canada", Journal of Negro History, Vol. V, No. 3, July 1920, C. I, p. 264; vide Riddell's footnote No. 4.

permission was granted with a caution given, "Mais il est bon de leur faire remarquer qu'il est à craindre que ces nègres, venant d'un climat si différent, ne périssent en Canada et le projet serait alors inutile." ¹⁷ The introduction of Negro slaves into the French colony of Canada need come as no surprise since the French Empire, in common with all other European empires fully recognised the necessity and propriety of Negro and Indian slavery. By the Treaty of Peace and Neutrality in America signed in London on 16 November, 1686 between King Louis XIV and King James II, both nations agreed in the tenth article "that the subjects of either nation should ^{not} take away the savage inhabitants, or their slaves or the goods which the savages had taken belonging to the subjects of either nation, and that they ¹⁸ should give no assistance or protection to such raids and pillage." In 1705 the Coutume de Paris decided that Negro slaves in America were meubles, or, in English law what would be considered as "personal property".

Although the colony of Quebec seemed not to have been troubled with organised slave rebellions, as occurred occasionally in the Southern States, there were instances of individual desertions, and, sometimes, of acts of violence. Jacques Raudot, the Intendant, on 13 April, 1709, promulgated an ordinance concerning the "Subject of Negroes and Savages called Panis". After having recited the advantages the colony would enjoy by a definite judgement on the

17 Idem, C. I, p. 264, footnote No. 3

18 Idem, C. I, p. 265.

validity of the ownership of Indian slaves, he speaks of the Panis, "whose nation is far removed from this country" and who are captured by Indians who deal mostly with the English of Carolina but who also supply the Canadians with Indian slaves. Raudot regrets the fact that some French colonists refuse to buy the slaves (presumably for reasons of conscience) which inspires the captives with the belief that there is no slavery in France whereupon the slaves make every effort to escape. In an effort, then, to clarify any ambiguity in the position of the Panis, Raudot enacted, "Nous sous le bon plaisir de Sa Majesté ordonnons, que tous le Panis et Nègres qui ont été achetés et qui le seront dans la suite, appartiendront en pleine propriété à ceux qui les ont achetés comme étant leurs esclaves."¹⁹

This enactment was put into effect in 1734 on 8 February, when Gilles Hocquart, the Intendant of Quebec, issued an order for the recapture of a Carib Indian who had fled from his master, a Captain Joanne of the French Navy. The same Intendant became worried about the casual manner in which the Quebec colonists released their slaves when they chose to do so. On 1 September, 1736, he reminded his people that a mere verbal, "You are a free man!" was not sufficient in the eyes of the law, and that in the future such manumissions had to be properly notarised.

In the same year, 1734, as the Intendant Hocquart was looking for an escaped Carib Indian slave, a female Negro slave came to a

¹⁹ Idem, C. I, p. 266.

sad end. This Negro slave had been bought in the English colonies, and was the household servant of a Madame de Francheville. On the night of 10 or 11 April, 1734, the slave set fire to the home of her mistress, and caused a conflagration which destroyed part of Montreal. For this deed, the unfortunate slave was hanged in June, 1734.

Some of the parish registers in Quebec record the burial of slaves. "In the Registers of the Parish of La Longue Pointe is found the certificate of the burial, March 13, 1755, of the body of Louise, a female Negro slave, aged 27 days, the property of M. Deschambault. In the same parish is found the certificate of baptism of Marie Judith, a Panis, about 12 years of age belonging to Sieur Preville of the same parish, November 4, 1756. On January 22, 1757, one Constant, a Panis slave of Sieur de Saint Bain, officer of the Infantry, is sentenced by de Monrepos, Lieutenant-Governor in the Jurisdiction of Montreal, to the pillory in a public place on a market day and then to perpetual banishment from the Jurisdiction," (French Canada was at this time divided into the three Jurisdictions or the Districts of Quebec, Trois Rivieres, and Montreal.)

The conquest of New France by Great Britain did not alter for some time the existence of slavery in the French colony. In fact, the 47th Article of the Articles of Capitulation granted to Governor Vaudreuil on 8 September, 1760 upon the surrender of Montreal to General Amherst, has this to say, "the Negroes and Panis of both sexes

20 Idem, C. I, p. 267.

21 Idem, p. 268.

shall remain in the possession of the French and Canadians to whom they belong; they shall be at liberty to keep them in their service in the Colony or to sell them; and they may also continue to bring them up in the Roman religion." ²²

SLAVERY IN CANADA
UNDER THE BRITISH

The subjugation of one set of men by another has ancient roots. By the Middle Ages, however, slavery as such had largely disappeared from Europe. In England, as late as the twelfth century slaves were bought and sold. Apparently, a trade dealing in white slaves existed at this time between Ireland and West England. This gradually ceased. Villainage, or the feudal system which permitted serfs, an improvement on outright slavery, was abolished by statute in 1660. Eight years later, it is recorded that King Charles II paid £50 for a Negro slave. As the famous engravings of Hogarth illustrate, many fashionable eighteenth century English families had Negro slaves as household servants. This question of the validity of Negro slavery on English soil was brought to a head by an historic legal case. Already in 1729, the Attorney-General of the time, Sir Philip Yorke, and Charles Talbot, the Solicitor-General, joined in an opinion that a Negro slave brought or coming from the West Indies did not become free but might be compelled to return. ²³

²² Idem, p. 269.

²³ William Renwick Riddell, "Method of Abolition of Slavery in England, Scotland and Upper Canada, Compared," Ontario Historical Society, Papers and Records, 1931, Vol. XXVII, p. 511.

James Sommersett was an African Negro sold into slavery in 1769 in Virginia to an English planter, Charles Stewart. In 1771, Stewart went to England on business, accompanied by his newly acquired slave. There, the slave ran away from his master only to be caught. On the orders of Mr. Stewart, Sommersett was imprisoned in irons, and confined to the ship, Ann and Mary of which a Captain Knowles was the master. The captain of this vessel, lying in the Thames, was instructed by Stewart to sell the recalcitrant slave when the ship landed in Jamaica. With liberal sentiment increasing in the English air, the case gained notoriety, and Lord Mansfield, the Lord Chief Justice, issued a writ of Habeas Corpus. The trial began on 7 February, 1772, before the whole Court of King's Bench, with five eminent lawyers defending the Negro, and two lawyers sustaining the case against him. After almost five months of legal argument, on 22 June, 1772, the Court decided unanimously in favor of the Negro slave. This judicial decision ended any possibility of Negro slavery in England. The Courts in Scotland abolished Negro slavery by a similar decision in 1778, while the indenture of "coalliers" and "salters" was abolished in Scotland in 1775.

Lord Mansfield is reported to have said, "the air of England has long been too pure for a slave, and every man is free who breathes it." Eleven years after this important decision, William

²⁴ Idem, p. 512.

Cowper celebrated the event in The Task:

Slaves cannot breathe in England; if their lungs
Receive our air, that moment they are free.
They touch our country and their shackles fall.

These were the sentiments which inspired John Graves Simcoe, Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada, and which led to the virtual extinction of slavery in Upper Canada. The complete abolition of slavery throughout the British Empire did not come until the Act of the Imperial Parliament in 1833. Since this statute provided for a transitional period, total emancipation was not accomplished until 1838.

Colonel Simcoe detested slavery, and had been a vigorous opponent of the system in his speeches in the British House of Commons. With his arrival in Upper Canada in the Summer of 1792, he met the condition of slavery, and was greeted in the Executive Council in March, 1793, with the case of Chloe Cooley:

At the Council Chamber, Navy Hall, in the County of Lincoln, Wednesday, March 21st, 1793.

His Excellency, J.G. Simcoe, Esq., Lieut-Governor, etc. etc.
The Honorable Wm. Osgoode, Chief Justice,
The Honorable Peter Russell.

Peter Martin (a Negro in the service of Col. Butler) attended the Board for the purpose of informing them of a violent outrage by one Froomand, an Inhabitant of this Province, residing near Queens Town, or the West Landing, on the person of Chloe Cooley, a Negro girl in his service, by binding her, and violently and forcibly transporting her across the River, and delivering her against her will to certain persons unknown; to prove the truth of his allegation he produced Wm. Grisley (or Crisley).

William Grisley, an Inhabitant near Mississague Point in this Province says, "that on Wednesday evening last he was at work at Mr. Froemans (Vrooman) near Queens Town, who in conversation told him, he was going to sell his Negro Wench to some persons in the States, that in the evening he saw the said Negro girl, tied with a rope, that afterwards a Boat was brought, and the said Froemans with his Brother and one Vanevery, forced the said Negro girl into it, that he was desired to come into the boat, which he did, but did not assist or was otherwise concerned in carrying off the said Negro girl, but that all the others were, and carried the Boat across the River; that the said Negro girl was then taken and delivered to a man upon the Bank of the River by Froemans, that she screamed violently and made resistance but was tied in the same manner as when the same William Grisley first saw her, and in that condition delivered to the man--- Mm. Grisley says farther that he saw a Negro at a distance, he believes to be tied in the same manner, and has heard that many other people mean to do the same by their Negroes.

Resolved---That it is necessary to take immediate steps to prevent the continuance of such violent breaches of the Public Peace, and for that purpose, that His Majesty's Attorney-General, be forthwith directed to prosecute the said Froemans

25

Adjourned.

At the time Vrooman was perfectly within his rights. Since British law was not founded in a society with a slave class, it was unprepared to deal with such situations, and could regard the slave only as a "chattel" or absolute personal property. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Imperial Government had forbidden the murder of a slave; beyond that the slave had no protection from the law. Hence, nothing could be done to prosecute the colonist, Vrooman, however annoyed might be the Executive Council.

Yet the incident had the effect of producing legislation which gave the death blow to slavery in Upper Canada. At the second

session of the First Parliament of Upper Canada, sitting at Newark, later Niagara-on-the-Lake, on 21 May, 1793, a bill for the gradual abolition of slavery was introduced. A reluctant Assembly, strongly persuaded by Simcoe, and, likely, by his Attorney-General, John White, passed the bill unanimously, as did the Legislative Council. The Royal Assent was given by the Lieutenant-Governor on 9 July, 1793.

The bill had the following provisions:

- 1) "that no Negro or other persons who shall come or be brought into this Province -- shall be subject to the condition of a slave or to be bounden to involuntary service for life."
- 2) that those "Negroes or other persons subjected to such service" who had been lawfully brought into the Province, should continue in a state of slavery.
- 3) that every child born after the passing of this act, of a Negro mother or other woman, would become completely free on attaining the age of twenty-five; and that such children were to receive "proper nourishment and cloathing" from their masters, and were to work for them until the age of emancipation.
- 4) that any voluntary indenture or service could not be binding longer than nine years. 26

Upper Canada had the distinction, thanks to its first, great Lieutenant-Governor, of being the first British possession to provide by legislation for the abolition of slavery. This act, quite possibly, was the first legislative act or one of the first anywhere in the world of European civilisation virtually to extinguish Negro slavery.

When Simcoe retired from his post in 1796, Peter Russell, the Administrator of the Province, tried, in the interim between Governors, to have the anti-slavery act amended to allow immigrants the right of bringing Negro slaves with them. The Assembly passed the bill on a vote of eight to four. The Legislative Council, independent of popular feeling, hoisted the bill for three months, which was tantamount to a rejection. That ended any further attempt to solve the difficult labor situation in pioneer Upper Canada by the continuation and expansion of traditional colonial slavery.²⁷

Although there were few manumissions of Negro slaves while their masters lived, many slave-owners freed their slaves by provisions in their wills. The evidence for this lies in some of the early nineteenth century wills extant in the Court of Probate files at Osgoode Hall, Toronto.²⁸ The paradoxical fact now arises that at this period Canadian slaves fled to Detroit, in the United States, for their freedom, thus reversing for a while, the direction taken by escaping slaves. Once the British were evacuated from Detroit, and Michigan was incorporated into a territory in 1805, Section 6 of the American Ordinance of 1787 came into effect. This section outlawed slavery in the new territories of the Western Reserve. As a result of this oasis of freedom at the very tip of Upper Canada, enough Negroes fled from Canadian slavery to form in Detroit in 1806 a company of Negro Militia to help in the general defence of the territory.²⁹

²⁷ Idem, C. V, p. 322

²⁸ Idem, C. V, p. 322, footnote No. 13.

²⁹ Idem C. V. p. 324

In 1784, both French and Loyalist colonists in the Montreal District owned around 212 slaves, while the number of slaves, both Indian and Negro, in Upper Canada in the year 1793 was probably around 500.³⁰ Most of the leading families in York (Toronto) owned Negro slaves. Peter Russell, who had attempted to sabotage Governor Simcoe's anti-slavery bill, advertised on 19 February, 1806 in the Gazette and Oracle:

To be sold: a Black Woman named Peggy, aged forty years, and a Black Boy named Jupiter, aged about fifteen years, both of them property of the subscriber. The woman is a tolerable cook and washerwoman and perfectly understands making soap and candles. The boy is tall and strong for his age, and has been employed in the country business but brought up principally as a house servant. The price of the woman is one hundred and fifty dollars. For the boy, two hundred dollars payable in three years with interest from the day of sale and to be secured by bond, etc. But one-fourth less will be taken for ready money.

Apparently, Peggy had embarrassing ideas about her own status, which caused the same Mr. Russell to advertise earlier in the same organ on 2 September, 1803:

The subscriber's black servant, Peggy, not having his permission to absent herself from his service, the public are hereby cautioned from employing or harbouring her without the owner's leave. Whoever will do so after this notice may expect to be treated as the law directs. 31

A year earlier, a Mr. Charles Field of Niagara was having similar trouble with an Indian slave. He notified all and sundry in the Niagara Herald of 28 August, 1802:

30 Idem, C. V, pp. 324-326.

31 Idem, C. V, pp. 328-329.

All persons are forbidden harbouring, employing or concealing my Indian Slave Sal, as I am determined to prosecute any offender to the extremity of the law and persons who may suffer her to remain in or upon their premises for the space of half an hour, without my written consent will be taken as offending and dealt with accordingly.-----32

Slavery in Upper Canada continued until the Imperial Act of 1833, but there does not seem to be any record of sales after 1806. At the other end of the Province, not too distant from the Chatham area, such a celebrated landowner as Colonel Matthew Elliott, who settled in 1784 just below Amherstburg, brought many slaves, possibly around sixty. At the time Justice Riddell was writing in 1920, the remains of the old Elliott slave quarters still existed. The famous fur-trader of the same area, Jacques Duperon Baby, had around thirty slaves, while another French pioneer of the Township of Sandwich (now Walkerville) and father of thirty-three children, also had slaves. His will dated 26 May, 1806, at Sandwich reads, "I also give and bequeath to my wife the use or service of two slaves that she may select, as long as she continues to be my widow....I will that all my personal property not here above bequeathed as well as my slaves with the exception of the two left to my wife, be portioned out or sold, and that the proceeds arising therefrom be equally divided between my said wife and the nine children born of my marriage to her." (He was married twice.)³³

32 Idem, C. V, p. 331.

33 Idem, C. V, p. 333.

Just exactly who were the last slaves in the different British North American Colonies is difficult to find; but certainly by 1833 the institution was all but dead, and was finished by the legislation of the Imperial Parliament in that year. The fact that British territory was now free from legal slavery, and that Upper Canada had given freedom to the refugee slave since 1793, reversed absolutely the previous incidental trend of Negro slaves fleeing to the Detroit area.

By 1837, the village of Chatham, Upper Canada was established. And a year later, the Negro race which had been in the territory since Loyalist days, provided a company of militia in Chatham to protect their haven from the pro-American rebels.

CHAPTER II

THE ORIGIN AND EARLY DAYS OF
THE CHATHAM NEGRO COMMUNITY

On 4 February, 1793, Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe made his departure from Newark for his famous trip down through the peninsula of Southern Ontario to the British Fort at Detroit. Both on his journey to and journey from Detroit, he was deeply impressed with the possibilities for settlement and prosperity in the rich peninsula. At Chatham, or The Forks, he envisioned a great shipbuilding centre which would supply the gun boats necessary to patrol the Thames River and the Great Lakes against possible American aggression; the same dock yards would build the commercial vessels which would ply up and down the Thames bringing life to a wilderness. And at another Forks in the Thames, some sixty miles above Chatham, Simcoe dreamed of a new London which would be the Capital of a great Canadian Kingdom.

Two years after Simcoe's visit to The Lower Forks, by order of the Governor-in-Council, there was set aside as a town site and military reserve at Chatham some six hundred acres which included river and front lots 1 and 2 in Harwich, and 24 in Raleigh. Victor Lauriston, the chronicler of Kent County, gives in considerable detail the local geographical meaning of this allotment:

Abraham Iredell, the same year, surveyed and mapped 113 one-acre park lots. The survey covered the double tier of lots, commencing at the eastern boundary, between Water and Gaol Streets to William; thence, the double tier between Murray and Colborne to the eastern boundary; then, crossing the creek a further double tier between King and Wellington to LaCroix, then the West limit of the town site. The map covering this survey, bearing date 1 November, 1795, shows

34 Victor Lauriston, Opus Citatum, C. V, pp. 42-48.

the Gaol and Market Blocks reserved as such, also the block bounded by King, Third, Wellington and Forsyth streets for Church purposes. Baker's block house is shown on the Military Reserve, later Tecumseh Park; and a small hut on Lot 50, at the eastern boundary, built by Meldrum and Park, merchants, of Sandwich for trade with the Indians who camped nearby on the creek. No other buildings are shown. There is, however, marked at the upper end of King Street, just outside the east boundary of the town site, either a bridge or a mill dam, crossing the creek. The width of the river is indicated as $2\frac{1}{2}$ or 3 chains and the creek rather more than a half chain. The river depth was $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 fathoms, with $3\frac{1}{2}$ at the Forks; the creek depth $2\frac{1}{2}$ fathoms at its mouth, dwindling one fathom at the mill dam. ---35

The interest of the Government in Chatham remained primarily military. In 1825, Major-General Sir James Carmichael Smith, president of a military commission, visited the Western area, and reported to the Duke of Wellington, that among other things, a fort should be constructed at Chatham to oppose any prospective American invaders on their way to Burlington and York. If the fort had ever been built, it would have had grand proportions. Planned in the shape of a star, the huge fort would have covered the area between the Thames River and McGregor Creek, and have extended far to the east of the Military Reserve.

Although this fort was never built, the Rebellion of 1837 caused the erection of a large frame barracks, on the site of the present Tecumseh Park to accommodate the troops quartered at Chatham during the years 1838 and 1843. From the Negro slaves of the Indian, Sally Ainsie, and from the unnamed Negro with a cabin on the Thames mentioned by the surveyor Patrick McNiff in 1791, in 1838, the Negro settlers

had grown in number sufficiently to join their white comrades-in-
36
arms. In the Chatham wilderness, previous to 1837, Lauriston records that Steve White, a Negro Preacher, and a Darkey Rhodes were among the few squatters.

The first group of refugee slaves from the United States likely came to Upper Canada after the war of 1812. With the help of sympathetic Quakers and other friends, the escaped Southern slaves made their way northward. American troops in the invasion of 1812 discovered that in Canada there was no slavery. Although this was not entirely true, yet slavery in Canada by this time was so limited, the remnants escaped the notice of the Americans. Upon their return to the United States, this singular feature about the British colonies was much remarked upon, and was very soon communicated widely amongst the Southern slaves. Since the American soldiers who passed through Southern Ontario were largely from Kentucky, the observation of "no slavery in British North America" would be carried directly to the
37
American South.

One of the early abolitionists, Captain Charles Stuart has recorded that in the years 1817-1822, while he was living in Amherst-
burg, about 150 refugees came to that place. Stuart settled these refugees on small plots of land, "and stated that he found them
38
'quite equal to any class of laborers in the country'".

36 Idem, C. XI, p. 108.

37 Fred Landon, "Abolitionist Interest in Upper Canada", Ontario Historical Society, Vol. XLIV, No. 4, October, 1952, p. 165.

38 Idem, p. 165.

From decade to decade, the stream of escapees increased until by the 1830's, colonies of Negroes were to be found in Sandwich, Amherstburg, Colchester, Chatham, Wilberforce (north of London), York, and other localities.

The Quaker Abolitionist, Benjamin Lundy, noted in his journal regarding his travel through the southern portion of Upper Canada in January, 1832, that, "the country (south of London) is thickly settled with Europeans and natives of both Canada and the United States. A few colored people are to be seen, but their number is small." ³⁹ He commented briefly on the village of Chatham, "There is a store, and also a tavern and stage house, kept in this place, and I am told that the country was thickly settled around. I had previously been informed that a considerable settlement of colored people is located here; but I had not the leisure to stop long, and did not learn anything very ⁴⁰ particular about it."

THE BLACK MILITIA OF 1838

The issues in the rebellion of 1837 varied somewhat in the Provinces of Lower and Upper Canada. In both Provinces, many of the electorate were dissatisfied with the failure of the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Francis Bond Head in Upper Canada and Sir F.N. Burton in Lower Canada, to act more in harmony with the elected Legislative

38 Fred Landon, "The Diary of Benjamin Lundy, Written During His Journey Through Upper Canada, January, 1832," Ontario Historical Society, Papers and Records, Vol. XIX, 1922, p. 127.

40 Idem, Vol. XIX, 1922, p. 129.

Assemblies. As it was, the Lieutenant-Governors and their predecessors had a history of consulting with the Legislative Councils which were appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor, and were largely occupied by members of the local oligarchy, known in Upper Canada as the Family Compact and in Lower Canada as the Chateau Clique. In French Canada, the issues, of course, were heavily tinged with the rivalry between the French and British factions. Although the major, political point was the need for a ministry responsible to the majority of the elected Assembly, the outspoken defiance of the Royal authorities by Louis Joseph Papineau and his Lieutenant, Dr Wolfred Nelson, in Lower Canada, and by William Lyon Mackenzie and his confreres such as Marshall Bidwell, and Dr Charles Duncombe in Upper Canada, sharpened the issues to actual, armed rebellion.

The first fighting took place on 23 November, 1837 at St Denis, Lower Canada, when regular troops were sent to capture Dr Nelson and his insurgents as they lay entrenched in his fortified, stone distillery. Apparently, Papineau fled to the United States while Dr Nelson's distillery was the scene of battle. At St Charles, on 24 November, a more serious battle occurred which resulted in victory for the British regulars. This all but ended the rebellion in Lower Canada. At the same time as the rising in Lower Canada, the rebellion opened in Upper Canada. On the day of the rebel's defeat at St Charles, William Lyon Mackenzie published a revolutionary appeal, headed, "Proclamation by William Lyon Mackenzie,

chairman, pro tem. of the Provisional Government of the State of Upper Canada." ⁴¹ Since this "Provisional Government" was self-appointed, Sir Francis Bond Head, and a number of other citizens, regarded the whole affair as an act of treason. The first skirmish in Upper Canada blazed haphazardly outside of Montgomery's Tavern on Yonge Street beyond the town of Toronto on 4 December, 1837. Within a few days Colonel Allan MacNab from Hamilton arrived with his militia to defeat the rebels at their outpost of Montgomery's Tavern. Mackenzie joined Papineau in exile in the United States. And although the fighting in Canada lasted scarcely over a month, the two exiled leaders were busy planning an invasion of Canada from American soil. This conspiracy kept Canada in a state of uncertainty for the following year which accounts for the continued recruiting of militia to protect the frontiers, especially, of the Niagara and Sandwich districts. For this reason, the Negro population was especially excited, and many were eager to assist in repelling any rebel assault from the United States.

The Negroes were not so concerned with the direct parliamentary issues of the struggle, but were immensely concerned that Canada should remain British. The pro-American sentiments and republican attitudes expressed by both Mackenzie and Papineau together with some of their followers had alarmed the Negroes, many of whom were escaped slaves. If Canada were to become an independent

⁴¹ George Bryce, A Short History of The Canadian People, London, Sampson Low, Marston and Co. Ltd., 1914, C. XI, pp. 336-353.

republic on the American pattern, or to be actually annexed to the United States, the position of the refugee slaves might become very precarious.

Ernest Green in his precious article on the Chatham, Negro company, quotes from the British Colonist of Toronto an excerpt from a letter published in the 31 May, 1838, issue, but which was written in Detroit two months earlier, and signed with the initials, "W. S.":

The regulars are thronging daily to Sandwich and Malden. Quite a martial array opposite. The belted, red-coat, the blanketed Indian, with tomahawk and scalping knife, the grinning Negro, mad with revenge, the swaggering peasant, and the cool, Waterloo veteran of fields fought and won, present an imposing appearance. 42

Since there had been a Negro insurrection in Detroit in 1833 which had been put down by regular American troops, the writer of the above lines probably expected the refugee Negroes to be "mad with revenge."

On 8 January, 1838, the Detroit Frontier experienced its first violence with the rebel group. The schooner Anne, manned by rebels and sympathisers, sailed down the Detroit River, and let loose a volley of cannon and musket shot into the town of Sandwich. The compliment was returned by loyal Canadians on the Sandwich shore. The return fire was sufficiently strong and well-placed that many casualties and much confusion resulted on the Anne. The ship went out of control, and drifted ashore on Elliott's Point below Amherstburg. Here, a

42 Ernest Green, "Upper Canada's Black Defenders", Ontario Historical Society, Papers and Records, Vol. XXVII, 1931, p. 380.

detachment of Essex militia, joined by the "second company of colored volunteers" led by "Captain" Josiah Henson boarded the stranded schooner without opposition. The crew became prisoners of war, and the vessel and its contents, a prize of war.

Green referring to McMullen's History of Canada makes this quotation:

Among those were....a body of colored men, settled in the Western part of the Province, the poor hunted fugitives from American slavery who had at length found liberty and security under the British Flag...⁴³

When in the Autumn of 1838, the rebels again sought to annoy the Detroit frontier, Colonel John Prince, commander at Amherstburg, retained fifty or sixty Negro recruits which were wanted at Chatham by Colonel C. Chichester. In a long letter of 29 November, 1838, Lieutenant-Colonel Richard Airey of the 34th Regiment in Amherstburg, described the situation to Sir George Arthur, the recently appointed successor to Sir Francis Bond Head. Volunteering from the 2nd and 3rd Essex Regiments of the sedentary militia was very slow, although every means had been taken to secure the number of men required for the six-months service without using the draft. From the 2nd Essex Regiment, 170 men had volunteered, including some sergeants and a colored company raised at Gosfield.

On 4 December, 1838, a large number of armed rebels and friends from Detroit landed at Windsor. Under Colonel John Prince, the defending Canadians defeated the invaders with severe losses in a

⁴³ Idem, p. 380.

series of skirmishes. The fight was of such duration and intensity that it has become known as "The Battle of Windsor".⁴⁴ Certain unfortunate barbarities marked this encounter. For one thing, an Assistant-Surgeon Hume, unarmed and hastening towards the sound of firing to give aid to the wounded, was murdered by a party of invaders, and, then, grimly mutilated. A Negro, named Mills, was ordered to join their forces. When he refused, he, too, was killed. A day or two after the fighting, the two bodies, black and white were interred in the same cemetery at the same hour.

Ernest Green in his article on Negro participation in the rebellion on the loyal side regrets the lack of information regarding the number of men in the colored companies along with the length and character of their services. His lament could be extended to many aspects of Negro history in Canada. He does discover, however, that there were a company of Negroes in Sandwich in 1838 under a Captain Angus McDonald.

The question of securing officers for the Negro companies was apparently of such urgency that the Government shattered precedent by asking a Negro preacher and former slave, Reverend J. W. Loguen, to command a company during the latter part of the disturbances. The Reverend J. W. Loguen refused. He does, however, speak in praise of his fellow Negroes in their war effort:

⁴⁴ Idem, p. 381.

They could not, therefore, be passive when the success of the invaders would break the only arm interposed for their security, and destroy the only asylum of African Freedom in North America. The promptness with which several companies of blacks were organised and equipped, and the desperate valor they displayed in this brief conflict, are in earnest of what may be expected from the swelling thousands of colored fugitives collecting there, in event of a war between the two countries....⁴⁵

The Chatham Negroes in 1837 began drilling in a voluntary, unofficial company since they were not asked to enlist in the local militia. To facilitate their drill, they borrowed arms from the regular troops at the Chatham post. Colonel C. Chichester, Commander of the Chatham area with his headquarters in Chatham, wrote on 16 October, 1838, to the Deputy-Adjutant General:

I should wish to mention that there are a number of colored people in the neighbourhood, all well disposed. They might be formed into a company, as it is they do assemble for the drill, and I lend them arms; but there is no authority for it. They do it of their own accord.

Apparently, shortly after this mention by the Colonel, some arrangements were made to incorporate the Negro volunteers into the militia. For some undetected reasons, possibly poor pay, or discrimination of some sort, recruiting went slowly, and the finding of officers to command the colored company proved difficult. Colonel Chichester in a letter of 24 October, 1838, to the Military Secretary, said:

⁴⁵ Idem, p. 381.

We are in great want of officers for the Colored Company it is proposed to raise. I have recommended two for the command of it, Mr Muttlebury, now in Captain Webb's Company, and Mr Perry in the Company doing duty on the St Clair. I believe each of these to be very fit for it...46

In a letter to Sir George Arthur, the harrassed Colonel wrote:

With respect to the blacks, we get on very slowly. Col. Curey wrote me that he could send me fifty or sixty from Amherstburg, but by a letter I received from him yesterday, I find Col. Prince is raising one at Sandwich, and they have joined him, being nearer. As soon as Captain Muttlebury arrives, I shall send him to try what he can do there. There are enough in the neighbourhood to form a company, all loyal and ready to turn out like the militia, but they are married, poor and will not engage for six months.

Loyal and militant as the Chatham Negroes were, they were almost overlooked when the call came on 31 October, 1838 for 9,000 volunteers from the sedentary militia to serve for six months. At the foot of the original order appears the following note, written with a different ink from the rest of the document, the chirography indicating hasty execution:

From the sudden manner in which I have been called upon to prepare this order, two colored Companies to be raised at Chatham have been omitted.

(signed) Richard Bullock,
Adjt. General....47

The Chatham Colored Company could truly be said to exist officially on 6 November, 1838, when by order of the Military Government, Captain Muttlebury, Esquire, was appointed Captain of the First Colored Company of Chatham, and Hugh Chambers was appointed his

46 Idem, p. 382.

47 Idem, p. 382.

Lieutenant. On 12 November, 1838, the Second Colored Company of Chatham was erected with James Black Perrier, as its Captain.

A post was begun at Bear Creek as part of the defence preparations for the Western District. Since Colonel Chichester found it difficult to construct because of the lack of men and materials, he wrote of his problems to Sir George Arthur on 21 November, 1838:

Captain Muttlebury is accustomed to that sort of duty and I would send him if he had more men; but his company is yet much too weak to undertake the defence of themselves, and it is not advisable to mix colours....I had hoped of employing a black colony at the forks of Bear Creek, but one of them was with me today. They live twelve mile from it, and could not leave their families to remain there....⁴⁸

When news reached Chatham that the "Battle of Windsor" had occurred, the British Colonist of 13 December, 1838, published a letter from Chatham citizen describing the Negro reaction, "fifty coloured volunteers assembled on two hours notice, from the first alarm."⁴⁹

Ernest Green speculates that the Chatham Colored Companies disappeared by the end of 1839, and that the participation of the colored troops in the Emancipation Day celebration of 1842 was the work of a volunteer group. He notes that J. B. Perrier was appointed Lieutenant in the Second Battalion of Incorporated Militia on 26 July, 1839. His surmise seems incorrect. The Chatham Journal for 22 January, 1842 records:

The colored troops stationed here under Captain Chambers, started at a late hour on Monday evening for the St Clair, our friends there are apprehensive of a visit

⁴⁸ Idem, p. 383.

⁴⁹ Idem, p. 383.

from the sympathisers, who have been at work in burning a house of a man named Ward on the American side, whom they considered disaffected. Thirty men of the 83rd under Lieutenant Austin arrived on Tuesday to replace the darkies, and more are expected....50

While a notice in the Journal for 23 April, 1842, gives definite information that one of the Colored Companies lasted, possibly, until 1844, this notice proclaimed that the Incorporated Militia including the Colored Company whose period of service should expire on 30 April, 1842, would be continued for two more years, terminable at the option of the Government at the end of twelve months, or at any intermediate period:

The whole of this force will be engaged for general service in Canada. The establishment of the different corps, the rates of pay and allowance, clothing, etc..., will be regulated for that of the force, embodied in Canada East, by the General Order, dated Headquarters, Montreal, 7th April, 1840, No. 1; and for the force in Canada West, by the District General Order, dated Toronto, 16th April, 1841.

(signed) John Eden, D.A.G.,
C. Foster, A.A.G. 51

THE WEST INDIAN SCHEME

The Chatham Journal of 1 June, 1844 carries a message from the editor about the project for Negro emigration to Jamaica:

We have before us a pamphlet on this subject, giving such particulars to intending emigrants as are necessary for their information and guidance. Every precaution seems to be taken to prevent their being imposed upon by designing persons, and on their landing, a government agent is always in attendance, to afford them advice and assistance. We

50 The Chatham Journal, Vol. I, No. 28, 22 January, 1842, p. 3, col. 3.

51 Idem, Vol. I, No. 41, 23 April, 1842, p. 2, col. 4.

recommend the perusal of the pamphlet to all our colored neighbors. It is written in great part by Mr Paul Gallego, Delegate from the Ancaster Convention to visit the Island of Jamaica and to report concerning the advantages there held out to persons of color. Mr Gallego, we are informed, is a colored gentleman, carefully educated who proceeded to Jamaica at the request of a large body of his countrymen in Upper Canada, for the express purpose of reporting to them from the spot, the real inducements to emigrate. Mr Gallego made two or three voyages to Jamaica, and ascertained to his entire satisfaction that the prospects opened by the government of the island, were not illusory, but accurate pictures of a condition of things actually existing and enjoyed by the colored race. He strongly recommended emigration: numbers went out, and it is pleasing to reflect that their condition has been greatly improved.⁵²

This was one of at least three attempts to have the refugee Negro in Upper Canada leave this challenging climate for the warmer vistas of the West Indies. With Mr. Peter Gallego, the Negro should migrate to Jamaica. Slightly earlier, Dr Thomas Rolph tried strenuously to have the refugee Negro migrate to Trinidad. And in the 1850's and 1860's, the Rev. W.P. Newman of North Buxton earnestly recommended Haiti as the best home for escaped slaves. The same country was also advocated in the same period by John Brown, Jr, whose bureau for this enterprise was in Boston.

When two races meet in the intimacy of a community, even such a scattered community as the Upper Canada of the first half of the nineteenth century, the differences of the two races will cause various clashes. Human nature is so superficial that a difference of color only will call forth primitive animal instincts which result in

⁵² Idem, 1 June, 1844, Vol. III, No. 44, p. 3, col. 1.

suspicion. There seems to be a feeling deeply rooted in the ego of each individual which wants strongly other people and other things to conform to the esoteric standards of the ego. "If I am white, then everybody else should be white, because all who touch my world must be like I." This instinct may be our heritage; most people through experience are compelled to modify this instinct because reality forces us to consider the rights and whims of the other human beings who compose our world. Some individuals succeed so well, that they actually become tolerant and lovable men and women.

When this protective instinct whereby the "one" feels safe only within an homogenous group of the "many" is alarmed by great cultural and historical cleavages, a long and painful adjustment may be the lot of the two races thus cast together. The white man in Upper Canada with his long history of a European, national home where the legal slavery of natives had not existed for centuries, of an ancient religious tradition, of a high cultural attainment in the arts and sciences, and of a proud claim to wide empires, found himself mixed with men of black skin some of whom were less than a generation removed from barbarism, who had been the special source of slaves for European Empires and Arab Kingdoms for centuries and whose religion, language and very names were adopted from their masters. Naturally, the sturdy white settler along the banks of the River Thames was not a cultured representative of his race, but he felt that he belonged to a superior race, and that the Negro belonged to a race of slaves.

Throughout the researches of the author, one fact is impressive. Many a British aristocrat and lordly Churchman gave time, money and influence to help the refugee Negro in Canada and elsewhere once the Christian conscience was awakened in the nineteenth century. The Royal officials in Canada in the nineteenth century were usually sympathetic and helpful to the arriving Negro. No doubt there were aristocrats who did not care a fig for the Negro; yet the greatest and most active prejudice against the Negro seemed to be amongst the people, themselves, and the lower the class of the white settler, the more vehement his prejudice. Reports which we shall consider later blame the American element, this group of emigrants who followed in the wake of the Loyalists and who were often a primitive, irresponsible group. The same reports maintain that the British emigrants, directly from the British Isles, had no color consciousness until infected by the racial doctrines of the American, white settlers in Canada. Whatever may have been the reasons, the presence of the Negro in Canada was resented by some part of the white population from the beginning. This living prejudice against the wretched refugee from slavery caused men such as Rolph, Gallego, Newman and Brown to believe that transplanting the Negro from Upper Canada to the West Indies was an act of humanity.

As early as 1832, Benjamin Lundy was struck by the prejudice shown to Negro settlers, especially by American emigrants. Referring to the Wilberforce Negro colony north of London, he wrote on inter-racial feeling:

These Europeans are, in general, very friendly to the colored people. While the 'Yankees' (as they denominate all emigrants from these States) are still actuated by their abominable prejudice against the colored race. The Irish, etc., are often heard to say that they prefer people of color as neighbours and citizens to them, (the 'Yankees'). The natives or Canadians (born in the country) appear likewise quite as friendly to the colored population as to the 'Yankees'. It is believed these observations will also very generally hold good throughout the Canadas.53

Lundy became increasingly vexed with the racial doctrine

held and practised by many of his fellow Americans in Canada:

By the way, it might not be amiss to observe that the white emigrants from the United States retain all their prejudices here that they formerly held against the colored people in their native country. And the latter being admitted to equal privileges with them under this government are accused of being 'saucy'. Perhaps, there is some ground for this charge. For when we reflect that the colored people are now released from their shackles of degradation, and yet, frequently provoked by the taunts and gibes and supercilious treatment of the 'Yankees', we need not wonder at their indulging their resentment, sometimes too far, and behaving with impropriety. But when the whites, themselves, clear their skirts of the guilt of being 'saucy' in their deportment towards the blacks, I apprehend that we shall hear little more of this kind of complaint. Indeed, if our good Republicans choose to leave their 'free' government where they can tyrannize over the colored man with impunity, and take up their abode among Monarchists, where all are 'free and equal', they would act wisely to assume fewer airs, and submit cheerfully, like good 'liege subjects' to the regulations adopted by the government of their choice.54

The "novelty" of the Negro in Canada is found mentioned in a despatch of Gould, probably Joseph Gould, Reform Politician of Uxbridge, Upper Canada, to Viscount Goderich, Colonial Secretary:

53 Fred Landon, "The Diary of Benjamin Lundy, Written During His Journey Through Upper Canada, January, 1832," Ontario Historical Society, Papers and Records, Vol. XIX, 1922, p. 116.

54 Idem, Vol. XIX, 1922, p. 121.

Cornhill, 17th Oct., 1832.

Among the novelties of the day is a Petition to the Government from a settlement of Blacks in Upper Canada, who have been driven from the places of their Birth in the United States, 'tho freeman and Christians, by their white and very liberal Brothers the Yankees, such anomalies are to be found among the professors of liberality, however,these free Blacks petition for aid to build a church.You know there are other Blacks in that Province who have introduced the culture of tobacco and as its quality is of the finest, it would be a great matter to secure protection to get it to the home market.⁵⁵

Dr Rolph had concerned himself with the plight of the Negro, likely shortly after his arrival from England in 1833. Whether Dr Thomas Rolph were any relation to Dr John Rolph of Rebellion fame, is unknown to this author. The Dr Rolph of our story was a physician and author, who came to Canada from England in 1833. He was a member of the Royal College of Surgeons in England, and, in Canada, began practising as a physician in Ancaster, Upper Canada. In 1839, he was appointed a Canadian immigration agent for The North American Colonial Committee in the United Kingdom. He retained this position until 1843 when he settled in Portsmouth, where he died.⁵⁶

In 1834, at some meeting of Negro refugees in Upper Canada, he was elected their representative. "In the year 1834, I had the honour of being elected unanimously your agent; and, since that period, it has afforded me the greatest gratification to have represented you in the two large conventions held in the British Metropolis in 1840, and during the present year, (1843)."⁵⁷ He agreed to become the agent

⁵⁵ Public Archives of Canada, Q 204, p. 240. By 1793, the Moravian missionaries at Fairfield had introduced tobacco to Southern Ontario. Vide: Lauriston, op. cit., C. VII, p. 58.

⁵⁶ The Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Toronto, The MacMillan Co., 1926, p. 347.

⁵⁷ Thomas Rolph, Emigration and Colonization, Faded in the Past

for the Trinidad Government in the Summer of 1843 for the recruiting of Negro emigrants from Canada to Trinidad. His efforts, however, antedate his official appointment by a few years.

Sometime in 1839, in his capacity as liaison officer between the refugee Negro and the Government, he apparently sent a loyal petition to the Queen in which were mentioned examples of alleged legal discriminations against some refugees. The Provincial Secretary directed an answer to him and his associates in September of 1839:

Secretary's Office,
Toronto, 24th Sept., 1839.

To Dr Thos. Rolph,
and in his absence to Messers Dunlop,
St Remy, and Gallego.

Sir,

The copy of the address of the Coloured Subjects residing in Upper Canada to Her Majesty, the Queen, was, in compliance with the Request of the Deputation, of which you were the Secretary, transmitted by the Lieutenant-Governor to the Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, by whom His Excellency has since been instructed to inform you, that the original address to the Throne has never been received at the Colonial Office; but that the copy of the address having been laid before the Queen by the Marquess of Normanby, Her Majesty had commanded His Lordship to express her satisfaction at the sentiments of ardent attachment to Her Person and Government, which it contains; and to acquaint the petitioners that the cases alluded to, as illustrations of their petition, had been previously referred by Her Majesty's Secretary for Foreign Affairs to the Law Officers of the Crown, from whose Report it appears, that under the existing laws of Upper Canada no difference was made between white and coloured men, between fugitive slaves and other individuals arriving in Canada from the United States, and that it would not be lawful to deliver up a fugitive slave in any circumstances in which a white man would not also be delivered up.

This principle, Her Majesty conceives, as amply sufficient for the protection of the Petitioners, and beyond it Her Majesty has no power to advance, nor to grant one class of Her Subjects privileges or immunities not enjoyed by others.

With reference to the Petitioner's application for assistance towards the establishment of schools, and the appointment of competent teachers, His Excellency has been desired to apprise you that the application on these points should be made to the Provincial Legislature.

In communicating to the Petitioners the answer to their Address, you will be pleased to assure them of the Lieutenant-Governor's favourable disposition towards them, and of his sincere desire to promote that system of education among them which may best be to the advancement of their true happiness.

I have, etc.,

(signed) R.A. Tucker....58

From this document, we learn indirectly of the active interest of a white physician, Dr Rolph, and of an educated Negro, Mr Peter Gallego, along with two obscure gentlemen, Mr Dunlop, and a Mr E de St Remy, in the lot of the Canadian Negro. More directly, we have an example of aristocratic and royal sympathy with one of the humblest classes in the British Empire, together with careful assurances that existing Upper Canadian law was ample to protect all citizens, and that alleged instances of legal unfairness towards Negro refugees were being investigated by the direct order of no less a man than the British Foreign Secretary. All of which illustrates that the Negro in Upper Canada had no difficulty in approaching the Throne, itself, and in having the ministers of the Crown attend to his complaints and necessities.

Dr Thomas Rolph would have agreed that the channels of government could certainly be utilised by the Negro. Yet, he would maintain stoutly that the bitter reality existed that many whites in Upper Canada disliked the Negro, and, in spite of impartial law and royal interest, would deliberately make the Negro's sojourn socially and economically unpleasant. Trinidad, therefore, (or Jamaica according to Gallego) with its Negro majority would be a happier place.

Dr Rolph writes concerning his 1843 visit to Canada and of his motives:

On the 5th of August, I left Liverpool, and arrived in Boston on the 19th, and proceeded to Canada, to make all the necessary arrangements for the removal of such of its coloured population who might desire to accompany me to Trinidad.

The same motives which had led me to espouse the emigration of the unemployed laboring classes from the United Kingdom to Canada, induced me to advocate, still more strongly, the voluntary removal of the coloured population from Canada to the West Indies. ...59

The end of the slave trade and of slavery in the British West Indies brought about a decline in the prosperity of the Islands. Their need for labor encouraged Rolph in his idea. He estimated that the Negro population of Upper Canada in 1843 was around 20,000, "and they are annually increased by the successful escape of many fugitives from the United States. They abound principally in the Western District, where a strong and unconquerable aversion on the part of the white

inhabitants is felt to them on many grounds....I am far from disputing their full right to equal countenance with the labourers from the United Kingdom; but I am stating an undeniable fact. They are looked upon with disfavour; they are excluded from the public schools; they are appointed to no public situations; they have great difficulty in obtaining land; they seldom advance from their less ability to cope with the climate than Europeans; they consume their summer's earnings with their winter's necessities" 60

This dark picture of the refugee's condition in Upper Canada is tempered by the more balanced report of the Rev. Hiram Wilson, an early benefactor of the refugee Negro and one of Josiah Henson's collaborators in founding the Dawn Institute at Dresden. Rolph, wishing to be fair, quotes from Wilson's answers concerning the Negro in Upper Canada:

4. "Do they (the Negroes) settle promiscuously among the white inhabitants, or in villages by themselves?....They are located in settlements by themselves in many parts of the Province, and are also scattered among the white inhabitants. The most populous settlements are in the Western District, near the head of Lake Erie....

5. "Is there much prejudice among the inhabitants; if so, in what forms is it exhibited?..In some parts of the Province, particularly along the frontiers, the coloured people are considerably annoyed by the same inhuman prejudice which is most shamefully prevalent in the States. Where "old country people" have the ascendancy, and consequently the moulding of customs and manners, there is not the same prejudice to disturb them. Prejudice against colour exhibits, itself, on this side, much as it does in the United States; but even where it is the strongest, the coloured people have the satisfaction of

knowing that the laws are equal and impartial, and that they stand upon the same broad platform of natural and constitutional rights with those of the florid hue. Prejudice in this country, as in the States, obtains rather among the ignorant and vicious than among the intelligent and respectable. It is evidently unnatural, of slaveholding affinity, and hellish in origin, and ought to be rebuked and dismissed from the human breast, and sent down to its proper place.

6. "How does the climate agree with them, and do they look upon Canada as their permanent residence?...The climate agrees with them. They are generally a vigorous and athletic people, except in cases where their constitutions have been impaired previously to their entering the country. Generally, they do not regard this country as their permanent home, unless slavery should be perpetuated in the Southern States. Should a general emancipation, for which they long and pray, take place, the majority would soon speed their way back to the embrace of their brethren and kindred at the south....I have long been familiar among these self-exiled ones, and do not doubt their readiness to return to their kindred and country, as soon as their safety and the restoration of their rights would permit.

7. "In what business do they chiefly engage?...They have generally been bred up to industrious habits, and are ready to turn their hand to any employment by which they can gain an honest livelihood. Considerable numbers are engaged in mechanical pursuits. They find constant employment, and many of them are doing good business. Some are carpenters, some house-joiners, masons, whitewashers, painters, shoe-makers, tailors, etc., etc. Many are engaged in agricultural pursuits. In some instances, coloured men have been very successful cultivators of the soil, and many more would be but for the fact they have not the means of purchasing land. Numbers of them are engaged as small traders, jobbers, day labourers, barbers, cooks, waiters, etc., in public houses, and on steamboats and schooners. Unless broken down by old age or infirmities, as is sometimes the case, they all take care of themselves!"...61

Mr Wilson's silhouette of the escaped slave's life in Upper Canada is more optimistic than the conception held by Rolph, without

61 Idem, pp. 312-313.

being any the less realistic. One of Dr Rolph's charges that the Negro had difficulty obtaining land from certain people and land companies is substantiated by later records and also by a letter of Thomas Fowell Buxton to the Lieutenant - Governor, Sir George Arthur, marked as having been received 28 March, 1837:

My Dear Sir George,

The following facts have been communicated to me. There are many respectable Negroes settled in Canada, but they are labouring under great disadvantages owing to the refusal of the Canada Company to sell them more land, of which they are in much want, supposing that it would deter white emigrants from settling there. Would it be considered advisable by the Government to grant a tract of land for the especial use of these Blacks where they might be placed without interfering with the whites? It is stated that it would be the most effectual means of retaining Canada under British control. A grant of this kind was obtained but the plan was frustrated by the disturbances in Texas. I send you the letter containing the information I have received.

Believe Me,

Yours Very Truly,

(signed) T. F. Buxton.

By 31 March, 1837, Sir George refused Buxton's appeal on the grounds that any of Her Majesty's Subjects could buy Crown land. ⁶²

To rescue the Negro inhabitants of Upper Canada from the inclement climate, nasty people, and a hard life in general, Dr Rolph held meetings of escaped slaves at Colchester, Sandwich and Amherstburg, on 5, 6 and 9 October, 1843 to induce them to migrate to the semi-tropical shores of Trinidad. He let loose upon his hearers an

outstanding example of Victorian, long-winded eloquence. He painted a cold picture of their present status in Upper Canada, and predicted a worse future. On the contrary, the unvarying climate of sub-tropical Trinidad and the prosperity of the Negro, there, beckoned with golden hope. From his account, many of his audience were so moved by his arguments and oratory that they instantly decided to trade
63
Canada for Trinidad.

In spite of such enthusiasm, the Trinidad plan came to nought:

The favourable opportunity afforded by the disposition of vast numbers of these people, who met me at this convention, and who were most desirous of proceeding to Trinidad, was then lost by the inefficiency of the ordinance of that Colony to furnish the sufficient amount required to bring them through the chain of lakes to Quebec; and this year, the obstacles to their removal is in the Home Government, which considers their removal of doubtful advantage.....

The lateness of the season, and the inefficiency of the provisions for their removal compelled me to postpone my operation until the present season, when they were altogether stayed by the determination of the Colonial department not to place on the estimates for Trinidad the allowance for an agent to British North America.....64

A deeply disappointed man, Dr Rolph left Canada for England in November, 1843, never to return again.

The official opposition to Rolph's idea of transplanting the escaped slaves to Trinidad is indicated in a forthright letter by Lord Sydenham, the Governor-General, to Lord John Russell, the Colonial Secretary, in April 1841. The letter was in answer to a dispatch from the British Government of 9 February, 1841, containing a query about Dr Rolph's scheme:

63 Thomas Rolph, Op. Cit., pp. 314-318.

64 Idem, p. 319.

Montreal, Lower Canada,
23rd April, 1841.

The Right Honourable, Lord John Russell,

My Lord,

Since I had the honour of receiving Your Lordship's despatch of the 9th February, no. 303, I have caused enquiry to be made into the circumstances of the colored people settled in Upper Canada, and the proposed scheme for the emigration of a certain number of them to Trinidad.

I cannot find that any correspondence passed on this subject between Dr Rolph and the Lieutenant-Governor, or that the matter was in any way mentioned by that gentleman to Sir George Arthur. I can only conclude, therefore, that the project for the transporting a body of these persons to Trinidad originated with Dr Rolph along, whether after previous consultation with any of the colored people themselves or not, I am unable to learn.

I see no reason, however, to think that there exists at present any desire on the part of that race to quit the Province, and I am certainly not disposed to take any measures for inducing them to do so. With some exceptions, they are, as far as I can learn, a well-conducted and orderly set of people. The condition and prospects in Canada are at least as good as any which Trinidad would afford, and their loyalty to the Queen and the gratitude shewn to their race under British Law, renders them valuable subjects in these colonies.

As Mr St Remy's letter contains some other interesting particulars respecting a portion of them, I enclose a copy for Your Lordship's perusal.

I have, etc.,

(signed) Sydenham.....65

The letter of Mr E. de St Remy, a copy of which Lord Sydenham sent to Lord Russell, concerns largely the Negroes of Toronto. His report, though in more detail, resembles the answers of Mr Hiram Wilson,

and has the same sober realism tempered with optimism. He states that the "colored people, having taken steps to ascertain their own numbers, report them at 12,500." One of the accusations made by Rolph against the white population, that is the refusal of the public schools to admit Negro children, is supported by de St Remy's report:

One cause of just complaint of our colored men is the difficulty they experience in procuring admission for their children into Common Schools, which necessarily renders them an easy prey to a few designing Americans of the lowest and most illiterate class, who have availed themselves of their situation to establish numerous schools, and to spread American ideas and dissatisfaction among them, both against the people and against the Government....

Mr de St Remy communicated suggestions to remedy the discrimination experienced by the Negroes:

I shall make bold to add to this letter the following suggestion from themselves: that a Bill of Naturalization as comprehensive as possible be passed either in the Colonial or Imperial Parliament. It might be drawn up so as to give no offence whatever to the United States; that they be admitted on the same conditions as other men to land grants (this has already been done on a limited scale in Simcoe without bad effects); that they be admitted to all Common Schools, and churches, which since the settlement of the Clergy Reserves, are all supported more or less by the Government, and bound to furnish instructions and administer the Sacrament without distinction.

These measures, they conceive, would secure their happiness, and satisfy every possible claim....⁶⁶

Such official correspondence as this undoubtedly helped to doom Dr Rolph's Trinidadian enterprise. Mr Peter Gallego continued the advertisements of his Jamaica plan in The Chatham Journal from 1 June

⁶⁶ Public Archives of Canada, PSO--C.W., #51, pp. 288-291; vide appendix for full text.

67
to July, 1844. What results he had, and what happened to his part of the West Indian Scheme is yet a mystery.

Peter Gallego, himself, is something of a misty figure. In a letter to the headquarters, in London, of the Society for Promoting The Gospel in Foreign Parts, Dr John Strachan, Anglican Bishop of Toronto, devoted a paragraph to this talented, young Negro:

Toronto, 28 April, 1840.

.....There is in this city an increasing number of colored people....(the bishop speaks of converting them)....to pave the way I have caused a young man, a Negro, called Peter Gallego to be educated with the view of his being admitted into Holy Orders should I find him sufficiently qualified in learning and seriously impressed with proper views of religion. He is already a tolerable, classical scholar and has read a good deal of Theology under my direction and that of my chaplain--But I am not yet quite satisfied of the sincerity of his religious feelings. Although now twenty-nine, I shall not admit him into orders till I am thoroughly satisfied in these particulars and of his feelings as a Churchman---In the meantime, he maintains an exemplary moral character, is much esteemed among his own people, and is at present employed in taking a census of them, a copy of which I shall forward to the Society. 68

Twenty-four years later, the memory of this personable, young Negro student remained. Dr S.G. Howe in his famous report on the refugee Negroes of Canada West quotes Dr John McCaul, then President of the University of Toronto, "There was a boy here from Upper Canada by the name of Galigo, who, I think I am safe in saying, was a thorough black. He did exceedingly well, and manifested a

67 The Chatham Journal 1 June, 1844, gives J.W. Dunscomb, as Agent of Emigration for the Island of Jamaica, 41 Great St James' St, Montreal.
68 Ontario Archives, Letters of Bishop Strachan to Society for Promoting The Gospel in Foreign Parts, 1843-44, p. 13.

capacity equal to any white boy of his standing...." 69

Except for Peter Gallego's interest in Negro immigration, his studies for the Anglican ministry, and his attractive character, nothing else yet found sheds light on his life and work.

CELEBRATIONS AND POLITICS

Traditionally, the Negro people of the British Empire celebrate a day in August as Emancipation Day. Even now, Windsor and Chatham are the scenes of great demonstrations and feasts by the Canadian Negro in jubilation for the abolition of slavery in the British Empire in 1833. King William IV gave Royal assent to the measure on 28 August, 1833. The Chatham Journal in a tone which suggests surprise that Negroes could conduct themselves so well gives an account of the celebration on 20 August, 1841:

On Friday last, the 20th, the colored people of this town, celebrated the important event of their emancipation throughout the British Dominions in a manner, too, that shewed the value and consequence attached by them to the boon of freedom. They met in the large building lately occupied as a military hospital, and having been addressed by Mr Lindsay Taylor--to whose exertions the getting up of the celebration is mainly to be attributed--formed themselves into a procession, and accompanied by an excellent band, paraded through the streets for some time, to the number of about one hundred. It gives us great pleasure to add, the greatest decorum and regularity was preserved, and the appearance they presented was very respectable. In the evening, they sat down to an excellent dinner, after which they figured away in the merry dance until a late hour....70

69 S.G. Howe, The Refugees From Slavery In Canada West; Report To The Freedmen's Inquiry Commission, Boston, Wright and Potter, Printers, 4 Spring Lane, 1864, pp. 79-80.

70 The Chatham Journal, Vol. 1, No. 8, 28 August, 1841, p. 3, col. 3.

The president of these rejoicings was William Lampton, while the vice-chairman was Henry Jones. A ringing two sentences from Lindsay Taylor's speech on this Emancipation Day could well be a clarion call, today. Imagining himself addressing the great, British Emancipators, William Wilberforce and Thomas Clarkson, he cried, "To you, the color of their skin is nothing. It is enough that they have souls; that they are rational beings; that they belong to the same common family, are the children of one common parent."

A military flourish was given to the Emancipation Day celebration in 1842:

The colored troops stationed here under the command of Captain Cameron celebrated "emancipation day" on Thursday last in a manner which evidenced their appreciation of the gift of liberty. Early in the morning, almost at the break of day, twenty-one rounds were fired from a cannon stationed at the extreme point of the military ground; near to which spot was erected an arbor of boughs about sixty feet long. About 4 o'clock, we went to see them sit to dinner, and were perfectly surprised at the profusion of the good things of this life with which a table, on which we counted sixty covers, was laden; the neatness with which everything was arranged, and the manner in which the beefs, hams, fowls, etc. were dressed gave ample testimony that the men composing the company are, at least, no novices at the culinary art.

Josiah Jones delivered the address of the day, which was filled with a patriotic fervor very characteristic of the refugee Negro:

Dearly Beloved Brethren:

I am happy to inform the public, that I am very much gratified to see so many of our friends assembled together to celebrate this great and glorious day of liberty on which the shackles of slavery fell from so many of our Brethren. I am sorry that I am not better qualified to deliver a long speech, as we wish to show the public the respect we have towards our

people, and also the great respect we have for the British Constitution. Dear fellow citizens and friends, we find that when our foreign friends were oppressed in a deplorable situation, the British Government emptied their coffers of twenty millions of pounds, of her precious gold and silver to redeem them from their distressed condition.

Can we forget such a friend. No! No ! as long as we shall exist our gratitude will be manifested on every suitable occasion. Dear fellow men and Brethren, in the southern states our friends are not asleep, they are known by all there, to be true British subjects, and all of the most loyal kind.

We also know what we are called by the Southerners, they call us the tigers, and well might they so denominate us, but why dare that ferocious animal remain so harmless. I answer because he is fettered and confined within a cage. Oh! that John Bull would roar in the East, and that the thunder of his voice might be heard by the tigers of the south, for then they would burst asunder their prison house, and sweep with the broom of destruction, the enemies of liberty and humanity.

The quaint and somewhat patronising account continues:

After dark they retired to a room provided by the kindness of the officers, where having procured some fiddlers, those "gen'men ob color" and their sable partners "welled the floor" for the remainder of the night. Many of the respectable people of the neighbourhood attended early in the evening to witness the dancing, and before leaving were regaled with "lots of lush" by the officers. One thing was particularly observed that during the whole day and night, although liquors of all kinds were in abundance, not one man of the company did we notice intoxicated. Indeed, much credit is due Captain Cameron and Lieut. Perrier for the state of discipline and efficiency to which they have brought the men under their command. We believe most of their men are members of the Temperance Society....71

Not so edifying is an item published for comic purposes in the Journal of 6 August, 1842:

"Nigger Peculiarities".....Perhaps no race of people on the face of the habitable globe are so imbued with individual peculiarities as the free and slave Negro population of

the United States. Out Heroding Herod in their monstrous attempts of imitating and exceeding the fashions of the whites, the emulative "Darkies" may be seen on Sundays occupying the whole extent of the Broadway pavement, New York, dressed in fashions carried to the very sublime to the very ridiculous.....72

Whatever may have been the capers of a newly civilised people groping their way through the world of fashion, the column, which goes on to relate gaily several "nigger" stories, indicates that the Negro, at times, could be an object of ridicule and contempt.

Another example of ribald humor at Negro expense appeared in the same Chatham Journal on 24 February, 1844:

A Negro by the name of Dennis Jackson has been committed to prison for stealing a quantity of pork, the property of Henry Eberts, Esq. It appears that while this gentleman was from home, chasing the horse-thief, divers gentlemen of color in the neighbourhood tho't it a good opportunity to levy contributions on him, and accordingly appropriate two barrels of pork from his root house. Mr E's return created some confusion among the black cattle, and they set their wits to work to hide the plunder. 'Golly', exclaimed one, 'I guess I'll tote my bag of pork two mile back in the bush, now Massa' Henry's come back'. He did so; but, alas! being of too artless and confiding a nature, he suffered his cumrogues(sic) to know the spot where his treasure was deposited....When the bereaved owner next approached.... 'Goramity!', cried the sable victim, '.....I go tell Massa Henry old about dese dam nigger teevs! '....But here again his ill luck triumphed: the niggers most deeply implicated have not yet been caught....his brothers giving testimony, he exclaimed, 'Oh! My! I didn't tink dey know'd harf so much! ' The upshot of the matter was that the suffering Mr Jackson sans pork was sent off this morning's stage to Sandwich gaol without even the solace a companion of his own color. 'No flower of his kindred to reflect back his blushes, and give sigh for sigh ! '73

72 Idem, Vol. II, No. 2, 6 August, 1842, p. 2, col. 3.

73 Chatham Journal, Vol. III, 24 February, 1844, p. 3, cols. 1, 2.

Although the word "nigger", a corruption of "Negro", was commonly used at this period, and often without any insulting meaning, it could have and definitely has today a connotation of scorn. Today, "nigger" is in the same vulgar category as other racial obscenities such as "wop", "kike", "dago", "frog", etc. To use such terms, now, is mark of ignorance.

Early in their history, the Negroes in Upper Canada became staunch supporters of the Tory or Conservative Party. Their main reason was the outspoken imperialism of the Tories. Since the royalist, pro-British and anti-American policies of the Tories guaranteed the continuance of Canada under the British flag, the Negro fleeing from slavery supported ardently the party dedicated to keeping American influence, and hence American slavery, out of Canada. The Whigs or Reformers, on the other hand, had too often flirted with republicanism and pro-American attitudes to appeal to very many of the Negro voters.

Thus it is that the Solicitor-General, of the Province and member for Cornwall, John Hillyard Cameron, received a "Requisition" from "the Colored Freeholders of Kent" in January, 1848:

We, the undersigned, who have sought freedom under the glorious flag which proclaims it to the world, beg to call upon you to come forward to represent the County of Kent.

We are all Freeholders in the County, and, as a body, we wish to testify our gratitude to the Country which has received us, and the Constitution which protects us, by recording our votes in favor of a loyal and good man.

That you are such, we feel assured, that you will not neglect the educational and other interests of the colored race we are certain, and again request you to come and receive our votes.

Geo. Ramsay,	J. Malone,	William Eddy,
Stephen More,	John Isaiah,	Charles Smith,
Samuel Thompson,	John Davis,	George Washington,
Samuel Long,	William Croucher,	Henry Hailey,
Henry Harrison,	David Strawder,	Will. Randall,
Lewis Willoughby,	Sen.	

Chatham, 18 December, 1847.....74

Mr Cameron replied graciously to his Negro supporters:

I am happy to receive your Requisition, and to be made aware that you appreciate the privileges you possess under the free constitution of your adopted country.

I shall be glad at all times, as well without as within, the Halls of the Legislature to assist in doing all in my power for the benefit of your race, for the promotion of the education of your children, and for making them worthy to take a proper position among their fellow Canadian Subjects.

In the hour of danger to the British Connection, you have proved yourselves true to your allegiance to the land which has made you free; and it gives me the greatest satisfaction to receive the promise of your support on the principles on which you have offered it to me.

Your Obedient Servant,

J. Hillyard Cameron.

Chatham, 1st January, 1848.....75

Along with the dawning political sensibilities of the refugee Negro came a deep desire for education. The Chatham Journal of

9 January, 1849 records an early meeting of the town's school trustees:

School Section Meeting---This day at noon, will be held at the School House the annual School Meeting, and it is proper that all who take an interest.....The duties of these officers

74 The Chatham Gleaner, Vol. IV, No. 25, 18 January, 1848, p. 4, col. 2.

75 Idem, Vol. IV, No. 23, 4 January, 1848, p. 3, col. 1.

during the present year will be more onerous than they have hitherto been. School Houses must be built, and the inhabitants of the town must pay for them. Four are wanted, one for the Coloured children, at the head of King Street, one in Raleigh, one on the opposite side of the Creek, and one where the old house now stands.....For those School Houses, sites should at once be bought. The expense to the town will not fall short of £600.....76

From this report, one would assume that the infant town of Chatham had only one school during the 1840's; but at the very end of that decade set about building, or planning to build, four new schools; three for white children in three newer areas of settlement, and one for the coloured children on King Street in Chatham's Negro colony, sometimes called, "Little Africa".

Only the newspaper report of the Emancipation Day celebrations in 1841, affords any clue as to the amount of Negroes in Chatham at this early date. One hundred took part in the parade. Because of the importance of the occasion, likely most of the town's Negro population was in the march. It might not be too inaccurate, then, to hazard a guess that Chatham's Negro population in the early 1840's was less than two hundred. This little band was to soar in number to close to a thousand when in 1850 the American Congress passed the second, and much more effective, Fugitive Slave Law, which drove the Negro into Canada by the thousands. The village of Chatham advanced in prosperity, and won international fame by becoming an important, Canadian terminus of the Underground Railroad.

CHAPTER III

THE GRAND INFLUX

THE IMPACT ON THE CHATHAM NEGRO COMMUNITY CAUSED
BY THE PASSAGE OF THE SECOND FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW

The one hundred Negroes who paraded on Emancipation Day in 1841 were to have their numbers inflated almost tenfold by August, 1851. Until 1850, the Negroes fleeing into Canada were largely slaves in illegal flight. From 1850 to 1863 the fleeing slave was often to have as his brother, the free Negro residing in the Northern or Western States who feared the unscrupulous clutches of the Southern slave-hunter operating under the remarkable Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. This was the second statute passed by the American Congress for the capture of runaway slaves. The first was instituted in 1793. The situation which led the early American Congress to this legislation was the abolition of slavery in several of the Northern States. Vermont began the pattern of abolishing slavery in 1777, one year after the Declaration of Independence. Pennsylvania and Massachusetts followed suit in 1780. Four years later, these examples were imitated by Rhode Island and Connecticut. Finally, the State of New York joined this worthy company of Free States in 1799, and New Jersey in 1804.⁷⁷

Such a free area constituted a potential menace to the slave holding plantations in the South. To limit the benefit of this likely

⁷⁷ Wilbur H. Siebert, The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom, New York, The MacMillan Co., 1898 C. II, p. 17.

haven, the Fugitive Slave Law of 1793 made these provisions:

The owner, his agent or attorney, was empowered to seize the fugitive, and take him before a United States Circuit or District Judge within the state where the arrest was made, or before any local magistrate within the county in which the seizure occurred. The oral testimony of the claimant, or an affidavit from a magistrate in the state from which he came, must certify that the fugitive owed service as he claimed. Upon such showing the claimant secured his warrant for removing the runaway to the state or territory from which he had fled. Five hundred dollars constituted the penalty for hindering arrest, or for rescuing or harboring the fugitive after notice that he or she was a fugitive from labor.....78

THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Since the inhabitants of the Northern States were, on the whole, unsympathetic to the slavery system, and slavery became not a crucial question until the 1840's and 1850's, the first legislation to retrieve fleet-footed Negroes largely failed. A growing success, however, was a mysterious organisation eventually to become known as "The Underground Railroad". Figures for the runaway slave population between the years 1812 and 1850 are open to speculation. Yet if the Canada Census of 1851 could, in a footnote, assume that the Negro population of Canada West was probably around 8,000, with most of these certainly refugee slaves, we are safe in hazarding that thousands of Negro slaves had already fled their masters and that the number was growing rapidly.

78 Idem, C. II, p. 22.

In high alarm, the slavery interests used every influence to persuade Congress to enact stringent legislation which would allow the power of the slave-hunter to be felt with equal force in all States.

The Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 provided:

- 1) a certificate granting the arrest and removal of a fugitive slave could be obtained from a United States Commissioner, the courts, or the judge of the proper circuit, district or county;
- 2) if the arrest were made without process, it was still valid, and was dealt with by a commissioner or other official;
- 3) the refusal of an United States Marshal to obey a commissioner's certificate would expose him to a fine of one thousand dollars.
- 4) failure to prevent the escape of the slave after capture would make the Marshal liable for the value of the slave;
- 5) in case of necessity, the Marshal could commandeer the services of local citizens in an attempt to capture fugitive slaves;
- 6) the testimony of the alleged slave counted for nought;
- 7) yet, the affidavit of the claimant was sufficient proof of ownership, and, when decided, no other legal process to obstruct the decision had any validity;
- 8) any person obstructing the execution of this law by protecting the fugitive through harboring, rescuing or concealing him, was liable to a maximum fine of one thousand dollars and a maximum period of six months imprisonment, and, in addition, was liable for civil damages to the slave-owner concerned to the sum of one thousand dollars for each fugitive thus lost;
- 9) if a warrant for the fugitive's arrest had been issued, the commissioner in charge of proceedings was entitled to a fee of ten dollars if the fugitive were returned to the owner; if the fugitive were freed, the commissioner received only five dollars.....79

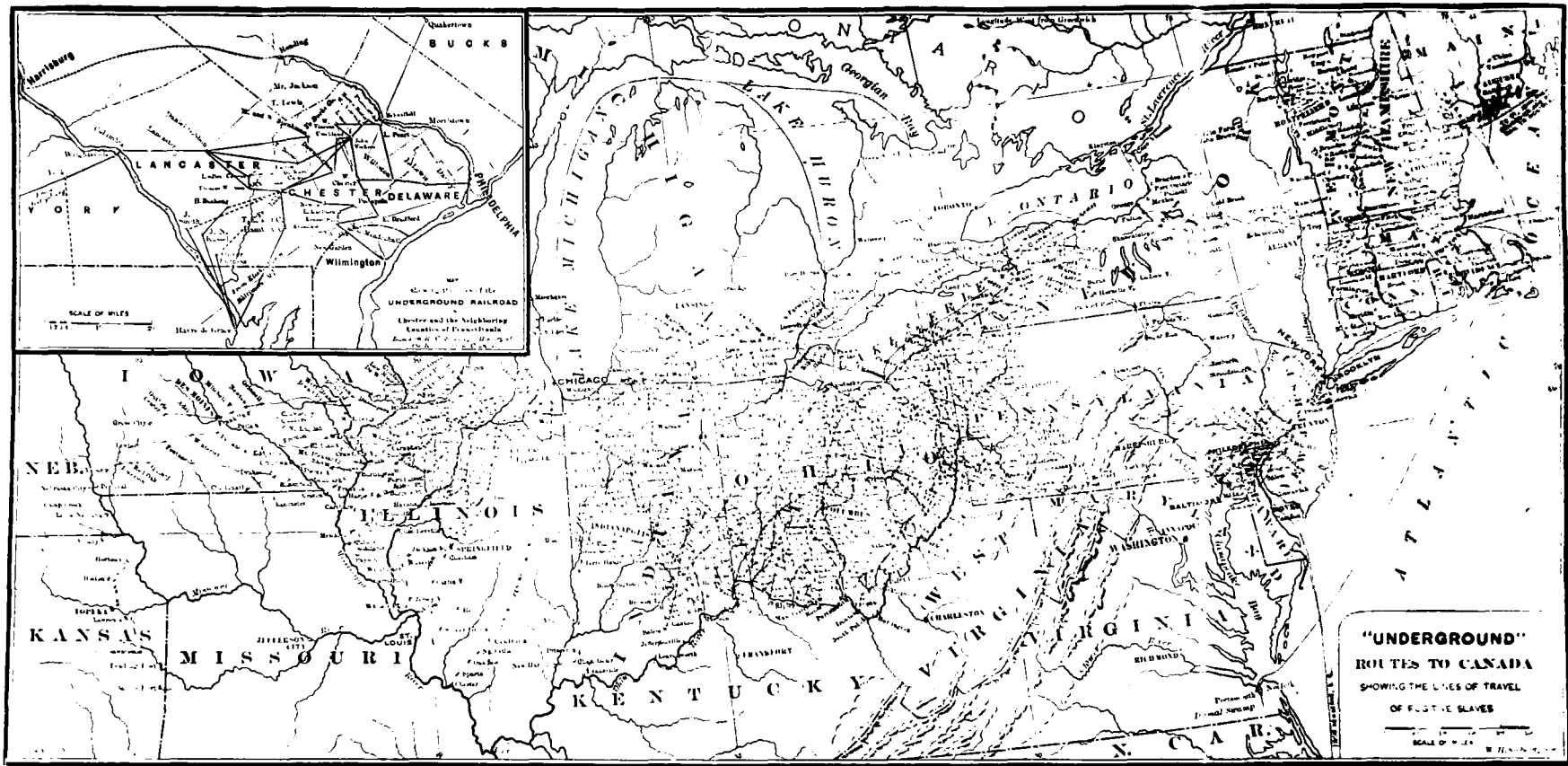
Based on the first Fugitive Slave Law, the second statute was so much more detailed and so heavily biased in favor of the masters that it became something of a national and international scandal.

The Underground Railroad consisted of a series of houses and other habitations owned by anti-slavery sympathisers in any number of places extending from below the Mason-Dixon line to the Canadian border, where refugee Negro slaves could be sure of hospitality, protection, and of guidance to the next station along the Railroad. Although the idea and practice antedated the age of the steam engine, by the 1850's the abolitionists involved in the flight of runaway slaves had adopted the terminology of the actual, railroad system. The origin of organised assistance to fleeing slaves would seem to have been as early as 1786 in Philadelphia amongst the adherents of the Society of Friends or the Quakers. This assistance was spread by the Quakers all over their native state of Pennsylvania and into Quaker colonies in New Jersey and New York. Isaac T. Hopper, who lived first in Philadelphia and then in New York City, was one of the founders of the movement which became the

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Underground Railroad.

By the 1840's, the Underground Railroad was developed as far west as Ohio and as far east as the New England States of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont. Although the Friends remained active in the underground, as time went on Americans of all denominations and classes joined in helping the Southern slave on his precarious way to Canada.



ROUTES OF THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

And as the route developed, Ohio became the state most prominent in the underground system, since the state was situated strategically between the northerly slave-holding States of Kentucky and West Virginia, and Lake Erie which lay alluringly at the entrance to Canada West. What made the refugee slave not only a property loss, in himself, but dangerous was the custom of many such slaves to return to their former homes in the South, and to steal away their wives, children, parents and even friends. The few refugee slaves who made their way to Canada shortly after 1812 were imitated by more in the 1820's and 1830's. The problem which was growing acutely by the decade of the 1840's, became epidemic from 1850 until the Civil War.

The American Government, as early as 1826, tried to eliminate Canada as a place of refuge by asking the British Government for a treaty which would provide for, "a mutual surrender of all persons held to service or labor, under the laws of either party, who escape into the territory of the other". The British Government rejected the idea, "It was utterly impossible for them to agree to a stipulation for the surrender of fugitive slaves." In July 1827, a similar negotiation with Mexico had more promise of success until the Mexican Senate refused
81
to ratify the treaty.

To frighten the slaves from any attempt to reach Canada, some slaveowners told their charges fantastic stories about the country:

81 S.G. Howe, The Refugee From Slavery in Canada West; Report To The Freedman's Inquiry Commission, Boston, Wright and Potter, 1864, pp. 12-13.

'After we began to hear about Canada', said M.J. Lindsay, 'our master used to tell us all manner of stories about what a dreadful place it was; and we believed some of them, but some we didn't. When they told us that we must pay half our wages to the Queen, every day, it didn't seem strange to us nor wrong; but when they said it was so cold there that men going mowing had to break the ice with their scythes, I didn't believe that, because it was onreasonable (sic). I knew grass wouldn't grow where ice was all the time.' 'I was told before I left Virginia', said Dan Fackart, 'I have heard it as common talk that the wild geese were so common in Canada, that they would scratch a man's eyes out; that corn wouldn't grow there, nor anything but rice; that everything they had there was imported'.....⁸²

As Dr. S.G. Howe puts it, "Nothing invited the Negroes to this cold region, except the still, small voice of freedom."

Benjamin Drew, a Quaker Abolitionist, twenty-two years after Benjamin Lundy's journey by stage coach and sleigh through the southern peninsula of Upper Canada, visited many of the same towns with a more specific object in mind. Lundy was more of a tourist; Drew was a social reformer studying, on behalf of the anti-slavery elements, the escaped Negro slave in a free society. His observations compiled into a book, The Refugee, were a retort to a Southern justification of Negro slavery contained in another book, entitled, A South Side View of Slavery. Anticipating the later technique of sociology and psychology, Benjamin Drew faithfully recorded the case histories of dozens of escaped slaves in various centres of Canada West, such as Toronto, St Catherines, London, Chatham, etc.

Under the section entitled, "Chatham", Drew calculated the white population of Chatham in 1854 to be 4,000 with 800 Negroes

⁸² Idem, p. 11.

residing in the town, itself, and 1,200 Negroes resident in the surrounding countryside.

As an example of the Negro's strong desire to improve his lot, morally and materially, Drew described the "True Bands". One such group had just been formed in Chatham with 375 members enrolled. Along the lines of a benevolent fraternity, the True Band, drawing its membership from both sexes of the Negro race, had multiple, useful ends: the members were to take a general interest in each other's welfare; to pursue such plans and objects as may be for their mutual advantage: to improve all schools, and to induce their race to send their children into the school; to bring all churches, as far as possible, into one body, and not to let minor differences divide them; to prevent litigations by referring all disputes amongst themselves to a committee; to stop the begging system entirely: i.e. canvassers going to the United States, and, there, by representing that the fugitives were starving, collecting funds which were, then, dissipated by the unscrupulous Negro begging in the name of his less fortunate and more honest brethren; instead, to raise such funds among themselves as might be necessary for the newly arrived, destitute refugee.

According to Drew, the first True Band was established in Malden, in September, 1854. It consisted of 600 members. In Drew's estimation, the True Band in Malden was a flourishing society on its way to fulfilling the several noble purposes listed above. He

believed this to be the case of the other thirteen True Bands formed in towns elsewhere in Canada West. Since Drew's account is the only one, within the knowledge of the author, to mention the True Bands, their subsequent history is hidden.

83

Sixteen interviews with various Chatham Negroes, in 1854, were recorded by the industrious Benjamin Drew. First and most colorful was the career of J.C. Brown. Brown sprang from the loins of his white master and of a Negro slave mother in Frederick County, Virginia. After the death of his father and master, his white aunt became his mistress. From her, he won his freedom for the price of \$1,800. His freedom, he dedicated to rescuing and guiding other slaves and ex-slaves. Forming and becoming president of a colonisation society, he told Drew that he was responsible for leading 460 Negroes to Canada from Cincinnati. Rather naturally, this occupation made him unpopular with slavery interests. Afraid that his position in Ohio was becoming precarious, Brown wrote to Sir John Colborne at Little York for asylum. Sir John granted such protection to Brown and his family. At Little York, he began negotiations with the Canada Land Company for a township of land for which he agreed to pay \$6,000 a year for ten years. Although it is unlikely that he managed to buy a whole township, he explained to Benjamin Drew that his land was purchased in Biddulph township, north of London, and that on this land he settled 516 families.

There occurred, apparently, some dispute between Brown and his colonists which resulted in his removal to Toronto. Here, his wife underwent a severe attack of nostalgia, and persuaded her husband to return to their native South. The cure for Mrs Brown's nostalgia proved drastic but lasting: Mr Brown was arrested in Louisville, charged with assisting the Underground Railroad. Once Brown was released his wife pleaded with all her former vehemence that he return at once to Canada. He resumed residence in Toronto where he joined the loyal forces during the Rebellion as a gunner. From Toronto, he migrated to Dawn where he became a school trustee, and, then, in 1849 settled in Chatham. Brown concludes his lengthy story to Drew by an opinion which may have animated many an ex-slave, "Slavery disarms a man of virtue--of everything; it prevents his being a man. Anticipation is what we live for---⁸⁴ the slave can see no future except the setting of the sun."

Philip Younger was born in Virginia, and spent most of his life in Alabama. Here at the age of fifty-five, he bought his freedom, and that of his wife. Once free, he found himself in a tragic situation common to slavery where he was forced to leave in slavery his children and grandchildren. After a few years in the Free States, he fled to Chatham upon the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law. Having become a farmer in the country with fifty acres to cultivate, Mr Younger commented on the wealth of two other Chatham Negroes, a Henry Blue,

84 Idem, pp. 240-248.

whom he claimed was worth \$12,000, and a Mr Ramsay, also worth
85
around \$12,000.

Gilbert Dickey hailed from Guilford County, North Carolina. He was able to purchase his freedom at the age of thirty-five. When his movements were unfettered by legal slavery, he worked in Indiana. At the time of his interview with Drew, he had been in Chatham for only six weeks. He gave as his reason for leaving the United States, the
86
great prejudice against the Negro even in the Northern States.

From the deep South came William J. Anderson. His birthplace was Red River, Bayou Rapide, Louisiana. At the age of thirty-two, he fled to the north upon the death of his master. For funds, he kept \$500 which he had earned by being hired out. In Cincinnati, he married a mulatto girl whose master was also her father. When the father and master of his wife died, his wife and nine other slaves were freed by the terms of the master's will, and bequeathed \$8,000 each. Anderson and his wife proceeded to Chatham with the part of their inheritance invested in Ohio, while the bulk of this capital, they invested in Chatham. Through such a stroke of fortune, a few ex-slaves reached
87
Canada in exceptionally good financial circumstances.

Fresh from flight, a Henry Crowthion had arrived from Louis-
88
ville, Kentucky, the night before Drew met him. Another very recent arrival was Mary Younger, who claimed to have experienced great cruelty
89
in her slavery days. Edward Hickee originated in Lunenburg County,

85 Idem, p. 248.

86 Idem, p. 251.

87 Idem, p. 254.

88 Idem, p. 256.

Virginia, and escaped slavery by travelling through Ohio and Pennsylvania to Canada. When Drew spoke to him, Mr Hickes had been in Chatham for six years, and had accumulated property worth \$2,000.⁹⁰

Henry Blue, mentioned by Philip Younger as being worth the tidy sum of \$12,000, came from Kentucky, and had found his way to Canada through the usual, famous station of Cincinnati. An interesting case is that of Aaron Siddles. Siddles, born in South Carolina, fled from a harsh slave-trader. His chance of capture was sold to another white man, who did capture him. This new master, however, allowed him to gain his freedom upon payment of \$1,600. For seven years, Aaron Siddles worked as a steward on a steamboat plying the Mississippi River before he cancelled his debt. He described to Drew one of his deep impressions gained from his life on the Mississippi, "On passing up or down the Mississippi, between slave states, the first thing I heard in the morning was the sound of the great bells which are rung to call the slaves. The next thing before it was light enough to see, I heard the crash of the overseer's whip, and the cries of the slaves, 'Oh! Pray, Mas'r! Oh! Pray, Mas'r!' Every morning, I heard it from both sides of the river." Aaron Siddles went, after his manumission, to Indiana. There, he suffered from racial discrimination which led him to remove to Chatham. He claimed to have brought capital worth \$10,000 with him to Canada.⁹¹

⁹⁰ Idem, p. 260.

⁹¹ Idem, pp. 270-271.

An escaped slave, identified only as John C....n, confirmed Siddles' impression of slavery along the Mississippi. Around April, 1856, Reuben Saunders came from Indiana to Chatham. Although born in Green County, Georgia, he was eventually sold to a master in Indiana. This master proved an ideal one: he deliberately purchased Reuben's wife and three children for \$1,300, along with her brother for \$750, and, then, manumitted them. After this magnanimous gesture, the Saunders' family moved to Canada. Concerning illiteracy amongst the slaves, he had this to say, "I was never caught there with a book in my hand or a pen. I never saw but one slave in Georgia who could read⁹² or write, and he was brought in from another state."

Unique amongst these case histories is Thomas Hedgebeth. A free Negro, born in Halifax County, North Carolina, he was the son of a farmer who was half-white and half-Negro. Unfortunately, his father lost his farm. In speaking of his condition as a free Negro in North Carolina, he revealed, "I cannot read or write. A free-born man in North Carolina is as much oppressed in one sense as the slave. I was not allowed to go to school. I recollect when I was a boy, a colored man came from Ohio, and opened a school, but it was broken up." In time, Hedgebeth came to live in Indiana. After 1850, however, he was arrested, in Indianapolis, as an escaped slave. Although he was later released, the experience frightened him with the result that he emigrated to Chatham in the Spring of 1856. Drew quotes Hedgebeth's opinion of Canada, "In regard to Canada, I like the country, the soil,

92 Idem, p. 274.

as well as any I ever saw. I like the laws which leave a man as much freedom as a man can have--still there is prejudice, here. The colored people are trying to remove this by improving and educating themselves, and by industry to show that they are a people who have minds, and that all they want is cultivating."⁹³

A William Brown claimed as his birthplace Tanquier County, Kentucky. There, he underwent great hardships as a slave on a tobacco plantation. With his wife and children belonging to another master, he went to Missouri, when he fled to Cincinnati, and, then, to Chatham.⁹⁴

Another slave refused to identify himself in Drew's recital because of the circumstances connected with his escape. This Negro was sixteen when he was placed in a chain gang in Missouri. He was eventually sold, and received two hundred strokes of the lash. Such brutal treatment drove him to escape from the chain gang to his former mistress. Since her second husband was determined to return the young slave, and, thereby, collect the reward for his capture, the sympathetic former mistress warned the Negro to flee. To further his flight, she gave him a few dollars, told him to follow the North Star to a free country called Canada. Lest the North Star be hidden by a cloudy night, this Southern woman counselled the young Negro to feel the trees of the forest--the side where the moss grew longest faced the north.⁹⁵

93 Idem, pp. 276, 279.

94 Idem, p. 280.

95 Idem, p. 282.

Issac Griffin, born in Tremble County, Kentucky, bought freedom for himself, his wife and child for \$500. He added to the foregoing stories of maltreatment of certain slaves by witness of his own, "Just before day, the first time I went down, as I was floating down the Grand Gulf, I heard the whip cracking, and a man crying, 'Oh Lord! Oh Lord!', I was afraid some one was murdering. I called my master. He said, 'Somebody is whipping his slave.' We had to put in there; he (the slave) was over a log; his feet tied, and his hands tied, and a rail between them....they flogged him off and on till dawn."⁹⁶

After twenty-five years in slavery, William street, born in Middle Tennessee, finally reached Canada in September, 1851. As a boy, he was hired out to a blacksmith from whom he learned the trade of a smithy. His father, while ill, was driven out by a cruel mistress who left her slave to die leaning over a fence. By erecting his own blacksmith shop in Chatham, he was trying to erase the harsh past with a future of freedom.⁹⁷

In these personal recollections of sixteen, refugee, Chatham Negroes, Benjamin Drew had caught forcibly their plight, hopes and humanity.

SLAVE-CATCHERS IN OPERATION

The first great census in Canada occurred in 1850. Since the collection of statistics was a novelty to the United Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, the men receiving the information committed many errors.

⁹⁶ Idem, p. 284.

⁹⁷ Idem, p. 284.

For one thing, the census-takers presented a false picture of the number of Negroes in Canada. Since many of these agents listed the Negroes under the columns of other nationalities, the census of 1850 relates a small number of Negroes in Canada West. Negro males are numbered at 2,502, and females at 2,167.⁹⁸ In a footnote, however, in the same volume on page 37, the Census admits its inaccuracy by stating, "there are about 8,000 colored persons in Western Canada." Benjamin Drew, the Quaker Abolitionist, writing of his tour of the Negro settlements in Canada West estimates the total Negro population as around 30,000. While Henry Bibb's newspaper, The Voice of The Fugitive, judges that the Negro population of Canada West was between 25,000 to 30,000 in 1850.⁹⁹ The first Report of the Anti-Slavery Society of Canada substantiates these figures by giving 30,000 as the number of Negroes in Canada West.¹⁰⁰

With such an amount of live property so close to the American border, slave-catchers from the United States were bound to try their wiles amongst the refugees. At least three such cases are recorded in the Chatham area. As early as 1843 a strong letter appeared in The Chatham Journal entitled, "To The Colored People residing in the Province of Canada":

My Friends and Countrymen.

Allow me to avail myself of this opportunity of laying before you the situation, under the circumstances which I was placed. Some time last month, I was decoyed by one George

98 Canada Census, 1851, Vol. I, p. 317.

99 The Voice of The Fugitive, Vol. I, No. 11, May, 1851, p. 2, col. 1.

100 The First Report of the Anti-Slavery Society of Canada, Toronto, Brown's Printing Est. 24 March, 1852, p. 17.

Wilson, a man of color, to go into the State of Ohio, under pretence of his rendering me a service, but on my arrival at Pettysburg, Ohio, according to my appointment, instead of meeting me with the proffered services gratuitously promised by the deceiver, I was met by the Agent of a Slave-holder, and arrested as a runaway slave; but through the kind interference of two professional gentlemen of that place, I was set at liberty, on a promise on my part to see them fairly remunerated for their trouble.

In making this brief statement to my colored friends, I have two objects in view.

The first is to caution you against the impropriety of placing too much confidence in any person, particularly those of color, who can thus be guilty of such nefarious conduct to his own people, on a mere superficial acquaintance.

And secondly, as many of you whom I am now addressing, have by permission of a kind Providence been allowed to make your escape from slavery and bondage, and through the wise and liberal policy of the British Government been allowed a place of refuge; I now with confidence appeal to your sympathy and humbly solicit of you such assistance as you in your different circumstances can spare in order to enable me to honorably and honestly redeem my promise to those my benefactors, thereby showing to the world, that though we once were slaves, that now we are free we will be honest.

(signed) Henry Gouins. 101

Henry Gouins' story is interesting because it reveals one technique of slave-catchers: that is, using mercenary Negroes as decoys for the capture of refugee slaves. Fourteen years later, The Chatham Planet records an actual visit of Southern slave-catchers to Chatham, itself. The object of pursuit was a young Negro slave, around twenty years old, by the name of Joseph Alexander. His pursuers were John W. Wells of Lynchburg, Virginia, and T.G. James of Nashville, Tennessee. An historic Chatham inn, the Royal Exchange, gave hospitality to the two Southern gentlemen.

Once the mission of the Southerners became known, a large, orderly group of Negroes gathered in front of the Royal Exchange. The reporters from The Chatham Planet were told by Mr James, "that Joe escaped from him for Canada some time in May last--that he was a 'good boy', but almost too 'big' and 'saucy'. The Master told us that he 'had never whipped Joe' but once, and then because he got drunk and imprudent, and allowed a span of horses to run away, and break a carriage all to smash, when, said James, 'I did take a strap and whip him right smart, that I did, now that's a fact; but t'was nothing more than he deserved, because Joe got dissatisfied, and I presumed he'd leave me!" According to the same account, Joe agreed to accompany his former master to the railroad station, and leave with him. Such an assurance, however, was an empty one, and all the people concerned seemed to realise this. By exercising the usual inquisitiveness of newspaper men, the Planet discovered, "that James is Wells's uncle, and that both are extensive slave dealers in New Orleans, their 'pen' being in the rear of the famous St Charles Hotel. The firm of James and Co. is said to be worth upwards of \$3,000,000 and the 'pen' is one of the largest in the Union, containing for sale on an average about 500 Negroes, good, bad, and indifferent. Agents of James, for the buying of slaves, are employed in all the Southern States." Before departing from Chatham, Mr James offered young Joe \$100 if he would accompany Messers James and Wells to Windsor. Declining with thanks, Joseph

Alexander remarked to the Planet reporter, "I am positive from what I know of him, that as soon as he got me out, he would shoot me dead, and then leave me, for he would just as soon shoot a man as a black squirrel, and a white man as a black man; and his nephew is just like him."
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The personal approach of the two Southern slave-owners ended in dismal failure. In the two instances considered, guile or verbal persuasion were the only methods used to re-enslave the refugees. The third case involved kidnapping. It also differs from the other two cases in that a Chatham Negro was not the object of capture; yet the case caused considerable excitement in Chatham.

In the latter part of September, 1858, word was sent from London to Chatham that a Southern gentleman was travelling on the Great Western Railroad with a Negro boy, who was thought by the London observers to have been kidnapped for shipment back to the Southern States.

The strong possibility exists that one London "observer", if not the "observer", was Elijah Leonard, Mayor of London in 1857, and prosperous iron manufacturer. In 1862, Mr Leonard became Member of Parliament on the Reform ticket for Middlesex County, and later was appointed to the Senate. Towards the end of the century in 1890, Senator Leonard wrote, and published his memoirs. Under a section

entitled, "Rescue of a Slave", he recalls that sometime in 1858, he was waiting at the Great Western station in London at the hour of noon. While watching the different people on the platform, he noticed an elegantly dressed man pacing up and down, with a bright, Negro boy following closely, who ran errands for him such as buying his newspaper and cigars. Rather rashly, the dandy engaged in a conversation with bystanders in which he boasted of the price the young boy would bring when sold in the Southern States.

Mr Leonard remembered stories of the kidnapping of free Negro children for sale in slavery states. With this in mind, he told his fears to Anderson Didderick, a Negro who happened by, and who had won local fame by carrying the Union Jack at the head of the fireman's parade. As the train for Detroit departed with the stranger and his Negro boy, Messers Leonard and Didderick became increasingly distressed about the affair. Mr Leonard asked his Negro acquaintance, "if he knew anyone in Chatham. 'Yes, several!' 'Would they take the boy away from the man?' 'Yes, they would.' But he had no money for the telegraph. I gave him some, and he immediately wired the state of affairs..."

Nearly a hundred colored and white men and women, armed with clubs, responded to Didderick's telegram by surrounding the Great Western train when it arrived in Chatham, later that afternoon. When the leaders of this group of Negro and white vigilantes boarded the train, the boy was quickly surrendered by the surprised and alarmed American.

Mr Leonard records that when the Great Western railway laid charges against those of the crowd who were arrested, he was summoned to the Chatham court as a witness, but the subpoena miscarried in the mails. According to Leonard, he was told that the young boy who was the focal point of this incident lived for many years in the Chatham area.

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Mr Shadd of Raleigh Township took charge of the boy.

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Although the Chatham Planet recorded that Mr Merwin laid a charge of abduction against the rescuers, the newspaper denied that any violence occurred:

On Thursday last, the southern slave-holder from whose possession a slave was taken, on the preceding Monday, laid the wires for the institution of a charge of abduction, against those persons engaged in the slave's rescue. But so far as the case had proceeded previous to its adjournment until Tuesday next, the plaintiffs failed together to mark out their points.....Meanwhile, it would appear that there was no riotous conduct, no violence, no threats of violence, on the part of the crowd that witnessed and engaged in liberating the slave boy; while on the other side, all these have been clearly brought out in evidence. 105

Quite another version was described in the Detroit Free Press, and copied in the Planet. Mr Merwin, who was supposedly from St Louis in this account, was having dinner in London (at the Tecumseh House, perhaps) with his Negro boy. He and his companion were noticed by "one of the vagabond, runaway Negroes that infest Canada West". When they arrived in Chatham, an "angry mob of Negroes with a white leader seized the

103 Elijah Leonard, The Honorable Elijah Leonard, A Memoir, London, Ont., Advertiser Printing Co., 1894, p. 48.
Elijah Leonard was born at Taunton, Mass., in 1814; came to Normandale Upper Canada in 1829; moved iron forge to London in 1838; became a British Subject in 1850; elected Mayor of London in 1857; Reform Member for Middlesex County in 1862; appointed to the Senate 23 Oct, 1867; died 14 May, 1891.

104 Idem, Vol. III, No. 41, 29 September, 1858, p. 2, col. 6.

child much to the fright of the child." In this colorful and possibly partly fanciful story, Mr Merwin's life was threatened to be saved only by the prompt action of the conductor and other passengers. The Detroit article named a Mr Goodyear as the probable leader in the rescue. Later on, a John Goodyear is listed in the Chatham Planet as one of several constables fined for "absenting themselves from duty."

According to The Free Press:

As soon as the train had stopped, a mulatto came into the car, and immediately proceeded to take the little fellow by force, but he cried out which called the attention of Mr. Merwin, who went to his assistance. He succeeded in rescuing him, but was immediately beset by a car full of stout, burly Negroes, who, to use his own expression, reminded him of the Sepoys in India. They were armed with revolvers, clubs, and knives, and were headed by a white man, who pretended to be one of 'Her Majesty's officers', and who attempted to arrest Mr. Merwin. Mr. Merwin, however, was assisted by the conductor, Mr. C.E. Goodrich, and by the other passengers who came forward to protect him, and he eluded their efforts, but in the tumult and confusion, the boy was dragged off, screaming in the most pitiful tones to his master to save him. He clung frantically to Mr. Merwin until he was pulled away by main force. When they got the boy out, they gathered on the platform and raised a shout of triumph, in which were mixed the most demoniacal gestures and expressions. But above all the cries of the boy calling for his master for protection were distinctly heard. It was deemed prudent to start away without further delay for the security of Mr. Merwin, as, without doubt the villains would have set upon the car, and not have been satisfied short of taking his life. He was, therefore, compelled to come away and leave a little favorite in the clutches of the miserable vagabonds who had succeeded in tearing him away. 106

From this melodramatic story, we gather that Mr Merwin departed with the train to Detroit, and there painted his picture in vivid colors for the benefit of the Free Press reporter. Very shortly after this

incident was publicised in the areas of Detroit, Windsor and Chatham, a letter appeared in the Planet which told considerable about the background of Mr Merwin:

New York, 2nd Oct., 1858.

Mr. Rufus Stephenson, Editor Planet,
Chatham, C.W.

Sir,

An article copied from the Detroit Free Press, and concerning the good behavior of your townspeople being extensively copied into our city papers, I take the liberty of stating a few facts, both for the encouragement of your citizens, and also for the proper and just proposal of Mr. W.R. Merwin.

This gentleman, then, to begin at the beginning, is no Southerner at all, but a Western man, born in Ohio, and who for the most part of his life has lived in the Free States. His mother now resides in Illinois; and all his friends without exception are Northern people. So much for this part of 'Southerners'.

Mr. Merwin has only been back from California about twenty months, and since that time has been, and now is, in the employ of O.J. Wood and Co. of No. 312 Broadway, N.Y., proprietors of Wood's Hair Restorative, as travelling agent, and for the first ten or twelve months for Job Moses of Rochester, Proprietor of Sir James Clarke's Female Pills, etc. Also, during the past Summer, he has been driving a team for these firms through New York and part of Pennsylvania, in one of which states he picked up, 'the little favorite' so touchingly spoken of by the Free Press, much to the astonishment of one of the firm of O.J.W. & Co., who accidentally happened to pass over part of the route Mr. Merwin had just traversed, and that for the first time heard of the magnificence of his "Agent" in travelling with a Negro servant.....

When Mr Merwin reached New York, the headquarters of his hair restoring employers, he was severely questioned regarding his little

friend. In fact, the blunt statement was made that he had abducted a free Negro child with the intention of selling him in the South. This nefarious statement, he indignantly denied claiming, instead, that the boy was employed by Job Moses to distribute handbills about the numerous merits of Sir James Clarke's Female Pills, and that, anyway, the boy was no longer in New York State. Mr Wood, the hair restorer, apparently accepted this explanation, when to the scandal of Mr Merwin's employers and friends he was caught in Canada with the same boy, whom he claimed was his slave:

Finally, the Detroit Free Press, knew Mr. Merwin to be a travelling agent for the firms already mentioned, and to be no Southerner, and must have known the boy whose fate it so sadly laments to be no slave, but just what he is, a deceived and nearly lost Free Negro child.

This, Mr. Editor, is a fair sample of the statements that occasionally find their way into the papers, wherein by the seeming affection of the slave for his master, this horrible institution is made to appear a happy one.

Please give the above space in your columns, that your people may feel justified in what they have done, and have the happy consciousness of having saved one poor little sufferer's back from the scourge of the slave driver and the fangs of the bloodhound.

(signed) M.J.M. 107

This exposition of Mr Merwin's antecedents and possible intentions was followed by the court case which ended the legal proceedings against "the rioters". In the latter part of October, 1858, a month after the removal of the Negro boy from the Great Western Railroad, His

Lordship, Justice Burns found Constable Goodyear and six associates guilty of riot. The following sentences were handed down: John Goodyear, \$50; I.D. Shadd, \$30; E. or H. Doston, \$20; John Hooper, \$25; John Sparks, \$10; W. Streets, \$4; S. Smith, \$4. In addition, Justice Burns imposed fines on several constables with the charge "of absenting themselves from duty": John Goodyear, \$20; John Hooper, \$10; C. Smith, \$10; Henry Chrysler, \$10; Amos King, \$10; Henry Robinson, \$10. Pointing out that the entire expense of the suit came to \$243, the Planet appealed to its readers to contribute to a fund for the payment of the court case, "and if in releasing this boy, the laws of our country were slightly overstepped, we feel Canadians of every class, creed and color, are not altogether dead to the recognition of 'a higher law than all human laws.'" ¹⁰⁸

The previous unmasking of the, by now, notorious Mr Merwin, was confirmed by the publication of an official letter from one of his employers, Mr O.J. Wood, with an affidavit appended certifying the validity of the letter and its contents. ¹⁰⁹ By November, 1858, a woman, residing in Patterson, New Jersey, had come forward to claim the disputed boy as her son. Around the 8th December, 1858, the woman had arrived in Chatham, with an affidavit made by an attorney, Avery Richards, before Benjamin D. Dorimus, a Justice of the Peace in Patterson, New Jersey, stating that the mother and boy were well-known to the lawyer, Mr Richards, for the past two years; that the boy

108 Idem, Vol. III, No. 52, 25 October, 1858, p. 2, col. 4.

109 Idem, Vol. III, No. 54, 29 October, 1858, p. 2, col. 3.

had been in the habit of dancing in bar rooms for which he received money from delighted onlookers. According to the boy's evidence, Mr Merwin used the dancing talent of the boy for his own financial benefit. In answer to the obvious question as to why the young Negro did not flee from Merwin in Canada long before the Chatham incident, the boy testified that his adult, white guardian frightened him from any such move by telling him that if he escaped, the free Canadian Negroes would capture him, and enslave him in the Canadian bush making him work with unbearable severity.

Mother and alleged son were not allowed by the Court authorities to meet except in the presence of the Magistrate in order to forestall any possibility of conspiracy. In the meantime, the Shadd family had been caring for the boy. When Mrs Sarah Burns, the woman claiming to be the mother, appeared in court, attended by several Negro women, the boy went directly to his mother without hesitation. An issue from his mother's first marriage, the boy's name was Sylvanus Demarest. After the death of the boy's father, the mother remarried becoming Mrs Sarah Burns. With such conclusive evidence presented to the Magistrate, possibly the very one who had fined the boy's rescuers, the case which had excited Chatham for over two months was closed. Whatever became of Mr W.R. Merwin in the United States is unknown; by stealing a free Negro child from a free Negro family, however, he had exposed himself to an
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American charge of abduction.

ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY OF CANADA

President Fillmore signed the second Fugitive Slave Law in September, 1850. The consequent influx of Negro slaves into Canada made Canadians acutely aware of the slavery problem and of its racial implications in a way unique in Canadian History. So much in the public mind was Negro slavery that in February, 1851, with Toronto as its headquarters, Canada founded its own abolitionist society.

Dr Fred Landon quoting from William Lloyd Garrison's newspaper, The Liberator (13 December, 1850) gives an extract from an article by the Rev. Hiram Wilson of St Catherines, "Probably not less than 3,000 have taken refuge in this country since the 1st of September. Only for the attitude of the north, there would have been thousands more." Dr Landon proceeds to illustrate this movement northward:

The Northern newspapers of the period supply abundant information regarding the consternation into which the Negroes were thrown and their movements to places of safety. Two weeks after President Fillmore had signed the Fugitive Slave Bill, a Pittsburg despatch to The Liberator (4 October, 1850) stated that, 'nearly all the waiters in the hotels have fled to Canada. Sunday, 30 fled; on Monday, 40; on Tuesday, 50; on Wednesday, 30, and up to this time the number that has left will not fall short of 300. They went in large bodies, armed with pistols and bowie knives, determined to die rather than be captured.....

A Hartford despatch of 18 October, 1850, told of five Negroes leaving that place for Canada; Utica reported under date of 2 October (Liberator, 18 October, 1850) that 16 fugitives passed through on a boat the day before bound for Canada, all well armed and determined to fight to the last; the Eastport Sentinel of 12 March noted that a dozen fugitives had touched there on the steamer Admiral en route to St. John's; the New Bedford Mercury said, 'We are pleased

to announce that a very large number of fugitive slaves, aided by our most wealthy and respected citizens have left for Canada and parts unknown and that many more are on the point of departure. The Concord, New Hampshire Statesman reported, 'Last Tuesday seven fugitives from slavery passed through this place.....and they probably reached safety in Canada on Wednesday last. Scarcely a day passes but more or less fugitives escape from the land of slavery to the freedom of Canada.....via this place over the track of the Northern Railroad. 111

There had been attempts to create an anti-slavery society in Canada before 1851, but they had failed in less urgent years. The Fugitive Slave Law, though, was such a shock to the liberalism of the times that even indifferent Canadians began taking sides. Set up in February, 1851, the executive of the Anti-Slavery Society of Canada was a model of propriety: President - Rev. Michael Willis, D.D., Principal of Knox Presbyterian College, Secretary - Rev. William McClure, a Methodist preacher of the New Connexion branch, Treasurer - Andrew Hamilton, Corresponding Secretary - Captain Charles Stuart. A large committee was formed which included such celebrities as George Brown, editor of The Globe, and founder of the Clear Grit Party, and Oliver Mowat, late Premier of Ontario. Within a year, the executive had changed to this extent: Secretary, Thomas Henning; Vice-Presidents - Henry Bibb, of Sandwich, and George Cary, of Dawn Mills, (both Negro) while the Rev. Samuel Ringold Ward remained as an agent of the organization. Both the Rev. S.R. Ward and the Rev. J.W. Loguen, distinguished Negro preachers and ex-slaves, spoke at various meetings.

111 Fred Landon, "The Negro Migration to Canada after The Passing of The Fugitive Slave Act", The Journal of Negro History, Vol. V, No. 1, January, 1920, pp. 23-25.

This roll of celebrated speakers was added to by names such as George Thompson, the English Abolitionist, Frederick Douglass, the famous Negro ex-slave and orator, and the Rev. S.J. May of Syracuse.

The Rev. Ward went up and down the country organizing auxiliary branches of the society. In the first year, at least \$900 was raised by the Ladies Auxiliary which was applied to the welfare of refugee slaves in Canada. An interesting contribution of this society was its assessment and condemnation of the various colonization schemes for the Negro refugees in other parts of the world. We shall consider their findings under the section dealing with such plans in the 1850's and 1860's. From its foundation until the emancipation of the American slaves, the society continued its work of practical help to the refugee and of rousing public opinion against the system of Negro slavery.

THE VOICE OF THE FUGITIVE

There were two known Negro newspapers in Canada West during the 1850's. One was The Provincial Freeman printed in Chatham and edited by Israel Shadd. Tragically for Canadian history, nothing survives of this newspaper. The other journal was The Voice of The Fugitive, printed in Sandwich and edited by Henry Bibb. Most happily, two volumes of this journal survives in the Burton collection of the Detroit Public Library, with microfilm copies available. An invaluable source for a knowledge of the activities and mentality of the Negro refugee, especially immediately after 1850, the newspaper was a

112 Fred Landon, "The Anti-Slavery Society of Canada", The Journal of Negro History, Vol. IV, No. 1, January, 1919, pp. 33-37.

bi-weekly begun on the 1st January, 1851 and continued, at least, until December, 1852. When one considers that Henry Bibb, the founder and editor, was a runaway slave with no formal education, the mastery of English vocabulary and style, with allowances made for Victorian floridness which shines through its pages, compels us to great admiration for this Negro leader.

Henry Bibb was born in Kentucky in May 1815, the son of a Negro slave mother and a white father. Dr Landon relates Bibb's personal account of his enslavement:

I was a wretched slave, compelled to work under the lash without wages and often without clothes enough to hide my nakedness. I have often worked without half enough to eat, both late and early by day and night. I have often laid my weary limbs down at night to rest upon a dirt floor, or a bench without any covering at all, because I had nowhere else to rest by wearied body, after having worked hard all day. I have been compelled in early life to go at the bidding of a tyrant through all kinds of weather, hot and cold, wet or dry, and without shoes frequently until the month of December, with my bare feet on the cold frosty ground, cracked open and bleeding as I walked. 113

As a slave, he was sold six different times at prices ranging from \$850 to \$1,200. This very fact is an indication that he was a devotee of the practice of escaping. "Among other good trades, I learned the art of running away to perfection. I made a regular business of it, and never gave it up until I had broken the bonds of slavery and landed myself in Canada where I was regarded as a man
114
and not as a thing."

113 Fred Landon, "Henry Bibb, A Colonizer", The Journal of Negro History, Vol. V, No. 4, October, 1920, p. 438.

114 Idem, p. 440.

One of his masters, a planter who acquired him at New Orleans around 1839, later sold him while retaining Bibb's wife. He never saw his wife again. Yielding to the fate of many recalcitrant slaves, Bibb was sold farther west until his last owner was an Indian in the Red River district of the American Southwest. Certainly by 1843, Henry Bibb had achieved his freedom, and was satisfying his zeal by attending meetings of free colored people in Detroit. His zeal for the abolition of slavery overflowed into activity in 1844 when he canvassed the State of Michigan addressing crowds in the interests of the Liberty Party, which had nominated a full slate of candidates for both Congress and the State Legislature.

The passage of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 gave Bibb his mission in life. He realized that the numerous slaves fleeing across the border into Canada needed guidance and encouragement. Full of his sense of mission, he moved to Sandwich with two projects in mind; to found a newspaper which would proclaim and formulate the message of the fugitive slave, and to colonize the refugee on Canadian soil. "It was Henry Bibb's belief that the future of people of color depended upon getting them settled on the land and his mind turned to the possibilities of establishing a distinctly Negro colony on land that might be secured as a grant from the Canadian Government, or, if necessary, purchased from the Government as had been done in the case of the Buxton Settlement established by Rev. William King in what is now Southwestern Ontario."¹¹⁵

115 Idem, pp. 440-443.

His idea was to form a colonisation society managed by a board of trustees. This society would purchase from the Canadian Government, 50,000 acres at an estimated cost of about two dollars an acre, the purchase money to be derived partly from contributions and partly from the sale of the land. Each family was to receive 25 acres, 5 acres to be free of cost provided they cleared and cultivated it within three years from the time of occupation. The remaining 20 acres was to be paid for in nine annual installments. Only the landless refugees were to receive grants, and transfer of lands, except after fifteen years of occupation, was forbidden. Removal of or extinction of families caused their lands to revert to the parent society. Funds returned to the society were to be spent on schools, for the payment of teachers, and for the purchase of new land.

As a result of this dream, Bibb and his many supporters formed at Detroit, on 25 May, 1851, the Refugee's Home Society. The chief officers were President - Robert Garner; Secretary - Rev. E.E. Kirkland, of Colchester; and Assistant Secretary, William Newman. Five days after the Detroit meeting a convention of Negro refugees in Sandwich endorsed the endeavor. Happy in the enthusiastic beginning of this colonisation project, one of the members wrote, "The plan seems popular, and he looks forward to the day when the colored people will nestle in the mane of the British Lion." The "nestling" began in the latter part of 1851 when land about ten miles outside of Windsor was purchased from the Canada Land Company. In two years' time, the society owned 1,328 acres

of land, 600 of which were settled. With the passage of several more years, 5,000 acres were owned by the society, and the large number of ex-slaves cultivating the soil in this tract earned the area the title of "the Fugitives' Home."
116

The Fugitives' Home had its own strong, clear trumpet, The Voice of The Fugitive. For a dollar a year, this bi-weekly went out from Sandwich to tell Canadians about American slavery, its refugees, and the problem of these New Canadians in white Canada. Negroes prominent in Canada West were agents for Henry Bibb's organ: Daniel Hotchkiss and Levi Foster, Amherstburg; S. Fisher, Toronto; George Carey, Chatham; James E. Grant, Dawn Mills; other agents were to be found in the States of Michigan, Illinois, New York, Pennsylvania, and New Hampshire. With sober thought and intelligent force, the maiden editorial of the Voice in its initial issue of 1 January, 1851 heralded its purpose:

We expect with the aid of a good Providence to advocate the cause of human liberty in the true meaning of that term. We shall advocate the immediate and true abolition of chattel slavery everywhere but especially on American Soil. We shall also persuade, as far as it may be practicable, every oppressed person of color in the United States to settle in Canada where the laws make no distinction among men, based on complexion and on whose soil "no slave can breathe". We shall advocate the claims of the American slave to the Bible, from whom it has ever been withheld. We shall advocate the cause of temperance and moral reform, generally. The cause of education shall have a prominent place in our columns. We shall advocate the claims of agricultural pursuits among our people as being the most certain road to independence and self-respect.

Our political creed will be to support that Government that protects all men in the enjoyment of liberty, without regard to color. We shall oppose the annexation of Canada to the United States to the fullest extent of our ability, while the Government continues to tolerate the abominable system of human slavery.

We shall from time to time endeavor to lay before our readers the true condition of our people in Canada, or their hopes and prospects for the future---and while we intend this to be a mouthpiece for the refugees in Canada, especially, yet we mean to speak out our sentiments as a FREEMAN upon all subjects that come within our sphere and if others differ with us, as they probably will, on some subjects, all we ask will be the toleration of opinion and free discussion, which is the refutation of error and the bulwark of liberty. We shall make no compromise with wrong, nor allow personal controversies in our paper. But anything written in respectful language, by way of reply or explanation shall always have attention, but we must be the judges of what is suitable to go into our columns....117

On the front page of the same issue, the Voice printed a succinct tribute to one of Canada's most famous and glamorous slaves, Josiah Henson, Mrs Stowe's inspiration for "Uncle Tom" in Uncle Tom's Cabin:

Father Henson. Many of our readers are aware of the position which this fugitive from bondage held among the really great men of our continent. The executive talent which could collect, organize and control a colony of runaway slaves, and shape out of such hopeless materials a virtuous and self-respecting community, can hardly be inferior to that which fills with the highest credit, the first places in our nation.... (Henson has gone to England equipped with various credentials.) But among the documents of which he is the bearer, the most interesting is from the Sheriff of the County where he resides who testifies that during fifteen years, and with a black population of from three to five thousand, not a single Negro has come under legal custody or animadversion for any crime or misdemeanour whatever....118

117 The Voice of The Fugitive, Vol. I, No. 1, 1 January, 1851, p. 2, col.1

118 Idem, p. 1, col. 5.

UNCLE TOM'S COLONY

In November, 1861, at a public meeting in Dresden, Josiah Henson rose to give a summary of the founding and history of his colony of Dawn Mills near Dresden:

I arrived in Canada about the year 1830. There were then no schools where the colored people could receive the rudiments of an English education. Four years afterward, the Rev. Hiram Wilson came here to reside, who, feeling an interest in the colored people (Wilson was white) who were scattered through the Province of Upper Canada in small groups where there were no schools of any kind. At that time, I was stationed at Fort Erie, and had access to all the Western Districts. James Canning Fuller, an English Quaker and philanthropist, who lived in Schanactedy, (Sic)...119 New York, travelled through Upper Canada during the years 1838-1839. From observation and information concerning the educational necessities of the colored people, especially the fugitives daily arriving in Canada, he took a deep interest in the colored people, and in 1842, he went to England and laid his case before his friends, there, who contributed \$1,700 to be used as discretion might dictate. Mr Fuller brought this money thus collected in this country; he visited Toronto, and other places and reported the means he had collected. A mass meeting was called in the former city to consider the best method of disposing of the money....120 Mr Fuller was to have been present at that convention, but his carriage broke down on the way, and he was thereby prevented from attending. He sent a letter to the convention saying that he would comply with whatever conclusions the convention in its wisdom arrived at, but suggested his preference for a manual labor school. After a session of three days, the convention agreed to establish a manual labor school, and appointed an exploring committee, consisting of the Rev. Hiram Wilson, myself, (Josiah Henson), and Henry Shelby. Our duties were to find a site and purchase it, which we did by exploring all this Western territory, and settling upon this property as the Dawn Institution. It contained

119 Skeneateles, New York.

120 Henson's autobiography names London, U.C., not Toronto as the convention city. Vide: Autobiography, C. XVIII, p. 124.



Povial Herson

two hundred acres lying on both sides of the Sydenham River. The committee agreed to purchase this piece of land if it could be bought, which was done by paying William Hannah, the amount thereof, \$300 for it. An additional tract of an hundred acres was added to the first purchase, making in all three hundred acres. I had previously purchased 200 acres of land adjoining that of the institution, and the additional hundred acres were purchased of me by the Rev. Hiram Wilson. I, however, collected the money and gave it to the executive committee of the Institution of which Mr. Wilson and myself were members." 121

Josiah Henson was seventy-two years old when he addressed his people on this occasion at Dresden, about seventeen miles north-west of Chatham and near the Dawn Mills colony. His career ranked in color and prestige with those of other distinguished slaves who fled to or visited Canada such as Frederick Douglass, the great Abolitionist orator, Samuel Ringold Ward, the indefatigable missionary, and Dr Martin R. Delaney, Negro physician, resident of Chatham, fellow-conspirator with John Brown, and agitator for "the-back-to-Africa-movement." Fame, if not always fortune, came eventually to Josiah in such ample measure that his memory lingers in the white folk-lore of the English-speaking world long after the names of other nineteenth century Negro celebrities have been relegated to the history books. As the prototype for Uncle Tom of the novel Uncle Tom's Cabin, he became a permanent part of the imagination of the reading public. At Andover, Massachusetts, in 1849 he met Mrs Harriet Beecher Stowe who used his life as fiction material.

121 The Chatham Planet, Vol. XI, No. 23, 14 November, 1861, p. 1, cols. 3 and 4.

Born a slave on 15 June, 1789, in Charles County, Maryland, he belonged to a planter, Mr Francis Newman, who lived about a mile from Port Tobacco. As he recounts in his Autobiography, his boyhood memories of his father are bitter and tragic. As a result of having punished a white overseer for an attack upon the mother of Josiah Henson, and a consequent attempt to escape, the father of Josiah was brutally beaten after which his ear was severed, in accordance with the slave law of Maryland. The mother was the slave of another planter, Dr Josiah McPherson, who, in contrast to Mr Newman, was kind and generous to his whole household. Since the children remained with the mother until separated by a sale, Josiah was on the estate of Dr McPherson. Josiah was the first Negro child born in the physician's household. Consequently, the doctor took an especial interest in this infant, an interest memorialised when Dr McPherson gave the child his own Christian name, and added as a surname, the family name of an uncle who served as an officer in the American Revolution.

The death of Dr McPherson caused his heirs to curtail his estate and sell his slaves. At first Josiah and his mother were purchased by two different slave-owners, with his brothers and sisters suffering the same fate of family disintegration. Shortly after, however, the pining, sick little boy was re-sold to Isaac Riley who had already bought the mother. Of a family of several children, only

Josiah and his mother managed to keep a semblance of the family unit. Henson's life with Riley was an intriguing mixture of abuse and of increasing respect and responsibility. His native keenness and strong physique in time won him the position of trusted slave and overseer on his master's plantation. While protecting his master, who was engaged in a drunken quarrel, he rather severely beat another planter, Bryce Litton. Litton's revenge occurred a week later as he and friends captured Josiah Henson on a lonely road, and, in the ensuing beating, broke both of Henson's arms. 122

In 1811, at the age of twenty-two, Henson married his first wife. By the time Henson's wife had borne him two children, Isaac Riley was on the brink of financial ruin. To avoid the loss of his slaves to his creditors, Riley commissioned Henson to lead the eighteen Negroes of the small plantation, including Henson's family, from Montgomery County, Maryland to the estate of Riley's brother, Amos, in Kentucky. This amazing mission was successfully and conscientiously carried out. After a career of devoted and enterprising service to the two Riley's, Henson discovered that the promised manumission from his master, Isaac Riley, was being thwarted by a conspiracy between the two brothers. This treachery capped by an attempt to sell him south, convinced Josiah Henson that nothing short of an escape to Canada could prevent the ultimate separation of himself from his wife and family. In Mid-September of 1830, Henson, a man in his forty-first year, undertook to guide his wife, and four children to the far away shelter of a Queen's Province.

From Kentucky to Indiana to Ohio, Henson and his family fled through river and forest enduring fear, starvation and incredible fatigue. The two older boys walked. The infant boys of two and three years of age, were carried in two different haversacks on Henson's back. Although his arms had been permanently deformed so that after the attack by Bryce Litton, he could not raise his arms as high as his head, yet his physique retained its youthful strength and toughness. The fugitive party arrived at the usual refugee centre of Cincinnati, and moved thence to Sandusky. There, they found a sympathetic Scottish boat captain who gave them passage to Buffalo. 123

At Buffalo, the friendly captain arranged for Henson and his family to be ferried across to the Canadian town of Fort Erie, which like Sandwich, Windsor and Amherstburg and other border points was an important Canadian terminal of the Underground Railroad. On 28 October, 1830, Josiah Henson and his family achieved their legal freedom by touching the soil of Canada. For three years, he lived at Fort Erie working as a farm laborer. Always deeply religious and sensitive to the needs of his fellow slaves, he noted that freedom was having a varied effect on the refugees, of whom there were several hundred in the neighborhood. It occurred to him, as it later did to Henry Bibb, that the newly freed slave was not sufficiently interested in owning his own land and home. To encourage economic independence for the refugee, Henson planned some day to inaugurate a Negro colony consisting of farms and a school which would teach the elements of education along with the skills required on the farm.

In 1834, with other interested friends he travelled through the southern peninsula of Upper Canada, and decided that the land in the Dawn area near Dresden best suited his purpose. Although not able to purchase it immediately, his family and several other refugee slave families rented land nearby at Colchester, worked the land growing wheat and tobacco, and saved what money they could for their colonising project. During this period, Henson followed a not uncommon pattern for refugee slaves by returning to Kentucky on two occasions to lead other slaves to Canada. On his second trip, he made use of the nebulous Underground Railroad when he met an Ohio Quaker during the return journey. From his own account, we are told that he led one hundred and eighteen slaves to freedom.¹²⁴

Rev. Hiram Wilson, the Congregational, white missionary from Massachusetts who dedicated much of his life to the Canadian Negro, met Josiah Henson at Colchester, Ontario. Wishing to help Henson in his scheme to make the refugee more self-sufficient, Wilson wrote to an English Quaker friend of his, James C. Fuller, who at the time was living in Skeneateles, New York. Fuller was so impressed by the plea that on his next voyage to England, he collected enough money to bring back with him to Canada, \$1,500. The £20,000,000 paid by the British Government to redeem the West Indian slaves was the larger part of an investment which included the many private donations of Britishers to aid the Abolitionist and refugee slave causes.

124 Idem, Cs. XV-XVI, pp. 103-120.



SOUTHERN ONTARIO - 1840

Nearer than even before to his cherished ideal, Josiah Henson in conjunction with Hiram Wilson called a convention of his people at London, Upper Canada in June, 1838. As he mentions in his speech of 1861, Mr Fuller's carriage needed the assistance of a mechanic, which kept him from the London convention. He had enough faith, however, in Henson and Wilson to commit himself in writing to whatever decision the convention should make. The convention followed the strong suggestion of the Henson, Wilson combination, and voted to use the money as the beginning of a fund for a Negro colony and manual labor school. The actual choice of the site of the colony was left in the hands of a committee of three, Hiram Wilson, Josiah Henson and Henry Shelby. Because of his own previous explorations, Henson no doubt was determined to present the Dawn area as the most suitable land. After several months of investigation and consideration, the other two members of this committee agreed with Henson's choice of Dawn which is about ten miles northwest of Dresden.

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At first, two hundred acres were bought, fertile land covered with black walnut and white wood, and watered by the River Sydenham. Henson added to these acres from his own purse. Four years after the decision of the London convention, the plans for the colony were sufficiently advanced that Henson, his family and the families of several friends moved onto the new land at Dawn. Shortly after the

settlement began in the 1840's, Henson visited the lumbering towns of New England and New York to study the techniques used in their mills. After he had gained some knowledge, he acquired some money from his Boston friends for a mill on the Dawn colony. In the mid-1840's, then, the mill and school were built, one to provide extra revenue from the forests on the land, the other to provide an elementary grammar and technical education for the Negro children, who were joined by children from nearby white and Indian settlers.

In 1849, the colony found itself burdened by a debt of \$7,500. Thinking that the separate administration of the mill, on the one hand, and of the school, on the other, each with its own superintendent, would help the efficiency of operations, the two institutions were divided for four years. Henson, always enterprising, shipped some of his best walnut boards and went himself to the Industrial Exhibition of 1851 in London, England. In short order, his unique position as an escaped American slave on English soil along with his letters of introduction from Canada and from the abolitionists of Boston, made him the darling of English anti-slavery society. This love-feast was interrupted by a circular introduced into England which attacked the honesty of Henson. Alarmed by these slanders, which Henson claimed came from "sectarian interests" at Dawn, he requested his English supporters, who were composed of such well-known anti-slavery figures as Samuel Gurney, Jr., Samuel Morley, John Scobell and Lord Ashley (later Earl of Shaftesbury), to appoint a committee to examine the charges.

The committee appointed a man to accompany Henson to Canada, where at a meeting in Dawn presided over by the Rev. John Rolfe of Toronto, the charges against the character of Henson were proved false. His English friends were satisfied, and the debt of the Dawn Institution was eliminated. Very satisfied with the happy turn of events, Henson returned to England in the latter part of 1851. There, he remained exhibiting his Canadian walnut at the London fair, bowing graciously to Queen Victoria as she looked inquisitively at him and at his wood, and hobnobbing with the great and the good such as Lord John Russell and the Archbishop of Canterbury. The serious illness of Henson's wife forced Henson to leave the temples and tables of Great Britain for the raw reality of Dawn, Canada West. In September, 1852, he left England; his wife died later that month. 126

One of the gentlemen who had been most prominent in clearing the Dawn Institution from debt, and in fact had accompanied Henson in 1851 back to Canada to investigate the charges of dishonesty against Henson, returned from England around 1852 to assume control of the school. For about nine years, this English Abolitionist followed a course of grand mismanagement which began with the destruction of the old manual labor school, carried on through the purchase of costly breeds of cattle which starved because of lack of fodder, to the failure to build the promised new and better school until finally financial ruin once more threatened the colony. In Henson's autobiography, the name

of this white man is not mentioned. The Chatham Planet, however, of December, 1860, records the resolutions of a mass meeting held at Dresden to consider ways of dislodging John Scoble (Scobell)'s hold on the school property at Dawn:

To The Editor of The Chatham Planet.

Sir,--A large meeting of the inhabitants of Dresden and its vicinity, was held on Monday evening, 19th instant, in the Baptist Church in that village for the purpose of enquiring into the state of the Dawn Institute. The Rev. Samuel Davis was called to the chair, and Alfred P. Whipple was appointed Secretary. Several of the trustees of said institute attended, and gave to the meeting a sketch of the history of the institute and their connection with it, and the reasons why some of them were led to sign away their powers to Mr. John Scoble. After the statements of the trustees, the following resolutions were passed:

1st. That whereas some eight years ago, a certain instrument of the validity of which there exists grave doubts was executed between a portion of the trustees of the Dawn Institute and Mr. John Scoble, placing the management of the said Institute together with the property belonging thereunto into his hands and under his control; and in as much since that time none of the objects for which said institute was established to promote have been carried out by Mr. Scoble, nor any statement made public of the condition of its affairs, this meeting deemed it high time that an inquiry should be instituted into its present position and past management, and legal measures taken to have the property of the said institute placed under such direction that the income derivable therefrom may be applied to secure, as far as possible, to the inhabitants of this country those educational advantages contemplated by the Deed of Trust.

2nd. That this meeting appoint the following persons to act as a committee to collect funds and to take such other steps that may be deemed necessary for carrying into effect the foregoing resolutions. Committee, Abram D. Shadd, J.B. Hollensworth, Samuel Benton, George Long, Reverend Thomas Hughes, William Clarke and Samuel Davis.

Mr. James B. Hollensworth was appointed Treasurer of the Committee, and Messers J.C. Brown, Chas. Harrison and Morris Potter were instructed to have committees appointed in Chatham and other places to assist in carrying on the above named object.

3rd. That a subscription list be at once opened, and the names now of persons present willing to contribute towards this object be taken down.

4th. That the best thanks of the meeting be accorded to Mr. J.C. Brown of Chatham for the wisdom and foresight he has exhibited in firmly refusing to relinquish his power as one of the Trustees of the Dawn Institute.

5th. That a copy of the proceedings be sent Mr. John Scoble, and that copies be sent to the different papers for publication.

6th. That a vote of thanks be tendered to the Chairman of this meeting for his able and efficient services as such.

7th. That we now adjourn.

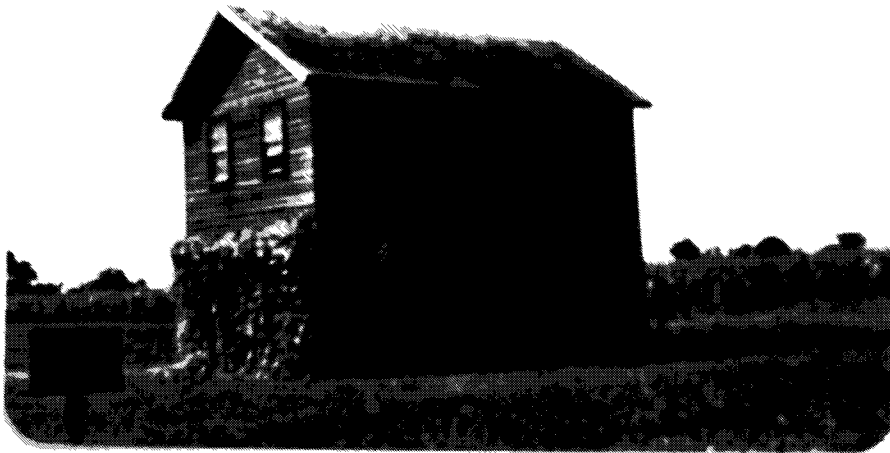
Rev. Samuel Davis, Chairman,
Alfred P. Whipper, Secretary,
Dresden, Nov. 20th, 1860....127

From this account, we gather that Mr Scoble's well-intentioned abuse of his trust had been exercised on some very patient people. To have allowed eight years to pass before taking action spoke highly for the previous reputation which Scoble must have enjoyed and the powerful personality which Josiah Henson possessed in order to calm the growing doubts of his colonists. Apparently, too, the one trustee reluctant, in fact adamant, in his refusal to sign over his control over the school and its property was the active Chatham Negro, John C. Brown. Samuel Davis, the Baptist Negro minister, Alfred Whipper, appropriately named colored schoolmaster in the Chatham colored school, and the Anglican, white missionary to Dresden, Rev. Mr Thomas Hughes were all men of

repute in their communities. Undoubtedly, very embarrassed in the background would be "Uncle Tom", Mr Henson, whose unqualified admiration for Scoble had caused the Dawn trustees to place such supreme and, as it proved, foolish confidence in the English dreamer.

The Planet of November, 1861 records that a similar meeting was held at Dresden in the Autumn of 1861. This meeting was presided over by Rev. Thomas Hughes, and apparently was addressed by John Scoble. At a second meeting held in the Dresden Baptist Church on 23 October, 1861, Mr George Carey presided, while Mr Parker T. Smith was secretary. It was at this meeting that Scoble did not appear, and his remarks at the last meeting were assailed as "a tirade against the colored people." At this meeting, Josiah Henson gave
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his historical sketch.

Either in 1860 or 1861, the trustees of the Dawn Institute crowned eight years of decline in their colony with seven years of litigation about the powers and property held by Scoble. Finally, around 1877, the Court of Chancery decided in favor of the Dawn Institute trustees, appointed a new board of Trustees, granted a bill to incorporate the institution as the Wilberforce University (sic) and granted the trustees power to sell the land on which the old manual labor school had been built so long as the new school was erected in the same county. The sale of the land held for some time by John



The House of Josiah Henson,
near Dresden, Ontario.



The Grave of Josiah Henson,
near Dresden, Ontario.

Scoble brought about \$30,000. Chatham was selected as the site of the new school, better known as the Wilberforce Institute, where in 1881, after four years of existence and at the time of the writing of Henson's autobiography, the new school was at once free from debt and also fulfilling the long-cherished, educational dreams of Josiah Henson. 129

THE ELGIN ASSOCIATION

The towns of Dresden, Chatham and North Buxton, in the lower part of the peninsula of Southern Ontario, are almost in a straight line going from north to south with approximately twenty miles separating the terminals of the line, Dresden and North Buxton from the centre of the area, Chatham. Chatham always possessing a colony of American Negroes, acted as a fulcrum between the specifically Negro colonies of Dawn, near Dresden, and that of the Elgin Association of North Buxton. This latter colony situated about eighteen miles due south of Chatham was founded around seven years after Josiah Henson's colony at Dawn.

Although a colony for refugee slaves, the Elgin or King colony, so-called after its founder, William King, had certain points of contrast to the Dawn settlement. First of all, the Elgin colony was founded by a white man, who had against his will been a slave-holder for a time; secondly, the founder had a far less dramatic and more stable career than that of Henson; thirdly, the Elgin colony was

managed in a much more business-like fashion which caused it to be more consistently successful than its counterpart forty or so miles to the north.

The Rev. William King was born in Londonderry, Ireland, on 11 November, 1812. Almost eighteen years of age, he entered Glasgow University on 1 November, 1830. During the period of his studies at Glasgow, the subject of British Emancipation of the West Indian slaves was very much in the air. Various university professors and divines gave stirring lectures to their classes and to the public on the sacredness and expediency of the Abolitionist cause. The result on the sensitive and religious soul of William King was to convert him to the cause of anti-slavery. When he graduated from the University of Glasgow in April, 1833, he discovered that his Ulster family were thinking seriously of migrating to America. Later that year, he preceded his family to the United States carefully guarding a shipment of Irish potatoes from his family farm to Philadelphia where in that year the potato crop had been a failure. With the potatoes safely sold, and some private exploring of America fulfilled, King met his family at Cleveland. Near Providence, Ohio, the North Irish emigrants chose
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some fertile unbroken land as their new home.

Although his family were but newly arrived, the twenty-one year old William set out to practise his chosen career, school-teaching. His steps were directed, in December, 1833, towards the

130 Annie Straith Jamieson, William King, Friend and Champion of Slaves, Toronto, Missions of Evangelism, 1925, C. III, pp. 32-42.



WILLIAM KING FRIEND CHAMPION AND
DELIVERER OF SLAVES

Southern States. First he visited the State of Mississippi, and then followed his wanderlust to the storied State of Louisiana. Here, he was engaged as tutor to the children of three aristocratic planter families at Jackson. Prophetically, his term of service began on 1 January, 1836, a new year and a new position which was to lead him into a new apostolic life. At the request of the families who employed him, he agreed to teach the children of other planters in the neighborhood. King's methods of teaching were so successful that he drew many pupils away from a state-sponsored school called Mathew's Academy. Rather than have the old academy dissolve from lack of support and yet keep the valuable young schoolmaster in the district, the Board of Trustees very sensibly offered the headmastership to the clever, young Irishman.¹³¹

Destiny closed even more tightly around this remarkable young man who could stuff knowledge into the heads of irascible, youthful Southern blue-bloods, and, at the same time, retain their unqualified respect and affection. In 1841, he married Mary Phares, the beautiful, fair-complexioned daughter and heiress of a Jackson planter. One son was born to this marriage, a son with an auspicious but cumbersome name, Theophilus. As little Theophilus began to toddle, his parents worried about his future in the South. For one thing, the abolition of slavery seemed far away, and, for another, the gay, self-indulgent life of the young, white Southerner of the planter class which occasionally brought one of them to an early grave, met the severe disapproval of

131 Idem, C. IV, pp. 42-55.

Presbyterian King. As a Presbyterian, King was very interested in "the Disruption" whereby four hundred Presbyterian ministers and their congregations broke with the Established Church of Scotland to form the Free Church of Scotland. Believing this movement to be the true outlet for his idealism, he resigned his position, placed his wife and child with his father-in-law, and returned to Scotland, to Edinburgh in 1844, where he began studying for the ministry at the Free Church College.

During 1844, King returned to America, and brought his wife and child to Edinburgh. Tragedy entered his life with the death of his son. As a seeming compensation, his wife bore him a daughter, Johanna. Whatever joy this aroused passed away rapidly when early in 1846 a series of deaths plagued William King. First, his father-in-law, John E. Pharas, died in Louisiana; one of his wife's brothers fell a victim in the Mexican War; then his wife succumbed to tuberculosis and soon after, the infant daughter, Johanna joined the several dead in her family. William King had known love and happiness; he now knew bitter loneliness.

Cruelly freed from earthly ties, he was ordained a minister of the Free Church in 1846. His first posting as a missionary was to Canada. In November, 1846, he arrived at Toronto where he was speedily appointed to Knox Presbyterian Church, Hamilton. He left this charge to attend to his inherited property in Jackson, Louisiana. A complicated part of his inheritance was a group of fifteen slaves bequeathed to his wife shortly before her death by her father; the death of the wife left the slaves in the hands of King. An avowed Abolitionist, a minister of

an anti-slavery church, holding slaves gave rise to an embarrassment which was stupidly pointed out publicly in Scotland by Frederick Douglass, with more eloquence than understanding, and which yielded caustic remarks in the Presbyterian Synod in Toronto.

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Patiently, William King set the machinery in motion which would emancipate the slaves he held so unwillingly and accidentally. After about two years effort, his slaves were totally freed on 19 April, 1848. Since Louisiana law would not allow a free Negro to live in the State, on 5 May, 1848, King left Louisiana for Canada with his former slaves.

Once returned to Canada, with the support of the Presbyterian Synod, he formulated plans for a Negro settlement. Accompanied by John Redpath, a leading merchant of Montreal, and James Gibb, a leading merchant of Quebec City, he visited Lord Elgin. The progressive peer expressed his firm approval and directed the Commissioner of Crown Lands to assist Mr King and his friends in finding suitable land. A temporary committee formed to explore the idea had as its head that inveterate enemy of slavery, Dr Michael Willis, D.D., Principal of Knox College, and as secretary, Rev. Alexander Gale. William King found a good friend and advisor in Chatham's Member of Parliament, Archibald McKellar. Together, they decided to recommend the founding of the colony on 9,000 acres in the Township of Raleigh. A company to direct the project was established with its president, Judge Skeffington Connor; vice-presidents, Rev. Michael Willis, D.D., and

Rev. Robert Burns, D.D.; treasurer, James Scott Howard; secretary, Nathan Gatchell; managing director, William King; and a local committee in Chatham of which Archibald McKellar was the chief. 133

The Elgin Association was incorporated by Act of Parliament in 1850. When the Chatham Journal discovered the plan, the fat was in the fire:

In another column will be found an article copied from the British Colonist presenting a scheme entertained by the Presbyterian synod for colonizing the township of Raleigh with Colored people.....The inhabitants, if equalled are not surpassed in either honesty, industry, or intelligence by those of any township in Canada, and, we ask, would such men submit to have 1,000 Colored paupers introduced into their community, to have the whole township government controlled and its officers selected by them, to have their sons and daughters educated under the same roof, with a black man for a teacher...No, no, we are not aware of their being at present a colored man resident in Raleigh, and happy do the inhabitants consider themselves in their absence....Let Walpole Island be purchased from or an exchange made with the Indians, and let the African be as nearly by himself as possible.... 134

In spite of such an unabashed exhibition of "Negrophobia", the fine conduct of the Negro colonists and the sterling character of the white sponsors calmed the suspicious white residents, and did much to mellow their prejudices. Surveying began on the 9,000 acre tract south of Chatham with the area being divided into small farms of 50 acres each. Roads were cut through the heavy forest growth, and the fifteen Louisiana former slaves joined by other ex-slaves began their life of independent labor. Each colonist was allowed to take up 50 acres at the cost of \$2.50 an acre which was payable in ten annual installments.

133 Idem, C. VII, pp. 95-97.

134 The Chatham Journal, Vol. V, No. 19, 5 December, 1858, p. 2, col. 3.

Every settler was obliged within a certain period to build a house at least the equal of the model house put forth by the Association, to provide his own implements and to clear his land. The model house suggested by the Association from which nearly all the habitations were copied was 18 by 24 feet, 12 feet in height and with a stoop running the length of the front. Although some of the settlers built better and more extensive houses none was inferior to the model.

Unbroken forest characterised the huge tract of land which the Elgin Association chose for its colony. From the level ground arose handsome oaks, hickory, beech, elm, etc. Some of the soil was composed of a rich black loam. Springing from this fertile soil were trees which could be two to four feet in diameter. Mr King attributed much of the initial success of the colony to the fact that many of the Negroes were good axe men. Some of his colonists showed such industry that they had paid for their farms in five or six years.

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Progressing with amazing speed, the colony, as recorded in its third annual report, in 1852, showed a population of 75 families or 400 inhabitants, with 350 acres of land cleared and 204 acres of land under cultivation. The fourth annual report, in 1853, showed the number of inhabitants as 130 families or 520 persons, with 500 acres of land cleared and 135 partially cleared and with 415 acres under cultivation. The list of livestock was given as 128 cattle, 15 horses, 30 sheep and 250 hogs. School attendance for 1852 indicated 112 children enrolled in the grammar school with 80 attending the Sabbath school.

The fifth report, issued in the year 1854, gave as the population 150 families, 726 acres of land cleared, and 577 acres of land under cultivation. There had been an increase of cleared land amounting to 226 acres, and of 162 acres of land under cultivation. By this time, the livestock had grown in numbers to 150 cattle and oxen, 38 horses, 25 sheep and 700 hogs. The grammar school now had 147 children, and the Sabbath School 120. A second day school was opened that year.

With increasing optimism, the sixth report, in 1855, showed 827 acres of land cleared and fenced, with 216 acres chopped ready to undergo cultivation in 1856. That year, 810 acres were cultivated while the livestock amounted to 190 cattle and oxen, 40 horses, 38 sheep and 600 hogs. The day school had increased to 150 children. In 1855, a saw and grist mill, which supplied the colony with lumber and flour and feed, was erected. This mill which meant death for the forests of Buxton caused the timber reserve to be worth around \$127,000.¹³⁶

Men and women who seven years ago, and some in less time, had been slaves in the American South, unable to read or write, their actions not their own, their work often of the most menial type, their only reward the meagre material comforts of the slave quarters, were now free citizens of the great British Empire, pioneers of the vibrant, young country of Canada, and freeholders of rich, virgin soil, their work, their families, their lives to be enjoyed in responsible liberty.

NEGRO EDUCATION IN CHATHAM

A valuable letter containing information about the Chatham Colored schools and churches appears in a letter to the Voice of The Fugitive in April, 1851. From this letter, other letters to the Planet, and from Dr Howe's and Mr Drew's reports, we gather that from around 1839, Chatham had consistently one school for the elementary and high school was a Negro Separate School, possibly under the Upper Canada School Act of 1851. A sentence, however, in a letter to the Planet signed, "A Trustee" suggests otherwise, "If they (the Negroes) are so very much displeased with the management of their schools, as you would lead the public to believe, they would at once avail themselves of the provisions of the 19th Section of the Upper Canada School Act 13 and 14 Vic., Chap. 48, and appoint their own trustees to manage their own school. Their not doing so, goes to prove very conclusively that they are not so much dissatisfied after all....."¹³⁷

This latter statement seems definite that the Negro population had no "separate" school in the legal sense of the term, but did have a special building with its own staff of teachers or a teacher. In other words, the situation prevailed in Chatham as elsewhere in Canada West whereby the children of the refugee slaves were not admitted to the Common Schools because of the great prejudice of the Canadian people, most of them emigrants, themselves, against the Negro.

137 The Chatham Planet, Vol. IV, No. 96, 25 January, 1860, p. 3, col. 3.

As an example of white refusal to admit Negro children to the Common Schools, and of Negro reaction to it, is the following letter from a Dawn Mills' Negro, Dennis Hill. Mr Hill wrote to Dr Egerton Ryerson, Superintendent of the Canada West, Common School system, on 22 November, 1852:

Dawn Mills, C.W., Nov. 22nd, 1852.

Rev. E. Ryerson, d.d.,

You will please pardon me for the liberty, I have taken in appealing to you for redress for the base treatment I have received from the majority of the trustees of School Section No. 3, in the Township of Camden, County of Kent. I have used every respectful effort in my power to have my son, eleven years of age, admitted into the above named school; but all to no purpose. They say that I am a Black man and that it would be presumption (sic) to me to contend for my son to go to school among white children. Though, I am among the largest tax payers in the said school system. The amount of taxes that I am charged with and have paid this year was \$17 or less a few pence. Besides a 12 days statute labour. I am the owner of three hundred acres of land of which 80 or 90 acres (are) under cultivation situated nearly in the centre of said school section, and to be debarred from my Rights of School Privilege for no other cause than that my skin is a few shades darker than my neighbours, I do think is unfair. And at the same time, these same trustees have invited white children out of the township and they went as far as to invite some whites of the adjoining county to attend the said school and to enjoy the privilege of sending as many scholars as they please and the whole of that party put together do pay but a little more taxes than I do. The above are facts, therefore, will you be so kind as to instruct me how to proceed, and how I shall arrange matters so as to give my children their education, for I cannot let them grow up in ignorance. Be so good, Most Reverend (Sir), as to let me hear from you by the earliest opportunity.

Your Most Humble and
Obedient Ser't,

(signed)

Dennis Hill

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P.S. Address - Dawn Mills,
Canada West.

Yet, to fulfil the letter of the law which admitted of no discrimination, the Chatham School Board provided separate, and not necessarily equal facilities, for the newly acquired Negro subjects of the Queen. Sometimes, too, a teacher would be colored black or brown, and sometimes even white.

James E. Grant, a teacher, maybe the teacher, in the Negro branch of the Chatham Common Schools wrote to Henry Bibb's paper:

Chatham, Canada West, April 5th, 1851.

Dear Brother Bibb,

According to your request, I send you an account of the churches and schools (colored) of this place, the progress and wants of the latter, etc., as far as I am acquainted.

The colored population here numbers near 700 individuals large and small, and three places of public worship, one Episcopal Methodist, two Baptist, having a total of 217 members. Two schools, one a Government School, established some twelve years ago, the other Free Mission, started last summer and taught by Miss Huntingdon.

The Government School, here, numbered in 1848, 49 scholars, the first year I took charge of the school. In 1849, 76; in 1850, 91; as follows: Grammar, 7; History and Geography, 9; Writing and Arithmetic, 33; Reading and Spelling, 42 scholars; males, 45; females, 46; average daily attendance, $45\frac{1}{2}$. This season, the school is free to all children living within the corporation or limits of the town. Attendance in January, 73 scholars, February, 76--to the 31st March, 65. Studies of the same during the quarter, History, Geography, Grammar, Arithmetic, Town's Reader and Test Mat--37; Reading and Spelling--37. Total number of scholars, 86; and might have numbered 100 or over had we a school house sufficiently large to have accommodated all who wished to attend, as it was, we were obligated during the Winter to send some 15 small scholars to my house for instruction by my wife. The Board of Trustees have promised the

erection of a school house, large and commodious, this coming Summer. Our Sabbath School numbers from 60 to 100, and sometimes over, according to the state of the roads; it has seven teachers. We need Bibles for the Sabbath School and Bible class, and have many applications for the Bible from the poor and indigent. We need a larger library and a large Sabbath School map, temperance and other tracts for distribution among children and to be read at home to parents during the week. We are also in great need of reading books, slates and some six or seven dozen of Webster's Spelling Book, (the only American Spelling book allowed in Government Schools) for the use of poor scholars. We hope with a little help to be able to continue to keep our schools open to all living without the corporation, and that all children may enjoy the benefit of a common school education.....

Yours for the Oppressed,

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(signed) James E. Grant.

Whatever group of Negroes were responsible for the legislation which allowed the Negroes Separate Schools, came in for some most uncomplimentary remarks from Henry Bibb's newspaper. "This request (for Separate Schools), however, was not made by the intelligent portion of the colored population, but by a lot of ignoramuses who were made tools of, and who knew not what they were doing."¹⁴⁰

Benjamin Drew, the Abolitionist who visited Chatham around 1856, wrote briefly about its background, and its colored schools:

In 1832, there were in Chatham, but two or three shops and a few houses. The oldest deed or record is dated 1801. In 1837, two steamboats commenced plying to Detroit, one occasionally extending its trips to Buffalo. The facilities thus afforded to trade proved highly conducive to the prosperity of the town; but Chatham took its great start while the Great Western Railway was constructing. Colored people began to come in at the first settlement of the town; at present, they are

139 The Voice of The Fugitive, Vol. 1, No. 9, 25 April, 1851, p. 3, col. 2

140 Idem, Vol. II, No. 1, 1 January, 1852, p. 2, col. 3.

increasing in a greater ratio than the whites. They maintain separate churches and attend a Separate Public School. This writer visited and found fifty pupils of both sexes in attendance under a colored teacher. A private school is taught by Alfred Whipper, a colored man. This school appeared to be in very good condition; fifty-eight colored pupils of both sexes were present.¹⁴¹

Victor Lauriston, writing in the Chatham Daily News on 11 February, 1949, quotes from the minutes of the first meeting of the Chatham School Board in 1858; to the effect that the Negroes were dissatisfied with their one Government School, because it was not central and was overcrowded. Lauriston believes that the structure referred was a "disused", log structure. From the minutes of 2 February, 1858, one of the trustees, Mr. R.K. Payne, assured the Board that the colored school had been amply supplied with globes, maps and charts. To assist in finding temporary accommodation for a second colored school, Messers James Baxter, William D. Eberts, and R.K. Payne, were named a committee to enquire about renting a house, and, then, to select a plan for a permanent, second, colored school. This committee rented a room from a Mr Bell at \$3.50 a month, and bought a stove for the provisional school room.¹⁴² In 1858, therefore, there were two colored schools sponsored by the Municipality of Chatham. Judging from an exchange of letters in the Planet of December, 1859 and of January, 1860, Alfred Whipper's private school may have been taken over by the school board in the period between Drew's visit and 1859. A letter published in the Planet

¹⁴¹ Drew, Benjamin, The Refugee, Boston, J.P. Jewett & Co., 1856

¹⁴² Victor Lauriston, "Chatham Schools" Chatham Daily News, 11 February, 1949, (clipping in Chatham Museum).

of 29 December, 1859, spreads honey before it stings. The anonymous writer compliments the Chatham School Board for its fine school system, and then abruptly asks, "But what about the colored schools?". The letter goes on:

It would seem that the trustees ignore them altogether. The Central School and the School in Chatham North are no doubt well attended to, as they should be, but how is it that one of the colored schools is to be shut up at once, and all the children now attending it, to be crowded together in one small room which is even now too small for the number that attend it. Mr. Dolson is a school trustee, also a Councillor, and we believe is Chairman of the Board, itself. We had hardly thought this, particularly since his friends have promised so much to the colored people. But after all, we suppose that they are but promises at best, as their actions afterwards invariably prove.....143

In Victor Lauriston's extensive history of Kent County, a J.H. Dolson is listed in his Appendix as Deputy Reeve for Chatham in 1864; another Dolsen, John L. Dolsen, is noted as Mayor of Chatham in 1861. Whether one of these had incurred the critical remarks of the writer is not known for certain, nonetheless, the mention of election promises to the colored people is further evidence that the colored vote was not a factor to be ignored.

Not only had one colored school been dissolved, but the teacher Mr Alfred Whipper had been dismissed, or, perhaps, more euphemistically, his job simply disappeared. With another Negro teacher, Mr Highgate, Mr Whipper competed for the position of teacher in the remaining colored school. Obviously, by this time, James E. Grant who had been teaching

in this school from 1849 to 1852, at least, no longer held this position. A third candidate entered the field, a Mr Nichol, who was colored white, some shade of white or other, and who, unlike the darker candidates, who held second class teaching certificates, possessed in all its glory, a first class certificate with an "A" rating. He was chosen by the Board of Trustees to staff the colored school. This move met with a hostile reception from some of the Negro colony who had supported the candidacy of either Mr Highgate or Mr Whipper. The Chatham Planet, itself, joined in the argument believing that as Roman Catholics preferred and got teachers of their own creed, Negroes, too, should have Negro teachers, if that is what they wished. Beset by both black and white criticism, a member of the Board of Trustees answered such sniping in a reasoned and calm letter to the Planet:

Chatham, 20th January, 1860.

Dear Sir,

I take the liberty to address you in defence of that act of the Board of Trustees which gave to a white man the mastership of a coloured school, and which you in your otherwise truthful reply to the shameful article from the Detroit Free Press, say you think was unwise.

The case is simply this:--One of the Schools, for reasons correctly stated by you, was broken up. The teacher of the other, the Board had become dissatisfied with, and in order to give the teacher whose school was broken up an opportunity of getting the remaining school, without his being liable to the charge of supplanting the one the Board had dismissed, an advertisement for a first or second class teacher was inserted in the Planet. When the Board met, three applications for the mastership of the colored school had been received; one from the dismissed teacher who held a second

class certificate, accompanied by a petition signed by some thirty or forty persons, praying that he might be reinstated. Another from the person who had been teaching the school that had been broken up, and who also holds a second class certificate. This application was also accompanied by a petition about as numerous signed in his favor. The third was from a person who had a first class letter "A" certificate, and produced numerous testimonials of good moral character, etc...

Now, you have the responses to the advertisement--- two second class and one first class--all looking for the same salary, \$400 a year. You see that the parties interested were divided in their choice of the two who had been teaching, and I will now inform you that there were as many parties as applicants, and those composing the third party were by far the most numerous and the most respectable. And they said, 'Give us the best teacher, whether he be white, black or grey.' which course the Board adopted. With these facts before you, can you conscientiously adhere to your statement that the appointment "was unwise"? If you cannot, come out publicly and say so, and at the same time make amends to the present teacher for unjustifiably accusing him of, "supplanting", the teacher who had been dismissed. He became the teacher of that school in an honourable and straightforward manner, just as I should hope you obtained the Town Printing last year.

Your Obedient Servant,

A TRUSTEE 144

The explanation interested the Planet, which maintained still that the white teacher Mr Nichol had supplanted or "superceded" the colored teacher, Mr Whipper, contrary to the wishes of the colored rate-payers. In fact, a colored rate-payer had a great deal to say about the subject:

Sir,

I notice in your paper of the 21st instant, a communication respecting the appointment of the present white teacher at the colored school, signed, "A Trustee", the statements in which are not altogether correct. "A Trustee" says that when

the Board met there were three applicants, all asking for the mastership of the colored school. That is correct; but he also says that the white teacher had by far the most numerous and most respectable supporters,---every word of which is entirely untrue. The colored people, I admit, were divided as to which they preferred as a teacher, Mr. Whipper or Mr. Highgate--but sir, I have yet to see the first one that wanted a white teacher to supercede either of them. It is true that the white teacher had a petition with some few signers. But who were they? You will be surprised to learn when I tell you they were a few white citizens of Buxton, and still fewer colored, but not a single citizen of Chatham, white or colored; while the petitions of the other teachers were signed by our best colored citizens as well as white---the colored such as Atwood, Jackson, Chandler, Shadd, Carey, Hamilton, Bell, Browdie, and many others; the whites, such as A.D. McLean, Eberts, Drs. Cross, Asking and many others of the highest standing.....And still the few from Buxton must govern the School Trustees of Chatham, respecting the colored school, contrary to the wishes of both white and colored....

A few more words about the feelings of the colored people about the school as it now stands. We are only waiting for a colored man holding a first class certificate. We shall ask them, the Trustees, to make good their promises--to give us a colored teacher as soon as one comes with a first class certificate; and even with this understanding, let me tell you Mr. Editor, there would not have been ten, nay five children going to that white teacher, now, if the present efficient and highly esteemed assistant, Mrs. Armstrong, had not consented to teach during the present year.....

Along with a strong Negro counter-prejudice against whites in a Negro preserve, the writer suspects that politics may have influenced the Board's choice:

That Board is composed of Reformers, and what means reform, if it is not to do away with old things and establish new? In the present case to turn out old teachers (they are colored) and put in a new one with \$4.00 (he is white).

So much for reform; by giving this a place in your newspaper, you will oblige,

Your Humble Servant,
A Colored Rate-payer.

Chatham, January 23rd, 1860.

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Ending the discussion, the embattled trustee published the final letter in the dispute over the complexion of the schoolmaster to hold forth in the Negro school:

Chatham, January, 25th, 1860: To The Editor of The Planet,--

Sir:

I perceive that you in your Editor's note in reply to mine of the 20th inst., still ignore the good, sound reasons I gave you that led to the appointment by the Board of School Trustees of a white man to the mastership of the colored school, and adhere to your assertion that the appointment was unwise. What you say in regard to the colored children being set off in a separate school, and the preference the colored people have for colored teachers for their children, and indirectly contradicting my assertion, "that there were as many parties as applicants, and those composing the third party were far the most numerous and respectable."

The colored school is not a separate one, only in kind,--the same as the North Chatham School for young children. --The same Board of Trustees controls the Central and North Chatham Schools. This Board has serious duties incumbent upon it, especially in the selection of teachers; and, sir, stigmatize their act in appointing the present teacher over the other two applicants as you will, the Board will always feel in making that appointment, they performed their whole duty.

I am free to say that all things being equal, I would give preference to a colored teacher for colored children; but as I have before explained, this was not the case in this instance.

I maintain that you are in error when you say the colored people prefer colored teacher--upon these grounds:- First, their school was never in so flourishing a condition, as now, nor did the average attendance when the two schools were open to them equal the present average in the one now presided over by a white teacher. Second, if they were so very much displeased with the management of their schools,

as you would lead the public to believe, they would at once avail themselves of the 19th Section of the Upper Canada School Act 13 and 14 Vic., Chap. 48, and appoint their own trustees to manage their own school. Their not doing so, goes to prove very conclusively that they are not so much dissatisfied after all.....

In reply, I beg to say most decidedly, that Mr Nichol, the successful applicant, neither supplanted nor superceeded Mr. Whipper, but simply succeeded him.

Your Obedient Servant,

A TRUSTEE

Ed. Note--We "concede", "A Trustee" has partially succeeded. 146

As an anti-climax to this exchange of opinions, apparently a white reader worried about inter-marriage between the races or "amalgamation" wrote:

Sir,--Having with some sorrow witnessed a very strong disposition on the part of the colored people all over the country to force their children into schools among white children, contrary to the wishes of the white people, I address you to say through you to school trustees in the country, that if they do not desire amalgamation with the colored people, they will find in the 20th Section of 13 and 14 Vict. Chap. 48, means by which they can keep to themselves as we do in Town.

I am led to point out the clause in the School Act above alluded to, to country people, because its provisions being generally known, all obviate law-suits, heart burnings, and trouble to all parties concerned.

Your Obedient Servant,

Anti-Amalgamation.

Chatham, 2nd February, 1860. 147

146 Idem, Vol. IV, No. 98, 28 January, 1860, p. 3, col. 3.

147 The Chatham Planet, Vol. IV, No. 101, 4 February, 1860, p. 3, col. 3.

In a progressive vein, the editor of the Planet opposed this "Jim Crow" attitude, all too painfully common amongst white Canadians, and points out that the Separate School racial legislation applied only to cities, towns and villages. The net result of this tempest which broke over Mr Nichol's head, was to confirm the Board in its decision, to give future historians proof that Separate Colored Schools in the legal sense did not exist in Chatham, and to show, especially, that white prejudice against the Negroes exhibited all too clearly by the isolated, Negro schools, caused an opposite, if not equal, reaction amongst the Negroes, begetting anti-white prejudice. Extremes create extremes. That there existed a moderate group on both sides of the racial fence is indicated in the two letters of the trustee.

There were good intentions on the part of the Mother Foundress of the Ursuline Sisters of Chatham, Mother Mary Xavier Le Bihan, to educate Negro girls in Chatham. Beyond such pious thoughts, however, the Reverend Mother never went. The Ursuline nuns arrived in Chatham from Sault Ste Marie, Michigan, on 9 May, 1860. To establish a boarding and day school for white girls was the primary mission of Mother Xavier and her little band of nuns. Their second home, on Murray Street, was rented to them by a Mr Williams. It was from this house that Mother Xavier wrote to her former Superior at the Ursuline convent of Le Faouet, France, on 2 July, 1861, about Chatham's "Little Africa":

The Negroes occupy a section of the city which has been named Little Africa. Many of these families are respectable, industrious people, and four or five of them are Catholics. How I wish that it were possible for us to open a class for the daughters of these families. To do this, it would be necessary to rent a house at the other end of our grounds, but unfortunately our funds are so low that this is impossible. These people have the greatest desire to send their daughters to us and would willingly make sacrifices to this end, but they are so few in number that what we would receive would not suffice to pay the rent of the house. The government provides a school for the non-Catholic negro children, but the Catholics have no such advantage. 148

From the above letter, it would seem that Mother Xavier's difficulty arose because she believed a separate house for the Negro children was essential, since racial segregation was the standard practice in Chatham schools until the 1890's. She apparently had not heard of or was unimpressed by the experiment of Rev. M.M. Dillon, at the Anglican refugee slave mission, in London, where Negro and white children were educated together, and, in fact, were taught by mulatto school mistresses. The Anglican experiment lasted from 1854 to 1859, to be discontinued when the London Common Schools admitted Negro children. Although there existed in the southern part of Canada West, a precedent for unsegregated education, either faint-heartedness on the part of Mother Xavier or strong anti-Negroid prejudice in Chatham, or both, may have prevented the Ursulines from establishing a Catholic counter-part of the Anglican missions.

The County of Kent Directory for 1864-65 lists the following statistics for Negro institutions in Chatham:

- Colored Schoolon Princess Street;number of pupils attending,130;average,80;James Ward,teacher;res. ,Adelaide Street.
- Colored Baptist Church.. situated on King Street;built in 1862; size 30 by 50 ft; cost \$600;seats 200; Rev. A.(?) W. Anderson,Minister.
- British Methodist Episcopal....Victoria Chapel,situated on Princess Street;built in 1857;size, 40 by 60;cost \$4,000;seats,500; no settled minister.
- African Union Methodist Church....situated on King Street; built of frame in 1857;size,60 by 30; seats 200; Rev. Wm. Walker,Minister; residence,King St. 119

While some municipalities supplied some education for the refugee children,two religious groups were active in the cause of Negro education, the American Baptists in the Windsor area,and the Anglican Church in the London,Chatham and Windsor areas.

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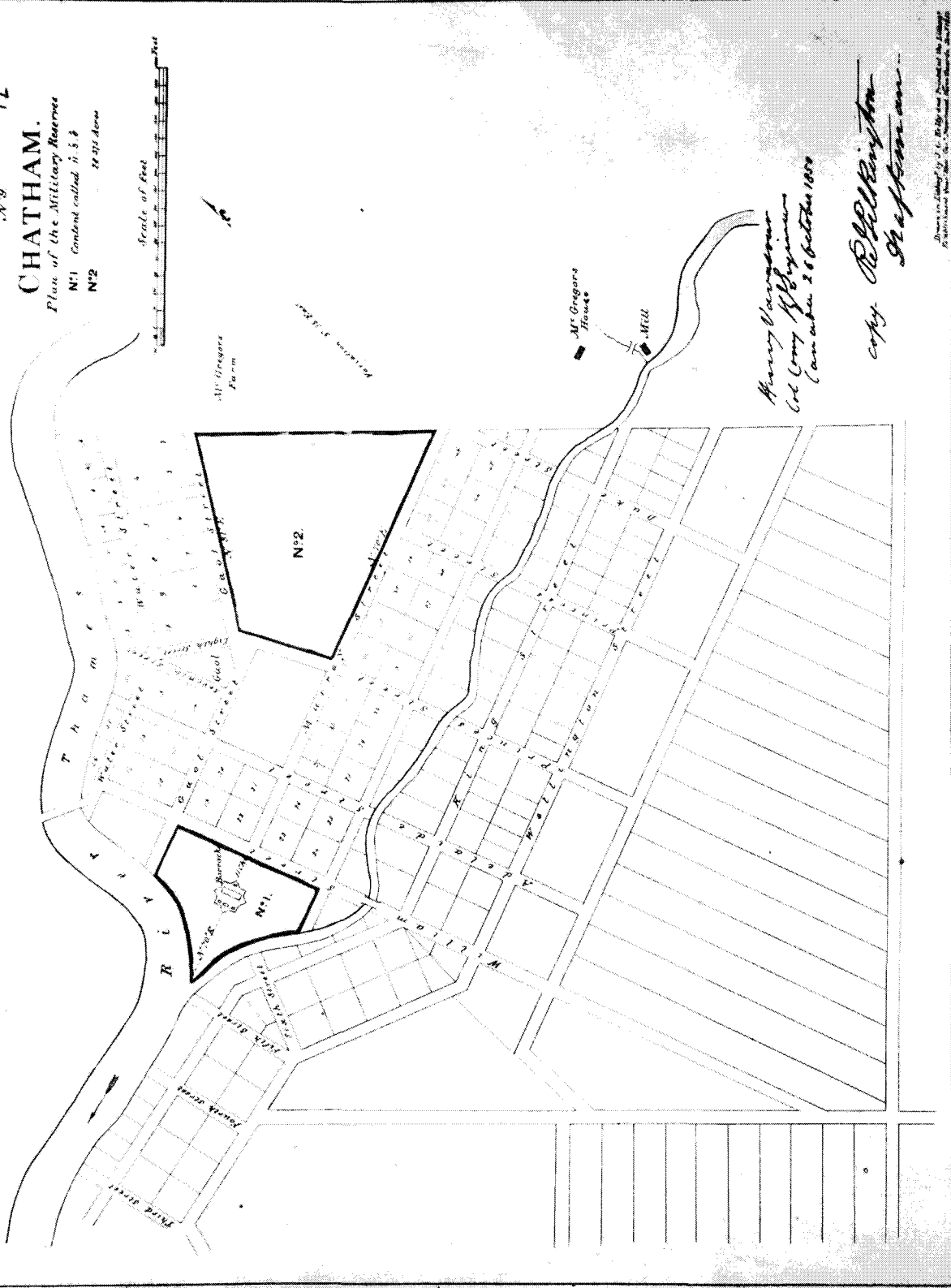
CHATHAM.

Plan of the Military Reserves

Nº 1 Contient called N 5 &

Nº 2

Scale of Feet



Henry Langston
Col Comd of Regiment
Can about 20 October 1800

copy of the plan
of the military reserves

Drawn by Robert G. C. B. Esq and Printed at the Office of the Surveyor General for the District of the Eastern Districts of the Cape of Good Hope, 1800

Troy Paul

CHAPTER IV

THE CLOSE OF AN ERA

RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL MISSIONS;
THE END OF EMIGRATION SCHEMES

An awakened sense of Christian devotion and duty was the legacy left by John and Charles Wesley to the Church of England. Evangelism in the Low Church of England, the more Protestant school, spurred in the early nineteenth century the activity of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts founded in 1701. And at the very time that John Henry Newman was reviving Anglicanism at Oxford by a more Catholic interpretation of the thirty-nine articles, the evangelical wing of Anglicanism inspired the missionary organisation called The Newfoundland School Society founded 30 June, 1823. In September, 1835, the expanded work of the society to other parts of the Empire was recognised by changing the name to the Colonial Church Society. In a third change of name, the group entered the field of education in the missions, and from 1 January, 1851 called itself The Colonial Church and School Society. It is at this stage of the society's career that we are concerned with its work in Canada. A fourth and final change in nomenclature occurred on 1 May, 1861 when it became known as The Colonial and Continental Church Society.

Four very distinguished Britishers took a constructive part in the society's work during the period of the 1850's and 1860's. The Earl of Shaftesbury, the Earl of Carlisle, the Hon. Arthur Kinnaid, M. P., and Sir E. N. Buxton, Bart. were interested in the general activities of the society but especially in the plight of the refugee Negro in Canada West.

In June, 1853, the noble lords and ladies with their equally devoted and

celebrated colleagues of lesser rank listened to the Negro preacher, the Rev. Samuel Ringold Ward, as he talked about the destitution, physical and moral, of the runaway slaves and of the great prejudice against them amongst white Canadians. All of which pointed to the fact that somebody, a Christian church most suitably, should protect, educate and spiritualise these human flotsam and jetsam. In case more persuasion were needed, the society circulated in February, 1854 an "Occasional Paper" which gave data regarding the black influx into Canada, likely supplied by men like Ward and/or by Anglican officials in Canada:

When in 1850 "The Fugitive Slave Law" came into operation, the number of fugitive slaves in the Northern Free States of the Union exceeded fifty thousand. These were thrown into a state of great alarm, and multitudes fled, some to England, but the major part to the adjoining British Colonies. And, whereas in 1848, they numbered only 5,489 in the Canadas, there are now, according to a communication in the Montreal Witness, 'Upwards of thirty thousand colored people in Western Canada scattered over the Province from Kingston to Amherstburg, and most of them, having fled from bondage are living in that degraded situation in which slavery has left them.....

As American paper states that....'The Ferry Master at Detroit reports that at least 900 fugitive slaves crossed at that point into Canada during one year. It is also estimated that some 250 crossed at Cleveland. If these statements be correct, not less than 2,000 slaves passed into Canada within the first year after the enactment of the Fugitive Slave Law'.

The number is still increasing, at a single point on the Canadian shore, the average arrivals are five daily; and at another, no less than 5,000 are reported to have landed since 1850.

Number of colored people in the Townships of Colchester, Gosfield, Raleigh, Sandwich, Anderdon, Chatham, and Malden.....4,250 by some reports and 3,530 by others; children requiring education....1,460.150

So impressive was the evidence presented before The Colonial Church and School Society that the mission to the fugitive slaves in Canada West began in the Autumn of 1854 with its headquarters in London, C.W. To head the mission, the society chose the Rev. Mr Marmeduke Martin Dillon, a veteran soldier who had served with the British regulars in Canada. As a lieutenant with the 89th Regiment, he had spent about twenty years both in Canada and the west Indies, and, in each place, became deeply concerned for the welfare of the Negroes. He held a deep conviction that since England was responsible for the introduction of Negro slavery into what became the Southern States of America, English people and especially the English Church should atone for the sins of their country and race by doing everything possible for the Negroes now in America, Canada and the West Indies.

Armed with this high ideal, the middle-aged army veteran and minister who had been ordained in Antigua and had been Rector of Dominica, left England with his wife, family, a lay assistant, Mr R. Ballantine, and two mulatto women, the Misses Sarah and Mary Anne Titre on 3rd July, 1854. Travelling on the packet-ship, Victoria, they landed at New York. Early in September, the party was received by the Governor-General, the Earl of Elgin and Kincardine, at Quebec

150 The Colonial Church and School Society Annual Reports, Vol. IV, 1851-56, "Occasional Paper", No. 1, microfilm, Public Archives of Canada, pp. 1, 3, 4.

City. At Toronto, Rev. William King left his farm at North Buxton to meet the Anglican mission arriving to educate and assist the refugee slaves. Here, Mr King accompanied Mr Dillon to a Negro meeting, numbering five hundred.

Although London was chosen as the logical site for the parent mission, Mr Dillon wasted no time in studying conditions amongst the Negroes in the Chatham area. The second "Occasional Paper" quoting from Dillon's Journal described his impressions of Chatham and its Negroes in 1854:

This is a rather new but rising town. There are several churches belonging to different denominations. The colored people form nearly one-half of the population. There are at least 2,000 of them in the town and its vicinity and they are daily increasing, as Chatham may be called the great resting place of the fugitives after landing on the Canadian shore. They afterward make their way into the interior. Degradation, crime, idleness prevail among them here, to a greater extent than I have met with anywhere else. But it must not be forgotten that a large proportion of them are just escaped from slavery, and for the first time in their lives are able to call themselves freemen. Being both uneducated and untrained, they have no idea of their duties and obligations to the law and society.

Prejudice against the colored people prevails here to a greater extent than I have anywhere else found. Some would even deny them the right of burial in the same graveyard with the white men; and most owners of town lots would on no account let or sell a lot to a colored man, but would dispose of it to a white man for half what such a one could offer. They are not, and would not on any account be admitted into the Public Schools, and they have no individuals among them qualified to conduct schools of their own.

I visited and conversed with several intelligent men of color, all of whom regret the want of education and religious instruction. They informed me that there are 500 to 600 colored children in the place, all growing up to complete ignorance, and they are exceedingly anxious to have them educated: I explained to them the objects of our mission. They were delighted, but said, if we opened a school and admitted colored children, not one white child would be sent.151

Dillon's first school would seem to have been begun on 20 November, 1854, in London, Canada West. An old friend and fellow officer, Colonel Graham, who was commanding the British regulars in London, placed a room in the barracks, which were on the site of the present Victoria Park, at the disposal of Rev. M.M. Dillon. On the first day of school, eleven children were enrolled. By the end of the week, fifty were in attendance, both black and white. Since the two schoolmistresses were partly Negro from Dominica, Dillon felt he had begun a bold experiment by having white children taught by colored teachers:

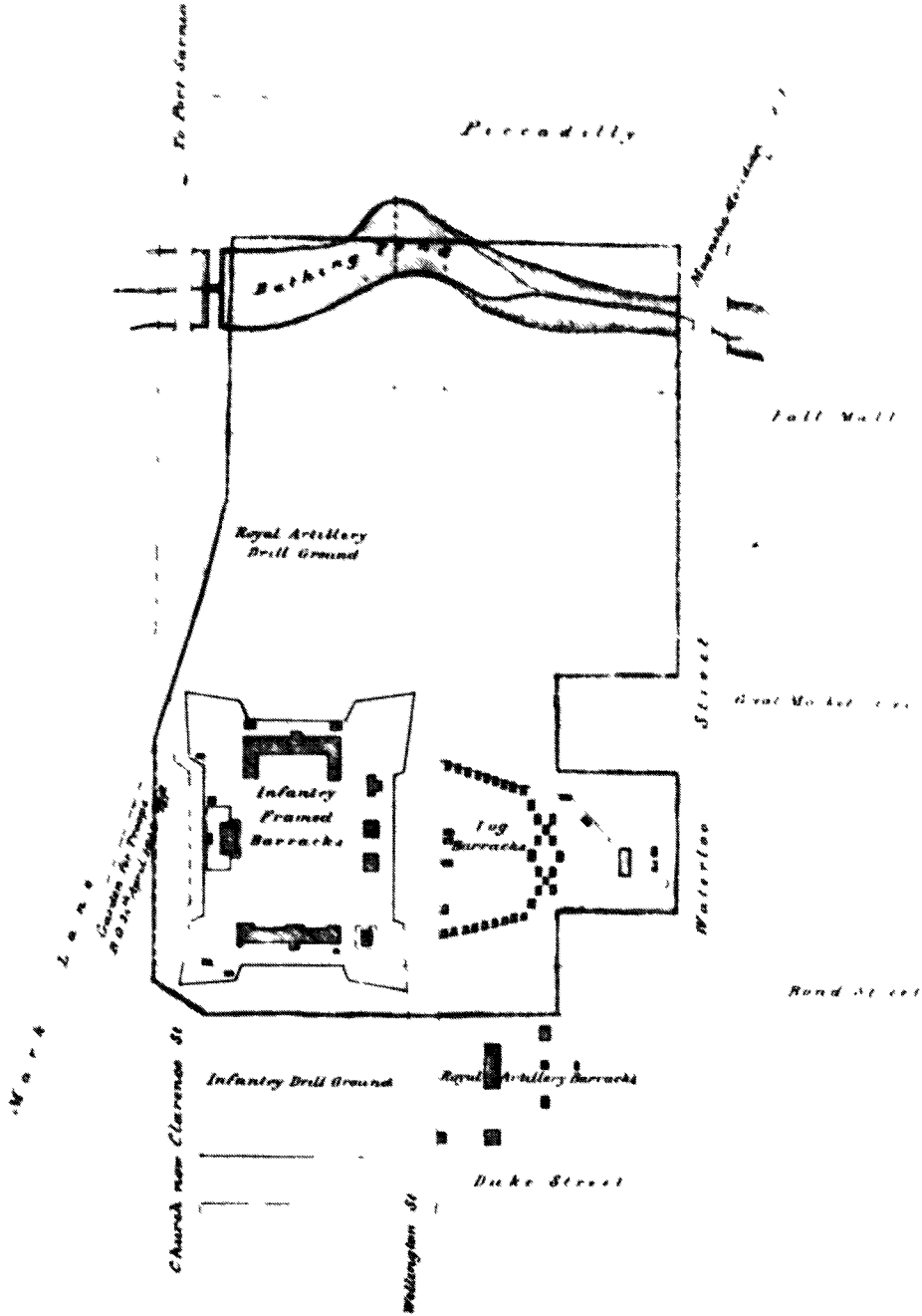
As it is the first instance either in the United States or this country in which colored persons have been introduced as teachers of white children, the experiment was a bold one, but I felt assured that if, under God, it should prove successful, the great barrier of existing prejudices to the introduction of white and colored children to the same common school---to be treated alike, as the children of Christian parents--would at once be broken down. It succeeded, thanks to God's Mercy, beyond my fondest hopes. Not a murmur was heard from parent or child, and the children especially the little ones, seemed greatly attached to the two colored teachers.....152

151 Idem, "Occasional Paper", No. 11, December, 1854, pp. 3,4,5,7,8,9,10.

152 Idem, "Occasional Report", No. III, January, 1855, pp. 4,5.

1850
LONDON. C.W.

Plan of the Military Reserves (continued) 1850



CENTRAL LONDON - 1850

Handwritten notes at the bottom right of the page, including the name 'W. H. Sturt' and other illegible text.

The so-called "Town School" was opened on 8 January, 1855. Sarah Titre taught at this school while Mary Anne Titre continued teaching at the Barrack's school. The first day of the new school, whose situation is unknown, saw 61 children in attendance; on the third day, the school was full with 115 children having been turned away. Of the children at the new school, 40 were Negro, and the total attendance of black and white children in both schools was 203.

Since the mission was obviously needed and being patronised, Dillon held a public meeting in one of the schoolrooms to explain the purpose of the mission to form an auxiliary association. They talked about a new, brick school which would cost £1,200. To help meet the rising costs of the little mission, the officers elected to this auxiliary society agreed to charge 3s. to 4s. per quarter term per pupil, allowing Mr R. Ballantine to make exemptions. Rev. Mr Dillon also hoped that more of the Barracks would be made available to his school through the friendly interest of Colonel Graham. In his reports, Mr Dillon pays especial tribute to the young Mr Ballantine's teaching and devotion. If a modern teacher feels fatigued, Ballantine's schedule would be consoling: he taught school daily from nine in the morning to five in the afternoon; he conducted three night classes a week; attended the weekly teacher's meeting on Thursday night; and on Sunday, taught Sunday school in the morning from nine till eleven and from two to two-thirty in the afternoon.

The list of officers elected as The Local Committee in Canada read like a London Who's Who of the 1850's:

President -- Rev. B. Cronyn	
Goodhue, Hon. Geo.	Brough, Rev. C.C.
Lawrason, L., Esq.,	Flood, Rev. R.
Hamilton, James, Esq.,	Hayward, Rev. H.
Bowick, H.C.	Elliott, W., Esq.,
Adams, Ed., Esq.,	Bailey, Benj., Esq.,
Wilson, John, Esq.,	Mercer, -- Esq.,
Labatt, J.K. Esq.,	Street, W.W. Esq.,
Morley, Saul, Esq.,	Shepherd, -- Esq.,
Dixon, J.C., Esq.,	Rowland, -- Esq.,
Chisholm, Esq.	
Treasurer -- Geo. Taylor, Esq.	
Secretaries -- Rev. M.M. Dillon,	
C. Montserrat.	153

The above committee was formed on 15 June, 1855. Sometime in 1855, two more members were added to the staff of the refugee slave mission. A Miss Williams arrived from England, and a Mr J. Hurst, who knew Mr Dillon on the Island of Dominica. Mr J. Hurst, apparently a young business man, dedicated his life to the Anglican missions by joining the Colonial Church and School Society and by working in its Newfoundland mission. In 1855, he left Newfoundland, possibly around June, to ally himself with the endeavors of his old friend in London, C.W. He met a mission which was growing rapidly. Together, the Barrack's school and the Town school, which was held in buildings lent by Dr B. Cronyn, had by the middle of 1855, turned away 304 children for lack of space and teachers. Dillon writes in 1855:

When we arrived here last November, there were but 800 Colored persons in London. They now number more than 2,000, and are daily on the increase. Between 300 and 400 of this

number are now under our immediate instruction either in the day or night or Sunday schools, or Cottage lectures delivered by Mr. Hurst or myself. ...154

By around June, 1855, Dillon held successful negotiations for the use of the abandoned artillery barracks. To refit the barracks, he collected \$1,271. This expansion allowed 450 children to be educated. Dillon writing for the fourth "Occasional Paper" rejoiced over the acceptance of Negroes into St Paul's Anglican Cathedral. They were now allowed to sit in all parts of the church; all pews were open to them at the afternoon service; they might now receive Communion with the whites rather than afterwards, as was previously the case; further three quarters of the Negro population were attending St Paul's Cathedral.¹⁵⁵ Dillon also recorded the arrival in London and study of his mission by an American, Anti-Slavery gentleman who was writing about the condition of the Negroes in Canada West--possibly, the investigator was Benjamin Drew.

Emancipation Day in the London of 1855, was celebrated on 1 August with great feeling and demonstration. The religious climax came when 600 to 700 ex-slaves paraded with banners flying led by the Barrack's band to St Paul's Cathedral, where Rev. Dillon conducted the service.

Laboring indefatigably for the cause of Christ and the Negro, Marmeduke Dillon suffered a decline in health. In the Spring of 1855, he mentioned his failing health to his London, England superiors, and

154 Idem, "Occasional Paper" No. IV, June 1855, p. 7.

155 Idem, "Occasional Paper" No. IV, June, 1855, pp. 2, 5.

warned them he intended to retire when possible. He retired in November, 1855. With no successor in sight, however, Mr Dillon seems to have stayed with the mission for another year. On 29 July, 1856, Dillon saw the children move from St Paul's Schoolroom to the Artillery Barracks. He later became pastor of Port Dover, Canada West, where he spent his remaining years. Two of his grandsons have their home in London, today, Mr Murray M. Dillon, 295 Wolfe St., the head of the Dillon firm of consulting engineers, and Major Arnold M. Dillon, 10 Marley Place, Manager of Mills Scaffold and Concrete Specialties, Ltd.

Dillon was not alone in his illness. The two teachers from the warm climes of Dominica had contracted tuberculosis. They, too, must be replaced. Yet, by August, 1856, the original staff, augmented, of course, by Mr Hurst and Miss Williams, were still functioning with continued success. During 1856, Mr J. Hurst received a request from a Negro preacher at Dresden, the Rev. W.P. Newman, to found a mission in Dresden. Newman will be referred to at some length later because he figured prominently in the Haiti colonisation plan.¹⁵⁶ Hurst quite sensibly regarded this invitation as an excellent introduction to Chatham. His presentiment proved correct since The Chatham Planet records on 20 October, 1858:

Ordination--At the recent ordination in St Paul's Cathedral, London, conducted by the Bishop of Huron, the following persons offered themselves, viz:

Mr John Hurst, the late city missionary at Toronto; Mr. Thomas Hughes, headmaster of the Colonial Church School in this city; Mr. R. Gordon, (colored) late of Kingston, Jamaica, and Mr. John Allan, of St. Bee's College, Cumberland, England.

The following are the appointments of those ordained:
Rev. J. Allan, destination not fixed as yet.
J. Hurst, appointed missionary to the fugitives at Amherstburg.
T. Hughes, appointed missionary and schoolmaster to the fugitives in London.
R. Gordon, missionary to the fugitives in London and district.
The Bishop at the same time licensed and appointed the following clergymen:
Rev. J. MacLean as curate to the Cathedral.
Rev. T.A. Pinckney as missionary to the fugitives in Chatham. ...157

The career of the Rev. Pinckney in Chatham is shrouded in mystery except for one controversial incident about which there exists little but the bare bones. For a year, he must have had some prestige and success since on 1 July, 1859, he was one of the speakers at a breakfast held at the Tecumseh Hotel, London, for the clerical and lay delegations of the Diocese of Huron. His speech, of which no account is given, was followed by the other Negro Anglican clergyman, the Rev. Mr Gordon. 158

From the Minute Books of The Colonial and Continental Church Society, 1855-1866, we read this excerpt:

Read a letter from the Mrs. Pinckney, late Miss King, Chatham, C.W., 6 March, announcing her marriage with Rev. T.A. Pinckney, and describing the persecutions which they endured in consequence at the hands of the white population. Resolved that Mr. and Mrs. Pinckney be assured of the sympathy of the committee and of their best wishes for their welfare. ...159

What priceless, original material might well have been contained in the letters exchanged by Rev. Pinckney and his wife with the missionary headquarters in London, England is forever lost. The bombing of London during the famous Blitz of World War II destroyed part of

157 The Chatham Planet, Vol. III, No. 126, 20 October, 1858, p. 2, col. 6.
158 Idem, Vol. IV, No. 11, 2 July, 1859, p. 2, col. 4.
159 Minute Books of the C.C.C.S. 1855-66, p. 682.

the society's building; all of the documents saved which pertained to Canada have been since microfilmed, and stored in the Public Archives in Ottawa. Unfortunately for us, the Pinckney correspondence was amongst those papers destroyed.

We can imagine, however, from the gleanings left, that in the pioneer town of Chatham, where the large Negro population sharpened the racial problem to delicate proportions, that the marriage of the new Negro, Anglican minister to his white, English catechist, Miss King would be explosive. We have no way of knowing exactly what were the nature of the "persecutions" endured by the couple who dared an inter-racial marriage. Likely, the minister and his wife were exposed to the countless, petty forms of nastiness in which human beings can be so expert. A letter appearing in the Planet of March, 1860, seems to be the only reference to the matter in a Chatham newspaper. This letter criticises what was apparently a lurid account of a riot occurring in Chatham over the marriage given by the Kent Advertiser and also questions the Advertiser's report that the colored women of Chatham were incensed by the action:

Where Did He Get His Information?

To The Editor of The Chatham Planet:

Sir:-- The Kent Advertiser of the 8th instant published an account of the riot which occurred in this town a few days ago, arising from the fact that a colored Christian Minister of the Gospel stationed here had ventured to unite his fate with that of an English lady.

Now, Mr. Editor, I do not like to accuse the person who wields the gigantic pen of the Advertiser of falsehood when he speaks of the "lawless mob" who delivered the boy Jack out of the lion's jaw; but really, it has that appearance when he says immediately after they only "endangered the peace of the community."

I really think that if he said the editor is not in the habit of "baying the moon", it would be well for him not to bray so loudly, that he cannot distinguish between a crowd of men protecting a poor, defenseless little boy doomed by a tyrant to lifelong bondage, and a mob of ruthless villains "breaking doors and windows, committing robbery, and using foul language to a lady, who, though "unfortunate" she may be or "astray", or possessed of "a strange taste", now might not, had she come under your contemporary's notice some years sooner, have selected her suitor on these matters because long ears were the chief qualification.

Under the head of "mysterious silence" are these words, "It is said the colored women disapprove of it." Where did he get his information on this subject? I should be much edified to find from what source the stream flows that supplied the brave editor with matter enough to fire his courage, and set him defending or speaking against that which he says offends the colored women. Have the days of chivalry returned? Richard 1st of England, The Black Prince, Don Quixote, then our friend of the Advertiser, Excelsior.

(signed) E.S. ...160

This heavy-handed diatribe on the Advertiser's treatment of l'affaire Pinckney is evidence that some kind of public demonstration may have happened. The Minute Books for 21 June, 1860 mention that more letters had been received from Mr Pinckney and that Mrs Pinckney had written on 23 May. On the basis of the stories related in these letters, and in view of the whole situation, the English committee, "Resolved that if Mr. Pinckney be removed from Chatham and the funds of the

mission allow, Mr W. Tearne (who arrived in London, C.W. in 1859 at the
mission) be recommended to the Bishop and Dr Hellmuth for that mission." 161

A letter from the Rev. T.A. Pinckney sent 12 March, 1860,
shortly after his marriage, finally arrived in London, England on
25 June: it announced to the Correspondence Committee, his reports 162
for the previous quarter and his resignation at the end of June.

A later note concerning this upset in the Chatham mission, related
that a letter from Dr Hellmuth stated he was going to see the Committee 163
in Toronto about finding a charge for Rev. Pinckney in Hamilton.

The final word is contained in the Minutes for 18 July, 1860.
Here, a letter was read from Pinckney, dated 29 June, 1860, and
addressed from Chatham, C.W. In this letter, Rev. Pinckney stated he
had resolved to accept the offer of an appointment to Hamilton, C.W.,
if the Committee in England had no objection. He had already inter-
viewed three ministers in Hamilton and the Bishops of Toronto and of
Huron. He states, too, that if the Hamilton position does not material-
ise, then, he will be forced to leave the Fugitive Slave Mission. The
Committee replied:

Resolved that this Committee approve of the course
adopted by Mr. Pinckney, and while they will be glad if an
arrangement be made for placing him at Hamilton, they will
abide by the ultimate decision of the Correspondence Committee
of London and Toronto and of Dr. Hellmuth. ...164

Dramatically, the feeling between races amongst the various
classes of human society and in different environments was shown in the

161 Minute Books of the C.C.S.S., 1855-56, p. 700.

162 Idem, p. 792.

163 Idem, p. 796.

164 Idem, p. 798.

Pinckney incident. Some of the people, likely both white and black, of the rough-and-tumble frontier town of Chatham where the Negro population was almost equal that of the white, saw the marriage as unbecoming a Christian minister and a violation of the barriers which protected race from race.

There is no record of the feelings of the educated and cultured Anglican authorities in Canada West; yet, noticing the attention and help which the Negro minister was receiving from them, they could not have been too scandalised. And most certainly, the Minutes of the C.C.S.S. in England record the sympathy and good wishes of the cultured, Christian, English and socially important Correspondence Committee in the Mother Country, where there was no racial problem.

Rev. Mr Dillon's name does not appear in the records after 1856. With the advent of the American Civil War and its successful conclusion for the anti-slavery forces, the need for the Fugitive Slave Mission became less apparent to the Anglicans in England. Yet the Mission to the Colored People continued as late as 1868. Although the school in London was closed in 1859 because more Negro children were being admitted to the Common Schools, students from Huron College for several years more perpetuated the "cottage lectures" of Mr Dillon and Mr Ballantine. The mission staff for 1866 read as follows:

Dresden--Rev. T. Hughes
 Mr. Highgate, Schoolmaster
London---Mr. S. Smith -
 Mr. Downie - Huron College Catechists
Windsor--Rev. J. Hurst
 Miss Williams

Rev. Mr. Hurst had been transferred from the London mission to the Windsor mission of All Saints in December, 1859 by the Bishop of Huron. In 1868, Mr Hurst was taken from the mission staff to become one of the regular diocesan clergy of the Diocese of Huron. This allowed the union of the Negro mission in Windsor with the white mission into the parish of All Saints.

165

THE NEGRO BAPTIST CHURCH IN CHATHAM

Apart from the efforts of the Anglican Church through its Fugitive Slave Mission to bring spiritual leadership to the Negroes, no other predominantly white church seems to have tried to succor the souls of these runaway slaves. Even the mission of the Church of England had its major success in London, Dresden and Windsor with the Chatham mission being most transient. And in London, Dresden and Windsor, the results of those once thriving missions were ephemeral.

Since most of the Negroes from the South were of the Baptist or Methodist creeds, it was most natural that the Negro branches of these churches should be formed in Chatham and area in the early days of emigration. When Josiah Henson lived in Colchester in 1835 before removing to the Dawn site, he organised the African Methodist Episcopal Church in that community. The Negro Baptist Church in Chatham, which formed the principal congregation for the slaves, was part of the Amherstburg Baptist Association founded in Amherstburg in 1840.

The Church in Chatham was established by 1843, because in 1844, the first ordination service of Amherstburg Association was held in Chatham. Horace H. Hawkins and Peter Stokes were ordained to the ministry with the sermon being preached by Elder Anthony Binga. The ordination provided the focal point for a session of the Conference. Typical of the earnest admonitions sternly issued by the religious leaders of the refugees, this session emphasized temperance in liquor indulgence and abstinence from servile labor on Sunday. ¹⁶⁶

The Rev. H.W. Stewart writing about the history of the white Baptist Church states:

Rev. Lloyd Houlding in reporting the early days of the Western Association (now Kent and Essex Churches) revealed in a minute on the record of the old Colchester Churches as of Feb. 22nd, 1846:

Brother Parks was delegated to go to council and to organise a church in Chatham.

This date accords with a statement of an aged member of the First Baptist Church (colored) of Chatham repeated to me by the Rev. Mr. Brown, "Ours is the First Baptist Church because it was begun in 1843, three years before the big Baptist Church of the white folk." ...167

Something of the zeal for Christ and of the hardships suffered by the early Negro preachers can be realized from this account:

The Amherstburg Association Churches were too small and poor to have a minister in each pulpit. To remedy this situation, a travelling minister was appointed to act under the direction of the corresponding secretary and the moderator. Mr. Horace H. Hawkins was the first to be so appointed. The Churches were to take an offering the first Sunday of each

166 Pathfinders of Liberty and Truth, Dorothy S. Shreve, compiler, 1940, p. 10.

167 Rev. H.W. Stewart, Historical Sketches of William Street Baptist Church, March 1948, p. 2.

month to defray expenses. In 1847, the number of such missionaries was increased to three. These travellers worked under difficult circumstances, and their accomplishments deserve praise. The following report of Israel Campbell will serve to illustrate the type of work performed. "I have travelled 2,500 miles, preached 100 sermons, visited 212 families, attended 24 prayer meetings, 6 church meetings and administered the Lord's Supper 6 times, attended 1 covenant meeting, and baptised 13 persons expended \$55 and received in cash \$35.168

The contemporary building used by the congregation of the First Baptist Church was built in 1851. A frame structure resembling a modest, village schoolhouse, the building stands on King Street, East, between Prince and Princess Streets. Recently, an extension was thrust across the front of the simple church, and covered with an asbestos-brick finish. Once the church was built, the written history of the congregation began. The pastor of the new church was the Rev. Horace Hawkins. His trustees were: Lorenzo Valtine, William Batson, George Solomon Washington, Henry Minor, Jason Grant, and Truelce Fitsbat. Their term was from 1852 to 1867.

Before 1856, there were three Negro Baptist Churches in Chatham; the First Baptist Church which belonged to the Amherstburg Conference; the Second Baptist Church which was allied to the Anti-Slavery Association, and the Union Baptist Church which was independent. The Second and Union Baptist Churches amalgamated on Sunday, 14 September, 1856. Four days later, they were joined by the First Baptist Church to form the First Baptist Congregation of Chatham. This re-organised congregation held its services in the First Baptist Church on King

Street, East. Its minister was the Rev. Richard Duling, and its deacons: William C. Philips, Marcus Carter, John Lawrence, and Mansfield Johnson. Mr Duling was shortly succeeded in 1856 by Elder Johnson who held the pastorate until 1866.

169

Wilfred Sheffield in his thesis quotes the resolution which bound the three Chatham Negro Baptist Churches together:

In 1856, the Canadian Anti-Slavery Baptist Association sent the following resolution to the Amherstburg Association:

Whereas it is undeniable that the two Associations, namely the Amherstburg Baptist and the Canadian Anti-Slavery Baptist be united into the one association, therefore, resolved that Elder W.P. Newman, Elder S. White, and Brother James Hansboro be appointed messengers from this association to the Amherstburg Association and present to them our desire to unite in one body on principles that may be mutually agreed upon.

The above resolution was unanimously passed. 170

AFRICAN, HAITIAN AND JAMAICAN COLONISATION

An item from The Chatham Journal, of 6 April, 1861, mentions that an African Aid Society had been formed in England to help the refugees in Canada and the United States to migrate to parts of Africa and to British Negro colonies. Finding its source in an issue of The London Daily News, the Journal stated that the Canadian agent was to be Dr Martin R. Delaney who expected to bring emigrants from the Elgin Settlement to Abbeohuta in the Niger Valley. His projected party

169 Pathfinders of Liberty and Truth, pp. 79, 80.

170 Wilfred Sheffield, Op. Cit., C. III, p. 53.

were supposed to contain men skilled in cotton and sugar cane growing and in mechanical repairing. The headquarters for this colonisation group was 7 Adam Street, W.C., Strand.

Delaney, the noted Chatham Negro physician, who was also involved with John Brown, had apparently visited Africa before this society was established. The Planet for 26 January, 1861 wrote about Dr Delaney's growing belief in Africa, especially the Niger Valley, as the place for the American Negro. On 25 March, 1861, the First Baptist Church, referred to above, was the scene of another lecture by Dr Delaney about his pet "back-to-Africa" movement. Rev. Mr Simpson chaired the meeting; O.P. Anderson and Mr A.S. Carey graced the platform.

How succesful was this vision of a New Africa which Dr Delaney seems to have held is impossible to say. We have not met with any accounts either in documents or in newspapers of the day which state anything about emigrants leaving the Chatham area for Africa. As with Dr Rolph's scheme for Trinidadian emigration, the basic assumption seems to have been that Canada, in particular, and North America, in general, was no place for the Negro because of a rugged climate and of white anti-Negroid feeling. When Delaney's idea was the subject of conversation in September, 1858, because of a new expedition to the Niger River Valley in Africa, The Planet may have expressed the opinion of many North American Negroes:

The mortality among colored emigrants in Canada is no greater than among others and that, too, when they come here many of them robbed by oppression, often only half as

171 The Chatham Journal, Vol. V, No. 127, 6 April, 1861, p. 2, col. 1.

172 The Chatham Journal, Vol. V, No. 123, 29 March, 1861, p. 3, col. 1.

well clad as others, and that after passing through hardships which would be considered a priori ruinous to almost any constitution. And yet they have shown that out of thirty thousand now in the Province, twenty-seven thousand have never since they have come, received a farthing of aid from any source; certainly a favorable showing as to prosperity and thrift here....If Africa is the real home of the Negro, so is Europe the real home of the American European. This new 173 society has no connexion with the American Colonization Society.

Much more in the news and having, perhaps, more attraction, was the Haitian colonization scheme led by John Redpath, aided by John Brown, Jr. and enthusiastically supported by Rev. W.P. Newman, Baptist minister from Dresden.

A rare quotation from that lamentably extinct, Chatham Negro newspaper, The Provincial Freeman, was to be found in the Planet for 5 July, 1858:

National Colored Convention: We observe in the Provincial Freeman of Friday last, a notice over the name of J.T. Holly of New Haven, to the effect that in pursuance with revised regulations the next regular Annual Session of the National (Colored) Emigration Convention will be holden in this town the 4th day of Next August. A punctual attendance of all members is requested at the approaching Convention. ...174

One of the prime movers behind this convention was the Rev. James Theodore Holly, Rector of St. Luke's Parish, New Haven Connecticut. In 1856 or 1857 he had been sent to Haiti by the above mentioned society to report on the wisdom of North American Negroes immigrating to that Negro Empire or Republic, as it was variously. His impressions were favorable, and perhaps, as a result of Holly's interest and visit, the Planet for 17 September, 1858, gloried in the glamor of two agents from

173 The Chatham Planet, Vol. III, No. 38, 22 September, 1858, p. 2, cols, 1, 2, 3.

174 Idem, Vol. III, No. 5, 5 July, 1858, p. 2, col. 2.

the Emperor of Haiti visiting Canada to investigate Negro Emigration. One imperial agent was Colonel P. Emile Desdunes and the other M. Mont-
175
fort, a merchant from Port-au-Prince.

A year later, the Rev. W. P. Newman left Canada for Haiti. Newman, the pastor of the Negro Baptist Church in Dresden, departed for the West Indian country as a missionary for the American Baptist
176
Association. He planned to work there for a year.

At the same date, the plan to emigrate to Jamaica so cultivated by Peter Gallego in the 1840's was still being broached by some sponsor who is not clearly stated. A sub-agent for this plan Mr J.D. Harris, a Negro, called a meeting to promote immigration to Jamaica at the Government School-house, on Princess Street on 3 October, 1859 at seven o'clock in the evening. In the best tradition of Victorian oratory, Mr Harris harangued his crowd for two and a half hours about the advantages of exchanging Canada West for Jamaica. Possibly feeling that his audience were not so interested in palm trees and Carribean sunshine, Mr Harris chaired his own meeting and proclaimed that any questions would be answered privately not publicly. The hostile element, which apparently composed most, if not all, of the audience seized the opportunity to voice its opposition just as Mr Harris called upon one of the ministers present to speak the benediction. Mr Thomas Cary presented a series of resolutions which were fiery in tone, and left no doubt as to the stand of Mr Harris's audience. They may well have

175 Idem, Vol. III, No. 37, 17 September, 1858, p. 2, col. 2.

176 Idem, Vol. IV, No. 47, 27 September, 1859, p. 2, col. 4.

represented the opinion of many or most of Canada West's refugee slave population:

Whereas, there have been certain parties here, of late, infesting Western and Lower Canada, assuming to be agents, (tools otherwise) to effect the expatriation of colored citizens from their homes in these Provinces, and

Whereas, the aforesaid agents and their subtle tools are Yankees, and give out as bait to their foul schemes, settlement on the island of Jamaica, under certain inhuman, pro-slavery and unfeeling provisions; holding to the idea they were working in the name of humanity, while they are working for Bunkum, and

Whereas, the said persons alluded to, having the daring impudence to come to our homes and among their families, and hold up pro-slavery arguments and the Colonization Libel, that warm countries are more congenial to the nature of colored persons; having the daring effrontery to add insult to injury, by posting publicly on the streets and avenues, 'Free Colored Emigration to Jamaica', endeavoring to sow broadcast in our midst, the hateful prejudice so prevalent in the Yankee States; and encouraging the prejudices of the ruling minds in that tyrannical dynasty--attempting to foster differences of caste and complexion--holding out the false idea to the world that we are unsatisfied here, and his nefarious agency causing to be circulated in the American Journals that we are emigrating in masses to the said Island; and

Whereas, We are British Subjects--living and enjoying British liberty like all other of Her Majesty's subjects, we feel proud to declare our loyalty to the greatest Sovereign on earth, and happy, happy, with our joyful homes in the Canadas, will only relinquish them by death; that we stand here to sustain and defend their honor and claim to our Gracious Sovereign by both treasure and blood, therefore

Resolved, That we indignantly repudiate and denounce the scheme of endeavoring so to effect a dislodgement of our people here as inhuman, impolite and deceptive in the extreme, that in view of the course pursued, we regard the labors of the white Yankee, Mr. Stanley, engaged in the trick, as an ally and a confederate of those who put a price on human blood, and thus we regard Mr. J.D. Harris, who has proved himself a willing tool in this matter, as a deceptive Judas, ready to betray his brothers for thirty pieces of silver.

Resolved, That we warn the colored citizens of the Canadas to beware of the seductive scheme, and we now arm them with a club to strike the vile monster down, whenever he appears; that we believe the system of infamy fostered in this enterprise is only excelled by the enormities of the African Slave Trade.

Resolved, That in view of the fact, a crisis will soon occur in the United States to effect (the liberation of) our friends and countrymen there, that we feel it the duty of every colored person to make the Canadas their homes. The temperature and salubrity of the climate, and the productiveness and fertility of the soil, affords ample field for their encouragement. To hail their enslaved bondsmen upon their deliverance, in the glorious kingdom of British liberty, in the Canadas, we cordially invite the free and the bond, the noble and the ignoble, --we have no "Dred Scott Law".

Resolved, That the colored citizens of Chatham request these persons to close their mission in these Provinces, and in Chatham, C.W. in particular.

Committee on Publication

F.F. Cary,
J.M. Bell,
Rev. Samuel Lowry,
J.H. Harris,
Rev. G.W. Brodie 177

At half-past eleven that night, the resolutions were unanimously adopted. Mr J.D. Harris must have paled under this broadside, and disappeared into the dark, October night.

Eight years before, other attempts occurred to further Jamaican emigration. In August, 1851, Rev. S. Oughten, a Jamaican, and another Jamaican, William Wemuss Anderson, visited Toronto, and spoke before the newly-formed Anti-Slavery Society. The suggestions of these gentlemen were presented before the Provincial Government and before the Governor-General, Lord Elgin. Both requested the opinion of the executive of the society. Their opinion was unfavorable to the emigration scheme, whether it be to Trinidad or Jamaica:

Jamaica, they thought, had nothing to attract the refugee more than Canada, and the Society was placed on record as approving the findings of the Great North American Convention of Colored People, which had met in Toronto the preceding September, to the effect that Western Canada was the most desirable place on the American continent, and that colored people in the United States should emigrate to Canada rather than to the West Indies or Africa, since, in Canada, they would be better able to assist their brethren flying from slavery. With regard to the American Colonization Society the finding of the Canadian Anti-Slavery Society was that its professions of promoting the abolition of slavery were "altogether delusive". It had originated with slaveholders and was protected by them to rid the country of the free Negroes. 'A Colonization and a bitter, pro-slavery man are almost convertible terms'. ...178

Although Dr Delaney's African emigration plan, and that of Messers Redpath and Brown Jr., had nothing to do with the above mentioned and condemned American Colonization Society, it is clear that responsible Negro and official white opinion was forcibly opposed to such movements. Although any emigrant held freedom to emigrate, if he liked, both Negro and white leaders saw little advantage.

While Mr Cary turned his heavy artillery on the hapless Mr Harris, that Autumn evening in the Princess Street School, in 1859, another Negro from the district was revelling in the novelty of Haiti. Rev. W.P. Newman, on 20 November, 1859, wrote from Port-au-Prince, that he had never felt happier than amongst his own people, in their own country with their own government. He found that the pure Negroes and the Mulattoes were on an equal footing. To his delight, he had been entertained by the Secretary of State, who had been educated in Paris,

178 Fred Landon, "The Anti-Slavery Society of Canada," The Journal of Negro History Vol. IV, No. 1, January, 1919, pp. 37-38.

and who lived, "in the highest Parisian style". Dazzled by the "Parisian style", the traveller from Dresden, C.W. was equally impressed by the fact that several members of the Haitian Government were of Anglo-Negro and American Negro origin. ¹⁷⁹ Apparently having got as far as the President, Newman declared the Chief Executive in favor of Negro emigration from the North American continent provided the emigrants pay their own costs; to encourage emigration, Newman claimed the President was thinking of allowing emigrant Negroes and Indians to own their land in fee simple, when having emigrated, they at once agreed to become Haitian citizens.

After several months of Haiti, Mr Newman still sent on 8 May, 1860, glowing accounts home to his friends in the Chatham area, but was now able to see at least three factors which might discourage emigrants. One was the militaristic form of government, another was the Roman Catholic Church as the established religion with a white clergy, and the third, was the continued flux in the price of land. In spite of such drawbacks, he would earnestly exhort his fellow Negroes in Canada to come to Haiti:

My advice to you is to have a definite arrangement with proprietors of land and the government before you come, and then charter a vessel, and come and settle in colonies of not less than one hundred each. Bring with you light clothing, bedding, and furniture, salt provisions and flour for six months, and all the farming, mechanical, manufacturing implements you have, as they will come free of duty....don't forget, cotton gins, hand corn grist mills, and portable saw mills, grape cuttings and apple, peach, pear and plum seeds, etc.

(signed) W.P. Newman. 180

179 The Chatham Planet, Vol. IV, No. 95, 21 January, 1860, p. 3, col. 3.
180 Idem. Vol. IV, No. 6, 21 June, 1860, p. 3, col. 2.

The trend to Haiti had some attraction for free Negroes in the State of Louisiana. The Planet quoting from the New Orleans Picayune in the autumn of 1860 claimed that the emigration to Haiti was sufficiently steady that a standard steamer had been placed for the first time on the regular line between Haiti and New Orleans.¹⁸¹

Not belonging in any way to the organisation sponsoring Newman's missionary activities in Haiti, but highly interested in promoting emigration to that sub-tropical land, John Brown, Jr. delivered a lecture in Chatham on Thursday evening, 7 March, 1861 concerning the wonders of Haiti. The literature for the occasion was A Guide to Haiti written by James Redpath, the Chief of the Haytian Bureau of Emigration in Boston since 24 August, 1860. Brown's campaigning had some success, because he writes to The Chatham Planet on 13 June, 1861:

As an item, that may interest some of your readers, you can state that forty-nine colored emigrants left Amherstburg and Windsor for Hayti, on Monday last, the 10th. They were among the enterprising and industrious farmers in this section of the country. From present appearances there will be a large emigration this Fall.

Truly Yours,

(signed) John Brown, Jr. 182

In the Spring of 1861, Mr Newman had an embarrassing experience in Port-au-Prince. At a Catholic religious procession, the Host was being borne aloft through the streets. Mr Newman, as a Baptist minister, rather naturally regarded such a rite as idolatrous, if not ridiculous. True to his convictions but rather lacking in good manners and tact,

181 Idem, Vol. V, No. 65, 9 November, 1860, p. 2, col. 2.

182 Idem, Vol. V, No. 3, 27 June, 1861, p. 1, col. 2.

he kept on his hat while the priest with the exposed Host went by. Whereupon an Haitian policeman knocked Mr Newman's hat in the dust, and escorted Mr Newman to the local magistrate. Newman's account maintained that he was fined for the incident. Whatever were the exact facts about the case, Haiti lost much of its charm for the Baptist missionary after that time. James Redpath, guessing that Newman's account was being noised about in the Chatham area, wrote his version of the incident to The Planet.

Redpath claimed that although Newman had insulted the feelings of the Catholic Haitians at this procession by wearing his hat, and that a zealous policeman had knocked it off, yet it was the policeman who had been arrested by another officer, and not Newman. Newman was fined, according to Redpath, for writing an insulting letter to an emigrant called Samford. Redpath accuses Newman of discontent with Haiti because he could not persuade the Haitian Government to grant some of his remarks. What these were are not stated. Possibly, they related to his emigration ideas and/or to his propagation of the Baptist religion in a nominally Catholic domain.

By the Summer of 1861, if not earlier, Newman had left the promised land of Haiti for the colder but more stable land of Canada. To one of Redpath's friends, Newman had written from his home in Dresden, on 2 August, 1861, a letter which James Redpath found singularly

183 Idem, Vol. V, No. 41, 21 March, 1861, p. 2, col. 8.

annoying. So annoying was it, that Redpath wrote a refutation of the Newman letter to the editor of The Planet, on 23 August, 1861. He accused Newman of four things: 1) of trying to prove that Negroes when unsupported or apart from the white race are incapable of self-government; 2) of inducing Negro refugees to immigrate to Jamaica instead of Haiti; 3) of attempting to destroy Redpath's prestige amongst the refugees; 4) of using offensive language, and of being untruthful.

In his tirade against Newman, Redpath had no objection to Jamaica as an haven for the refugees, but preferred the independant Negro state of Haiti. He pointed to his own anti-slavery record as sufficient proof of his sacrificial interest in the American Negro, and charged that the Rev. Mr Newman had fits of insanity. According to Redpath, Newman had lived with Mr John Hepburn in Haiti, a leading merchant in Port-au-Prince, the brother of Rev, Moses Hepburn, of Pennsylvania.¹⁸⁴

Whether Newman's personality had alienated his acquaintances in Haiti as Redpath charged, or whether he had experienced justifiably a complete disillusionment with the country is difficult to know. Likely, both factors had much to do with Newman's complete change of attitude. Yet the disappointment with Haiti did not prevent him from continuing to be an advocate of immigration, this time to Jamaica.

A Mr J.W. Menard submitted an enlightening letter to The Chatham Planet on 2 October, 1861:

184 Idem, Vol. VI, No. 13, 5 September, 1861, p. 1, col. 2, 3.

The numerous friends of Mr. Jacob Jones, of Windsor, will be glad to learn that he has returned from the island of Hayti, though greatly indisposed. Mr. Jones went out last spring with the New Haven Colony, which colony suffers greatly with the fever which is prevalent in that island. He says he is highly pleased with the country, and would have remained had it not been for that prolonged indisposition. Mr. Jones says that the enlightened Haytians possess great magnanimity and hospitality, and entertains a high opinion of President Geffrard. But the lower class, he says, will rob a man if they get the chance. While he was sick there, his nurse charged him 600 Haytian dollars (which is about equal to 35 American dollars) for three days service!

He says Hayti is a graveyard for the aged emigrants but young persons with strong constitutions will do well there. He reports Port-au-Prince to be strongly fortified, about its harbor. Those who intend going to that island would do well to consult with Mr. Jones.

Since his arrival, there have been several erroneous reports conceived and hatched by the foes of Hayti and emigration.....I hope intending emigrants for Hayti will use their own judgement....Mr. Jones says there are some in Hayti who would return if they could; he says these persons will do no good in Hayti nor in any other place on earth.

Chatham, C.W., Oct., 2nd, 1861.

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(signed) J.W. Menard

Experience and the Northern victory to the American Civil War ended the visions of Haiti or of any other West Indian island as the ideal home for the continental, North American Negro. The disillusion suffered by Newman with the Republic of Haiti, and implied by Mr. Jones's related words, was shared with finality by John Brown, Jr., in January, 1862. In a letter to The Planet, Mr Brown disavows his cherished emigration scheme:

185 Idem, Vol. VI, No. 18, 10 October, 1861, p. 1, col. 1, 2.

I feel it my duty to give to the colored people of Canada and of the United States, that my desires have been to see an emigration from this country to Hayti; but that has been thoroughly tried by Redpath during this past year, by sending out to that colony hundreds, and yet, find it impossible to give strength to that government, and to raise themselves personally and nationally and their children. Latterly, I have received four letters from that country, and besides those, there have been several others, from the emigrants, and they all corroborate the facts. True, the country is delightful, the hogs and cattle are very superior, the natives men in stature are like giants, and human kindness to strangers is not to be surpassed or found equalled in any other country, particularly among the females.

But alas! not the least one writing informs me, the house he lives in, and all around him is a perfect hospital; and many say if they had the means, they would gladly return to Canada, said the writer, write to them in Canada, if any of them are preparing to come to Hayti, tell them for us not to come here, for some cause the writer did not state. And now my friends, you see that we still have not come in sight of the promised land; we have to choose between two evils, to endure the prejudice of the Canadians, or hasten on to the untimely graves of Hayti. Let the Canadians tread upon us as they have, but for the just laws of good, old England, we must prove ever loyal to Her Majesty--our gracious Queen--and fight for her in Canada if needed. The next information, I will write more fully.

In Obedience,

(signed) J.C. Brown 186

Rather sadly, the devoted son of a militant father in the cause of the American Negro, admitted defeat in the well-meant but ill-starred scheme sponsored by the Haytian Bureau of Emigration. "John Brown's soul" went marching on crushing the slave-owning South in one of the most terrible military conflicts in modern history to free the Negro slave, allowing him to remain in the America of his birth.

PREJUDICE AND POLITICS

The distaste felt by many white Canadians from the very start of the Negro migration to Canada for the new black settlers continued and multiplied. Henry Bibb's newspaper, The Voice of The Fugitive recognized the feeling of the 1850's in an editorial called, "Color-phobia in Canada":

Color-phobia is a contagious disease. It is more destructive to the mind than to the body. It goes hard with a person who is a little nervous. It makes them froth at the mouth as if the Bengal tiger were in them. Its symptoms are various. It makes them sing out "darkey", "darkey", "nigger", "nigger", "long heel", "long heel". It sometimes makes them quack like crows. It frightens them up from the dining table at Public Houses not because of a black man's cooking but because of his sitting down to eat. It excites them awfully when colored passengers enter the rail cars or stage coaches but not when they come in the capacity of waiters or servants.

It sometimes gets into children through the wicked and unnatural teaching of parents....Whenever you hear a parent saying to a child 'hush go to sleep or the nigger will catch you', 'the black man will kill you', etc., it is pretty good evidence that they have got that color-phobia. When they have it bad, they will turn up their noses when they get near a colored person, as if they smelt something disagreeable, and often there is a cloud rising. It sometimes gets hold of professors of religion and shows itself at the communion table, especially if a colored sister offers to partake of the emblems of the dying Saviour with her white brethren. She is modestly asked by one of the deacons or class leaders to wait until the white folks are done, and she is seated up in the back part of the house, (perhaps under the steps).

In Canada, it gets hold of the very dregs of society. It makes them shudder at the idea of "Negro Settlement". "They will ruin the country", etc. The objection brought up is that we shall have Negro lawyers, doctors, etc. It serves to excite their imagination so

so much that they have become alarmed about amalgamation... the white girls are all going to make choice of black men, and the white gents will be left without wives, and what then? Don't be alarmed friends, you shall not be hurt. All this is the working of a diseased imagination, of which you must be cured, or it will destroy your souls and bodies both. Anti-slavery is the very best remedy for it. It will cure you of prejudice and hatred, and prepare you for a happier state of existence.... 187

Some of this terse, scathing and deeply sincere criticism of a kind of white Canadian sentiment against the black man has a modern sound to it. Unthinking people today will argue for second or third class citizenship for the Canadian Negro on the grounds that complete social and economic equality would result in the "mongrelisation" of the white race. Or they object to a Negro in a public dining room or using the services of a hotel, because they make the color brown or black synonymous with an inferior person.

A vivid example of such feeling in the Chatham area sprang alive when William King and Archibald McKellar were exploring Raleigh Township for the proposed Elgin Settlement. In the issue of 9 September, 1852, The Voice of The Fugitive printed what was supposed to have been a Memorial presented to the Governor-General, Lord Elgin, by some notable citizens of the Chatham area, urgently requesting executive action to stop any Negro colony from existing in Raleigh. The notable citizens were led by a chronic Negro-hater, Edwin Larwill. A draft Memorial was presented by Larwill to the Western District Council on 7 October, and adopted by the Council on 8 October, 1849. According to the account given by The Voice, a committee to complete the Memorial was moved by a Mr Jenner, seconded by a Mr Mitchell, and

was composed of Messers Girty, Wright, Arnold, Lawrill and Dr Robertson.

The topic sentence of this document indicates its purpose.

"That Your Memorialists have watched with intense anxiety the actions of the Government towards the "Elgin Association" for the settlement and improvement of the colored people." More anxiety is expressed when they assure His Excellency that any petitions sent to him requesting the settlement have been wholly of Negro origin..."...and especially so when clandestine petitions have been got up, principally, if not wholly, by colored people, in order to mislead the Government and the Elgin Association. These petitions do not embody the sentiments of the respectable, intelligent and industrious yeomanry of the Western District. We can assure Your Excellency that any such statement is false, that there is but one feeling and that is of disgust and hatred, that they, the Negroes should be allowed to settle in any Township where there is a white settlement."

Having made their point entirely clear, the memorialists proceed to warn the Governor-General that at the next session of Parliament, petitions will be forwarded requesting legislation to thwart the plan of the Elgin Association. In fact, the petitioners to Lord Elgin had several pieces of legislation in mind, all of which were clumsily aimed at the refugee Negro:

We, your memorialists, also beg leave to suggest that Your Excellency and Your Excellency's cabinet, will take into your serious consideration the propriety of laying a poll tax on American Negroes immigrating into this Province--also, the propriety of some enactments against amalgamation, and the

introduction of a bill by which all foreign Negroes shall be compelled to furnish good security that they shall not become a burden to the Parish, also to ascertain whether it would be politic to allow them the right of suffrage. These are questions which will be brought under the consideration of Parliament. The increased immigration of foreign Negroes into this Province is truly alarming. We cannot omit mentioning some facts, for the corroboration of what we have stated. The Negroes, who form at least one-third of the inhabitants of the township of Colchester, attended the township meeting for the election of Parish and Township officers, and insisted upon their right to vote, which was denied them by every individual white man at the meeting. The consequence of which was that the chairman of the meeting was prosecuted, and thrown into heavy costs, which costs were paid by subscriptions from white inhabitants. As well as many others in the same township of Colchester, the inhabitants have not been able to get schools in many school sections, in consequence of the Negroes insisting on the right of sending their children to such schools. No white man will even act with them in any public capacity: the fact is so glaring, that no sheriff in this Province would dare to summons colored men to do jury duty. That such things are done in other parts of the British Dominions, we are well aware of, but we are convinced that the Canadians will never tolerate such conduct. ...188

Naturally, the validity of the document is always open to questions; yet, The Voice would have been exposing itself to considerable legal trouble if the Memorial were not true. And the record of Edwin Larwill was so notorious in the matter of anti-Negroidism that such a move would not be surprising. The traditional Tory sympathies of the Chatham Negro suffered severe strain when in the election of 1851 for the Parliament of the United Canadas, Edwin Larwill was chosen as Conservative candidate to oppose the Reform candidate, George Brown, himself. Larwill was defeated by the famous leader of the Reform party. Larwill, whose home township was Raleigh, experienced success at the next election of 1854.

The victorious Conservative candidate had come to Chatham in 1841. His trade was tinsmithing; his talent political. Opposed by the Negroes on the one side because of his outspoken racism, he was not too popular with some of the white population because after the Montreal riots in 1848, he became a staunch advocate of Quebec City as the capital of Canada. With two displeased factions against him for very different reasons, Larwill was defeated in the election of 1857 by the formidable Reform politician, Archibald McKellar. Although Larwill had always been a zealous Conservative, yet he had won the admiration of the Liberal leader, the Hon. Alexander Mackenzie. When the latter became Prime Minister in October, 1873 after the downfall of Sir John A. MacDonald's Government from the railroad scandal, he offered Larwill a position in Ottawa. When he died on 29 December, 1876 at the age of sixty-six, the Reeve for Chatham in 1872, Henry Smyth, drew well Larwill's character in a sentence, "He was a very
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clever man who lacked ballast."

The "Anderson Case" which caused such a stir in Canada in 1860-61, inspired anti-slavery meetings in many parts of the country, including Chatham. John Anderson was a slave from Missouri who in the Autumn of 1853, killed his master. The death of the master, Seneca Diggs, came not from wilful murder, but rather occurred as the slave, armed with a dirk, refused to be bound and delivered to a new master who wanted only Anderson and not his wife and four children. Unimpressed

by the sentimentality of the occasion, Seneca Diggs, armed with a knife, attacked the defiant Anderson. Diggs died from his wounds; Anderson fled to Detroit, then to Windsor where he was sheltered by the mother of Henry Bibbs. He, then, lived for a time in Chatham. Warned by his protector in Michigan, Mrs. Laura S. Haviland, that slave-catchers were tracing his steps, Anderson left Chatham, and between 1853 to 1859 worked at various centres including Hamilton and Caledonia. In the Autumn of 1860, as he was working near Brantford, he was recognized and arrested. The case went from the local Brantford Magistrate to the Court of Queen's Bench at Osgoode Hall; the British courts were interested and the American Government demanded Anderson's extradition, not on the grounds that he was an escaped slave but that he was a murderer. In February, 1861, Chief Justice Draper acquitted Anderson because of technical defects in his warrant of arrest and commitment... 190

Chatham's public meeting in sympathy with John Anderson was held on 31 December, 1861. The Town Hall was filled with three hundred people who were presided over by Dr C.J.S. Askin, Mr Rufus Stephenson, the editor of The Planet, was secretary, while the first speaker was the Rev. William King. At the conclusion of his speech, Mr King moved:

1 Resolved--That it is the duty of every Canadian freeman to protest most strongly against the rendition to the United States of the fugitive Anderson;

Mr R.S. Woods, however, moved an amendment which read:

That in the opinion of this meeting, the case for the prisoner may with safety and propriety be left to the disposal of the courts....

Mr Edwin Larwill seconded this proposal, and then in the words of the surprised Planet:

Mr. Larwill apparently stepped forward to the astonishment of the entire audience and upheld the institution and perpetuation of slavery--said it was a divine institution sanctioned by the laws of God, the laws of man, the laws of the nations and by the laws of nature..... the amendment was put to the meeting, and though supported by a considerable number was declared to be lost, and the original motion carried by a clear majority....191

With interest, we note that Larwill's amendment was "...supported by a considerable number,...." Our mid-twentieth century horror of legal slavery, and our delicate concept of the individual's freedom, in an age when the individual is fast being developed by "the mass" may lead us to a harsh condemnation of Mr Larwill. In effect, he was the spokesman for many white Canadians who envisioned in Canada an homogeneous society undisturbed by ideas and people they could not understand. One thing which worried the life out of such devotees of social purity was the possibility of "amalgamation". Amalgamation, which to our ears sounds like the fusion of two railroad companies, had another connotation in the nineteenth century. It meant the physical fusion of two people, one male and one female, one partially or wholly Negro, and one wholly white, usually in the state of marriage. The notion of racial purity began not with the Nazis; it seems to have ancient, primitive origins, and would seem to be connected psychologically with a universal feeling of the ego that "I and things related to me are of necessity superior to people and things not sprung from me or mine."

Sharing the tribal dislike of racial inter-marriage, Dr S.G. Howe in his famous Report on the Negroes of Canada West, quotes various local physicians to indicate that mulattoes were not nearly as healthy as racially pure Negroes. How scientific these observations were is hard to know with surety. Considering the amount of sexual laxity existing between female slaves and their male owners which became a part of slave culture from its inception in the seventeenth century, one would wonder if the racially pure Negro would be much in evidence.

In spite of the opinion of local medical men, the Olympian disdain of Dr Howe, and the unguided, headstrong emotions of lower class whites, white and black people, usually Negro men and white women, fell in love, yielding to an instinct more universal and often stronger than tribal taboos. Howe reported:

It appears that formerly, that is in the early period of emigration, marriages, or open cohabitation, between black men and white women were not uncommon. The marriages were mostly with Irish or other foreign women. The instances of white men openly cohabiting with black women were very rare; and the marriages of this kind were too uncommon to need notice....192

From Mayor Dr Thomas Cross of Chatham, Dr Howe received this comment:

They (the Negroes) do not intermarry much with the whites, and it is only the most abandoned whites who marry them. It is a good trait in the character of the people that they do not regard it as an honor to marry a white person. A very laughable incident occurred here the other day. A colored man ran away with a white girl, and another colored man speaking of the affair said, 'I always looked upon him as a respectable man. I didn't think he would fall so low as to marry a white girl.'..193

192 S.G. Howe, Op. Cit., p. 29

193 Idem, pp. 31, 32.

Mr Sinclair, who in 1861 was headmaster of one of the Chatham colored schools, answered Dr Howe's queries about inter-racial marriage:

So it is with a white woman who marries a Negro. The whites will have nothing to do with her, and her society is entirely with the blacks. Such marriages occur once in a while but not so frequently as they did a number of years ago. There was a considerable stir and fuss made about it, and the greater part of the colored people and their leaders are opposed to it.

Upon the whole, then, the experience of the Canadian refugees goes to show that there need be no anxiety upon the score of amalgamation of races in the United States. With freedom, and protection of their legal rights; with an open field for industry, and opportunities for mental and moral culture, colored people will not seek relationship with the whites, but will follow their natural affinities, and marry among themselves...but they will dwindle and gradually disappear from the people of this continent, outstripped by the more vigorous competitors in the struggle for life....194

Dr Howe met everywhere the opinion expressed before that much of the prejudice against the Negro refugees was imported from the United States via the numerous, white American emigrants to Canada. Quite naturally, Dr Howe, an American civil servant, objected to this claim. His analysis, which has some merit, consisted simply of the fact that such prejudice was natural and universal, although undesirable, once a large foreign, racial group disturbed the racial equilibrium of any community:

The truth of the matter seems to be that, as long as the colored people form a very small proportion of the population, and are dependent, they receive protection and favors; but when they increase, and compete with the laboring class for a living and especially when they begin to aspire to social equality, they cease to be 'interesting Negroes' and become 'niggers'....195

194 Idem, pp. 32, 33.

195 Idem, p. 40.

True as this assessment may be, Dr Egerton Ryerson, the founder of Canada West's common school system, the Rev. Mr Proudfoot, London, Canada West's famous Presbyterian missionary, Benjamin Lundy, the American Quaker and early Abolitionist, the Rev. Hiram Wilson, early American Missionary to the refugees, the Rev. Mr M.M. Dillon, Rev. Mr T. Hughes and Miss Williams, members of the London Fugitive Slave Mission, stated definitely that in their opinions, which were based on considerable first-hand experience with the racial problem, American emigrants taught the notion of Negro inferiority to British emigrants to this country. Hence, racial tensions which might ordinarily be expected, were heightened by the importation of the general American attitude toward the Negro conditioned by two centuries of Negro slavery in their own midst.

Miss Williams, one of the teachers at Mr Dillon's mission, wrote in 1856, "In this country many, indeed, most English persons become changed, and while they agree with the American Abolitionist in his abhorrence of slavery, they also show all the American prejudice to the colored race." ¹⁹⁶ Rev. Mr Hughes writing from his mission in Dresden, on 26 June, 1865, rejoiced when an English settler and his wife received communion with Negro Anglicans:

(The man and his wife)...came forward on Easter Sunday and joined us at the Lord's Table. This is the first time any white persons, except members of my own family, have done so. Their only child, a girl of about ten years of age, also regularly attends the Sunday School. The only white child, again excepting the younger branches of my own family, that has ever attended either Sunday or day school. I sincerely trust

that grace will be given them to continue to live above the wicked and foolish prejudices of American society. It is painful to see how quickly old country people fall in with these prejudices. When they come out, of course, they have no feelings of dislike toward the colored race, but they quickly acquire them, and some even carry them to a more disagreeable extent than native-born Americans. ...197

Even the successful Grit politician, Archibald McKellar, who had been such a close associate with William King in the founding of the Buxton colony, escaped not the accusation of anti-Negro sentiment. In the election campaign of 1857, The Planet, which was constantly sympathetic to the Negro and Conservative in politics, accused McKellar of a negative prejudice. Well-founded or otherwise, The Planet may have been trying to neutralize the outspoken and militant "Negrophobia" of the Conservative Member for Chatham, Edwin Larwill. Referring to a campaign speech made by McKellar, The Planet carped:

We see nothing in the whole address concerning color.... No, not a word, altho', it is well known that this has been for several years past a cause of grievance to the colored man. Yes, Mr. McKellar will obliterate the sectarian line that unhappily exists between the Protestant and Catholic, but he will not strive to obliterate the line of prejudice that exists between two classes of different colors. He will still exclude the blacks from the common schools, and at the same time will not even allow them to have separate schools of their own....In conclusion, we beg the colored people to put the following plain question to that gentleman, viz: 'Is he an advocate of colored children attending our common schools upon a perfect equality with white children?' 'Is he an advocate of Separate Schools for colored children?' Let the answers be given to the public in an unequivocal form. .. 198

About two weeks later, at a meeting of Negro electors, George Brown, himself, was the object of Negro criticism, because he had a record of opposition in Parliament to measures helpful to the Negro;

197 "Mission To The Colored Population in Canada, Late Fugitive Slave Mission", Idem, Vol. IV, pp. 67.

198 The Chatham Planet, Vol. II, No. 74, 9 December 1857, p. 2, col. 2

for refusing on various occasions to print notices of Negro meetings, and for refusing to employ Negro help. True or untrue, the charges against one of the leading founders of the Canadian Anti-Slavery Society were publicly proclaimed, and the Conservative candidates were endorsed in an announcement over the signatures of Negro Tories: K.T. Augusta, C.J. Minl, H.R. Abbott, T. Smallwood, and A.O. Judah.

Born in Scotland, at Glenshiel, on 3 February, 1816, McKellar was barely a year old when his family emigrated to Canada. In 1836, his pioneer parents settled in Raleigh Township on the banks of the Thames. Although he received some schooling, his native intelligence and attractive personality marked him as a young man with the possibilities of a distinguished future. Vacillating in politics, now a Tory and now a Grit, by the election of 1857, he was firmly at home in the Reform party. He won the following two elections of 1861 and 1863. Devoted to the Reform cause, he was also an ardent exponent of Confederation along a federal pattern, and argued some of his points in his native Gaelic--one of the few times, if not the only one, in which this language was heard in the Canadian Parliament. His public and private support of the Elgin Association, and his life-long friendship with the Rev. William King would seem to negate the charges of anti-Negro prejudice hurled against him by The Planet.

The friendship of the two men with old country origins, both of Scottish blood, and both following the usual Presbyterian tendency of

199 Idem, Vol. II, No. 79, 21 December, 1857, p. 2, cols. 3, 4, 5.
200 Victor Lauriston, Op. Cit., C. XLIV, pp. 494-495.

supporting the non-Conformist, semi-republican Reform Party followed naturally. The Planet for 14 November, 1860 complains that until the recent arrival of Sir Allan MacNab in the Chatham district, Rev. William King would allow only Grit politicians to address the Negro settlers of Buxton. Sir Allan broke the tradition with enthusiastic results, according to The Planet.

Pistols were in the news in late September, 1860. A pair of pistols, a Prince and a Negro craftsman constituted a strange triangle revolving around the very prominent Mr McKellar. Once more, the sensitive Planet wanted to know why a pair of Derringer pistols which were to be presented to the Prince of Wales, making the first extensive Royal visit to Canada, at a brief stop in Chatham, were not presented, after all. The Planet recounted the fact that the Prince had been persuaded to stop at Chatham, as a deviation from the original program, in the first place; in the second place, the Prince, when his railroad train stopped, was kept waiting for ten minutes before he was informed that there would be no presentation. The sleuths on The Planet staff claimed to have found the origin of the strange and disrespectful behaviour in an account which claimed that Mr McKellar was informed by an influential friend that the pistols were the work of Mr J.M. Jones, a Negro, and that he should not present such a contaminated object to a Royal Prince. A week later, The Planet reported in high glee that a Bronze Medal was won by Mr Jones at the Grand Provincial Industrial

Exhibition, being held in Montreal, for his excellent skill in making three pistols on display, two of which were replicas of the pair to
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have been given the Prince of Wales.

JOHN BROWN, CHATHAM, AND HARPER'S FERRY

Springtime in 1858 brought to the youthful, town of Chatham a patriarch, whose Puritan ancestor stepped off the Mayflower, whose soul was obsessed with an undying hatred of slavery, and whose brief flame of violence followed by his execution was to make himself and Chatham forever famous.

This strange figure in American history came into the world on 9 May, 1800 at Torrington, Litchfield Co., Connecticut. Five years after his birth, his family migrated to Ohio. In the wilderness of the Ohio forests, he grew in surroundings of poverty, hard work and of adventure. Although hating the confinement of school, he stayed long enough to master the rudiments of reading and writing. This allowed him in later life to cherish the reading of scripture and of history. Amongst the several trades which Brown attempted, with no success, was that of surveying. Yet, in his period of surveying, he became very familiar with the area around Harper's Ferry. The other trades were such varied occupations as those of lumber dealer, postmaster, wool grower, farmer, wool merchant, fruit grower, stock fancier, and land speculator.

During one of his business trips, when he was a wool merchant, he visited England. There, he met various English Abolitionists, and told them of his destiny to wipe out slavery in the United States. Upon his return, a wealthy New York land owner, Mr Gerrit Smith, offered Brown a large tract of land in the Adirondack region of New York to make free homes for runaway slaves. With his family, John Brown moved to North Elba, and undertook to accept escaped slaves, settle them in cabins, and to teach them the rudiments of northern farming. Understandably, North Elba became a well-known terminal of the Underground Railroad.

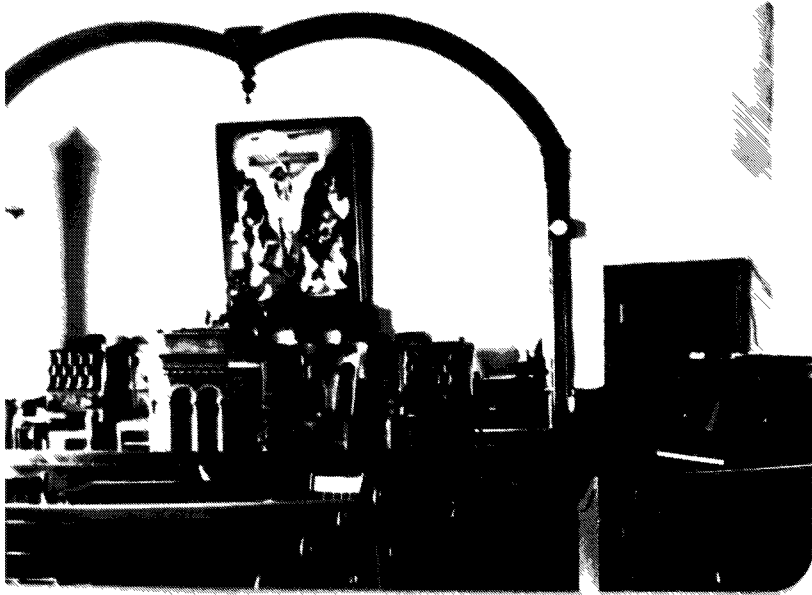
In an autobiographical letter written on 15 July, 1857, Brown told his young and firm friend, Henry L. Stearnes, many facts of his life, as well as the origin of his anti-slavery views:

During the war with England a circumstance occurred that in the end made him a most determined Abolitionist: and led him to declare, or Swear: Eternal war with Slavery. He was staying for a short time with a very gentlemanly landlord since a United States Marshall who held a slave boy near his own age very active, intelligent and good feeling; and to whom John was under considerable obligation for numerous little acts of kindness. The master made a great pet of John: brought him to table with his first company; and friends; called their attention to every little smart thing he said or did: and to the fact of his being more than a hundred miles from home with a company of cattle alone; while the negro boy (who was fully if not more his equal) was badly clothed, poorly fed; and lodged in cold weather; and beaten before his eyes with Iron Shovels or any other thing that came first to hand. This brought John to reflect on the wretched, hopeless condition, of Fatherless and Motherless slave children: for such children have neither Fathers or Mothers to protect and provide for them. He sometimes would raise the question is God their Father? 202

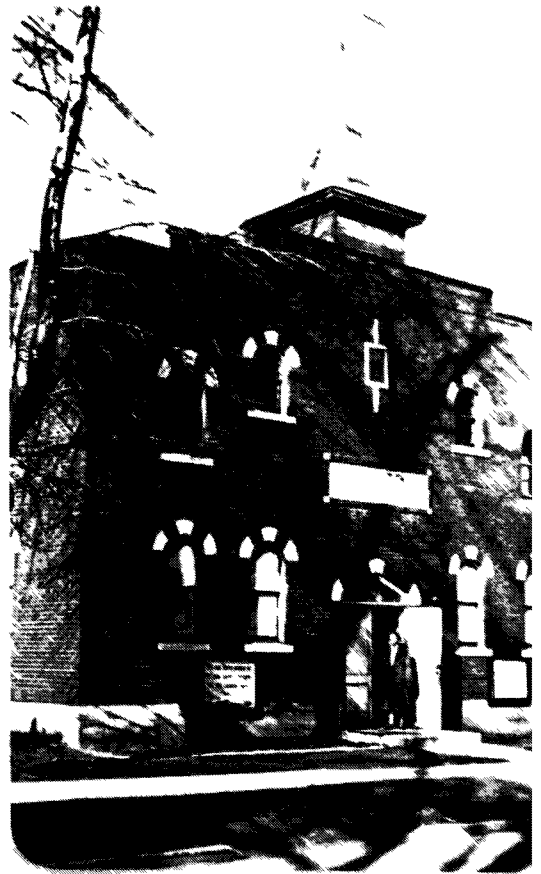
202 F.B. Sanborn, The Life and Letters of John Brown, Concord, Mass., F.B. Sanborn, Publisher, 1910, C. I, pp. 14, 15. Brown writes in the third person singular; he uses his own spelling, grammar and punctuation.

The battle cry, Eternal war with Slavery, which occurred to the thirteen year old John Brown, became burnt into his brain. His first chance for something of a shooting war with the slave-holding elements occurred in 1854 with the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act which permitted the settlers of Kansas themselves to decide whether the territory should enter the Union as a free or slave state. Pro-slavery leaders in the adjacent slave states of Missouri and its environs poured in their own settlers, and took steps to control the politics of Kansas and to secure it for the slavery interests. The Northern Abolitionists responded in a similar way by sending their own settlers into the region for an opposite purpose. This Kansas Border War between the two classes of settlers resulted in brutal murders, violent elections and property destruction. As soon as possible, John Brown and his six sons hastened to Kansas to engage in the "holy war".

From Kansas, John Brown, in 1858, with twelve of his white followers, including his son Owen Brown, left for the Canadian town of Chatham, Canada West. Some of his men and John Brown arrived on 30 April, 1858. He had conceived a plan of establishing himself in the Appalachian Mountains of Virginia; with his small band of black and white militia, he planned to harass the plantations by raiding them to free their slaves, using his mountain hideout as a basis for operations. The Negroes thus freed would constitute a colony which would assist in freeing more Negroes. Brown felt that the result would



Interior



First Baptist Church



Chairs and Table Possibly Used by
John Brown and Fellow Conspirators

be so demoralizing for the slave-owners that slavery would naturally disappear. This was the kernel of the conspiracy laid at the Chatham
203
Convention.

Dr Landon explains the choice of Chatham for the Convention:

Chatham was chosen as the place of meeting with special reference to the effect it might have on the large Negro population resident within the immediate vicinity. There were more Negroes within fifty miles of Chatham than in any other section of Canadian territory, and among them were men of intelligence, education and daring, some of them experienced in slave raiding. Brown was justified in expecting help from them. There was also evidence that among the Negroes, themselves, there existed a secret organization, known under various names, having as its object to assist fugitives and resist their masters. Help from this organization was also expected. Hinton says that Brown, 'never expected any more aid than that which would give a good impetus.' ...204

The first place this dedicated band visited was the office of the local Negro newspaper, The Provincial Freeman. Likely the first man which they met would have been the editor, Israel D. Shadd. The majority of Brown's American companions stayed at the Villa Mansion Hotel. This hotel was nearby the office of The Freeman. The Freeman was housed in a two-story, white brick tenement, which until 1951 stood just beyond the C.P.R. Station at the railroad crossing which intersects Williams Street North. Brown, himself, resided at the home of a leading Negro resident, James M. Bell, 153 King Street East. Victor Lauriston, the historian of Chatham, records that the first meeting was held on 8 May, 1858, in the small, frame Negro school on

203 Fred Landon, "Canadian Negroes and The John Brown Raid," The Journal of Negro History, Vol. VI, No. 2, April 1921, p. 174.

204 Idem, p. 181.

Princess Street. Other sessions were held in the engine house of No. 3 (colored) fire company and in the First Baptist Church on the north side of King Street near Prince.

At these sessions, twelve white men and thirty-three Negroes attended. An ambitious plan for a Provisional Constitution of the United States and for a Provisional Government was formulated. To discover how many of the Chatham Negroes were interested in Brown's plan, and to what extent they were willing to cooperate is impossible. Lauriston claims that some of the Negro community sought advice from the Rev. William King and others from Archibald McKellar, the Member of Parliament, and that both clear-headed men advised them not to join in with Brown's fanatical plot. In any case, Brown was looking for quality amongst the Chatham Negroes, not numbers. When the papers of John Brown, including the minutes of the Chatham meeting came out during the trial, certain names appeared which indicated that the principal members of the Chatham Negro community had attended and taken an active part. There were names such as those of Osborne Anderson, the only Canadian Negro to follow Brown to Harper's Ferry, Alfred M. Ellsworth, J.C. Grant, Alfred Whipple, Dr Martin R. Delaney, Thomas F. Carey and Israel D. Shadd.

Somewhere in Brown's ranks, there was a leakage which forced Brown to postpone his desire to attack Harper's Ferry from mid-May, 1858 to early October, 1859. When on the night of Sunday, 16 October, 1859, Brown and his eighteen followers, including four Negroes, attacked and captured the Government Arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Virginia, he

205 Victor Lauriston, Op. Cit., C. XL, pp. 457-460.

206 Idem. C. XL. p. 461.

courted nothing but folly and death. On the 18 October, Colonel Robert E. Lee captured Brown and his position. Of the company of anti-slavery patriots, ten, including two of Brown's sons, lay dead. John Brown was seriously wounded, and the others were wanted traitors. Osborne Anderson, the only Chatham Negro to assist Brown had a slight legend attached to him. Victor Lauriston states that after the departure of John Brown from Chatham while Israel Shadd felt doubtful about Brown's fantastic scheme, he decided that someone from his office should be a representative. When they drew lots, the privilege fell to Osborne Anderson, twenty-eight year old, printer's devil, born in Pennsylvania.²⁰⁷

John Brown's career as an emancipator of the slaves came to an abrupt end. The wounded man was found guilty of treason, conspiracy with slaves to rebel, and of first degree murder on 31 October, 1859. He was hanged on 2 December, 1859.

Thirteen days later, a "John Brown Meeting" was held in Chatham, one of many to be held in the principal cities in Canada and the United States. His soul was already beginning its march which would beat a deathly rhythm to Southern ears.

Cannons roared on 12 April, 1861, at Fort Sumter, Lincoln issued his Proclamation of Emancipation on 1 January, 1863. Colonel Robert E. Lee surrendered his army to General Grant on 9 April, 1865. With the surrender of a Colonel's sword, the necessity for the great migration to Canada of the Southern slave and of the Northern freedman

²⁰⁷ Idem, C. XL, p. 461.

ended. The black stream reversed. From 1865 on to the present, the story of the Chatham Negro became one of an ever dwindling community as many of the refugees returned to the Southern States rejoicing in the warmer climate and memories of home.

CONCLUSION

A weary pilgrimage lasting two hundred years brought men with black skins from the torrid West Coast of Africa by way of the rich, red earth of the Southern United States to the meadows and valleys of pioneer Upper Canada. Some came as the chattel property of the white colonists who preferred old loyalties to old homes. Most of these African-Americans, however, came of their own accord to seek the personal freedom denied them by the slavery system of the United States.

The few hundred Negroes in Upper Canada at the beginning of the nineteenth century had their numbers augmented possibly by as much as sixty thousand by the half-century mark. Many of them found the southern part of the British colony of Upper Canada, most congenial as their new home. In this southern portion of the colony, Chatham held a position of pre-eminence amongst the various Negro settlements. Documents, local newspapers, and the writings of reliable men indicate that from the very beginning of Negro migration to the Chatham area, the runaway slave, as a rule, tried to improve his life. From the letter in 1841 of E. de St Remy, the quotations from the Rev. Hiram Wilson by Dr Rolph in 1844, Dr Landon's account of Benjamin Lundy's trip in 1832, Benjamin Drew's report of 1856, Dr. S. Howe's report of 1863, as well as the accounts of the Elgin and Dawn Mills Negro colonies, we have ample proof that the refugee slave adapted himself well to his new environment by farming, on the one hand, and various urban pursuits, on the other.

What interested such humanitarians as Drew and Howe was the reaction economically, amongst other things, of the former slave to a life of individual responsibility. After the experiment had existed with increasing momentum for around fifty years in Upper Canada, or Canada West, the results tabulated by the above researchers, as well as by William King, the founder of the Elgin colony, show the remarkable adaptability of the Negro.

Materially, the Negro responded well to a life of economic freedom, in spite of certain problems of adjustment described by Henson in his Autobiography and by Rev. Marmaduke Dillon in his reports. Both frankly admit that some slaves reacted to their newfound freedom by idleness, dissipation and forms of petty criminality. Yet the evidence is that such laxity was not general, and was soon corrected by the leadership of responsible Negroes such as Josiah Henson and Henry Bibb. Along with his material improvement went a strong desire to acquire education. One of the principal dreams of Henson was the establishment of a manual training school at his colony of Dawn Mills. As soon as the late 1830's, the Chatham Negroes had one school, and two more were added by the 1850's. Related to their desire for an elementary education were the two Negro newspapers, The Provincial Freeman in Chatham, operated by members of the distinguished Shadd family, and The Voice of The Fugitive in Sandwich, edited by Henry Bibb. The latter journal campaigned intensely for both education and alcoholic temperance amongst the Canadian Negroes.

Deep in the heart of the Negro slave, important as a reason for life and a consolation, burned his religious feelings. Along with his schools, newspapers, and benevolent societies, such as the True Bands, his church gave purpose and strength to his spiritual life. The principal of the religions functioning amongst the Chatham Negroes was the Negro Baptist Church of the Amherstburg Conference. That John Brown should choose to meet in this church, on one occasion, to formulate his plan for the release of the Southern slaves has significance. This church, and other churches such as the British Methodist Episcopal, taught their members the ancient doctrines and discipline of Christianity which gave a firm religious and moral tone to the Chatham Negro.

Grateful to the benevolent British Empire which had provided a haven for refugee Negro slaves, the Chatham Negro translated such appreciation into action by military service in the Rebellion of 1837, by a consistent pattern of strong loyalty to the British Crown, and by an active interest in Canadian politics.

Even though the refugee slave from the beginning of the nineteenth century until the mid-nineteenth century progressed rapidly from a slave culture to the more difficult but more rewarding competitive, individualistic European culture, his presence in Upper Canada caused racial friction.

On the basis of the above research, the following conclusions could be reached:

- 1) Negro migration to the Chatham area occurred because of legal slavery in the American Union, and personal freedom in the British colonies to the north.
- 2) The refugee slave showed amazing adaptability to his new life of freedom.
- 3) As a rule, the Canadian Negro, in general, and the Chatham Negro in particular, proved themselves desirable new Canadians, courageous, devoted and stable citizens; within the limits of the period of time considered by this thesis.
- 4) The Negro had to contend with racial prejudice from the outset of his appearance in Upper Canada, and in the Chatham Area; this had no legal implications, but showed, itself, in various social and economic pressures. Often this prejudice came from the lower white classes, especially from American emigrants to Upper Canada, or Canada West.
- 5) The end of the American Civil War and, therefore, of slavery, brought about the gradual return of these refugee Negroes to the United States, where in the South, the climate was warmer, and, where the Negro minority was far larger than in Canada, and, thus able to provide opportunities for Negro youth. This trend, of the migration of Canadian Negro youth to the United States, now, to the Northern States, such as Michigan, continues because of subtle but deep anti-Negroid feeling in Canada; whereas in the Northern States, the Negro minority is now sufficiently large and prosperous to provide economic openings for ambitious Negro youth.

The protagonist of this thesis, the refugee Negro slave who settled in the area of what is now Chatham, Ontario, proved with clarity that his race in a matter of years, in some cases, months, held the power to rise from illiterate slavery to sturdy, responsible citizenship.

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APPENDIX A

REPORT ON THE TORONTO NEGROES
FOR LORD SYDENHAM BY E. de ST REMY.

SYDENHAM PAPERS

Toronto, the 5th of April, 1841.

Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of yours of 31st March, requesting information about the colored people. I beg to state, in answer, that I have during the last three years kept up an intimate correspondence with all in or around Toronto, whereby I have acquired considerable knowledge of their general circumstances.

The colored people, having taken steps to ascertain their own numbers, report them at 12,500. Nothing positive, however, on this point as new arrivals continually swell the amount. At the request of His Lordship, Bishop Strachan, a young colored man, my friend Mr Peter Gallego, since gone to Jamaica, made a census of all in Toronto and its liberties. He made out 525 souls, giving their names, residence, employment, and religion. His Lordship, I hope, has kept this report. I do not know the amount of their property. Some brought a little capital with them, as the Rosses, Sey, Wardell, Hickman, etc. The elder Ross, originally a carpenter, owns 200 acres in the Gore of Toronto, more than half under good cultivation, with extensive buildings, plenty of fine stock, besides several little houses in town. Abbot, once a tobacconist, now lives on the rents of five to six frame houses, and the interest of a capital valued at \$30,000. The generality, however, came penniless to Canada. Among these, Lafferty, a carter, now owning several houses in King Street.

There is a mistaken notion that most of the colored men become barbers. Too many certainly take up this trade which imposes few hardships, requires little outlay, and gives good returns. A person named Edwoods assures me that he earns on an average of £200 yearly. For some, it is only a temporary resource, abandoned for some other pursuits as soon as they have the means. A careful perusal of Mr Gallego's report will show exactly how readily they avail themselves of the hardest trades which enable them to support their families. A large proportion are day laborers, masons, plasterers, smiths, carpenters, many shoemakers, tailors, grocers, tobacconists, carters, etc.

This answers to the question of occupation as well as that of property. Further, it meets the charge of idleness brought against them by persons more prejudiced than observant. What has given some color to this accusation is their hanging about the towns. Several causes contribute, and must continue to do so for some time towards this result. The want of capital on their arrival, which prevents their becoming (sic) landowners; the dread to engage in field labors under new masters unknown to them, and the resemblance of such occupations to those they have fled from, awakening recollections of pain and humiliation. These last motives are beginning to subside so that of late years attempts have been made by them to get on land.

One cause of just complaint of our colored men is the difficulty they experience in procuring admission for their children into Common Schools, which necessarily renders them an easy prey to a few designing Americans of the lowest and most illiterate class, who have availed

themselves of their situation, to establish numerous schools, and to spread American ideas and dissatisfaction among them, both against the people and the Government. They have failed happily in their endeavours to alienate their affections from England. The whole body of them are devoted heart and soul to the British connexion. (p. 290) No discouragement to their industry, no insult to their persons can shake their steadfast loyalty. It may be ill-directed by parties opposed to the Government, but means well, and only requires to be properly enlightened. In case of war with America, every man, old or young, will fight with the courage of desperation. The Northern States are so well aware of this, that ever since our troubles, they have taken most important steps to regain their affections, as if in preparation for possible contingencies. I shall cite the following instances:- a grant of money last year in the State of New York for the education of colored men; two laws this session, same state, one granting trial by jury to those claimed as fugitives, the other empowering their Governor to take measures for the recovery of free colored men kidnapped into slavery. By Massachusetts, a more flattering law authorising marriages between white and black persons. Were there only the fact of Virginia threatening war on New York, and Georgia on Maine, for refusal of surrender (of runaway slaves), it would well deserve the attention of our administration.

That these measures are not produced merely by the growing power of Abolitionism is evident to all who study facts. Abolition Societies began eight years ago. During the four first years they obtained nothing. On the contrary, two years after their establishment, colored people were deprived of the right of voting in Pensilvania(sic), and all the great riots against them took place. There are 300,000 free colored men in North America. Let us recollect how well the Blacks fought the last war at New Orleans.

I shall make bold to add to this letter the following suggestion from themselves: that a Bill of Naturalization as comprehensive as possible be passed, either in the Colonial or Imperial Parliament. It might be drawn up so as to give no offence whatever to the United States; that they be admitted on the same conditions as other men to land grants (this has already been done on a limited scale in Simcoe without bad effects); that they be admitted to all Common Schools, and churches, which, since the settlement of the Clergy Reserves, are all supported more or less by the Government, and bound to furnish instructions and administer the Sacrement without distinction.

These measures, they conceive, would secure their happiness, and satisfy every possible claim.

(signed) I have etc.,
E. de St Remy.

APPENDIX B

DR THOMAS ROLPH'S TRINIDAD EMIGRATION SCHEME

1843

09-319 On the 5th of August, I left Liverpool, and arrived at Boston on the 19th, and proceeded to Canada, to make all the necessary arrangements for the removal of such of its colored population who might desire to accompany me to Trinidad.

The same motives which had led me to espouse the emigration of the unemployed laboring classes from the United Kingdom to Canada induced me to advocate, still more strongly, the voluntary removal of the colored population from Canada to the West Indies. Sir Henry MacLeod, after several conferences with me on the subject appointed me the agent for that purpose in Canada, on behalf of Trinidad.

The present anomalous condition of the coloured people in British North America, and of Canada, in particular, the certainty of the serious declension of West India property, and diminution of West India produce, without a very large addition to the labourers in those Colonies, equally conspire to render this Emigration one of great national interest and importance. Their numbers in Canada,
10 at the present time, scarcely fall short of 20,000, and they are annually increased by the successful escape of many fugitives from the United States. They abound principally in the Western District, where a strong and unconquerable aversion on the part of white inhabitants is felt to them on many grounds. In making their escape from slavery they encounter incredible hardships, great

privations, and run the most imminent risk of capture. They have to travel through many hundred miles of hostile territory, sleeping in morasses, caverns, or in trees, during the day and pursuing their journey in the night. But few females accompany them, thus, amalgamation and sometimes, outrage, has heightened the prejudice with which they are viewed by the white people. Further, they occupy that field in the Western District of Canada, which its inhabitants have always desired to reserve for their poor and industrious subjects from the British Isles. I am far from disputing their full right to equal countenance with the labourers from the United Kingdom; but I am stating an undeniable fact. They are looked upon with disfavor; they are excluded from the public schools; they are appointed to no public situations; they have great difficulty in obtaining land; they seldom advance from their less ability to cope with the climate than Europeans; they consume their summer's earnings by their winter's necessities; and they, therefore, present an unfavourable contrast with the hardy white labourer, who soon becomes acclimated, and by his physical energies exchanges poverty for independence. But whilst the Negro in Canada is rarely seen greatly to improve his condition as a settler in the woods, many instances have been seen of their extraordinary progress in those more genial climates the West India Islands; and some who went to Jamaica from Canada through the first generous assistance, in that benevolent cause, of Neill Malcolm, Esq., are amongst the gratifying proofs of this success. Mr Hiram Wilson,

a person from the United States, who has devoted himself for years past
311 to the improvement of the coloured population in Canada, gave the follow-
answers in 1839 to a series of interrogatories forwarded to him from
Andover, in the United States:---

4. "Do they settle promiscuously among the white inhabitants, or in
villages by themselves?---They are located in settlements by themselves
in many parts of the province, and are also scattered among the white
inhabitants. The most populous settlements are in the Western District,
near the head of Lake Erie. In that part of Canada which is the most
southerly point, they are nvery numerous and are rapidly increasing. In
the London District, there are two settlements in and around the village
of London. One of these settlements is called the Wilberforce colony.
It is situated sixteen miles west by north of London. Though much has
oeeen said about the Wilberforce colony, it has never flourished, and is
now inferior to several other settlements. The population is not over
100. Immense sums of money have been collected for the benefit of that
colony; but, unfortunately, it has fallen into perfidious hands, and is
worse than lost. Large numbers are scattered abroad in the Niagara and
Gore Districts, partly in settlements, party in villages, and partly
interspersed throughout the country. In the Home District, they are
numerous (quite) particularly in and around Toronto. There is quite a
large settlement of them in the County of Simcoe, seventy miles from here
where the Government granted them lands of the best quality for a shil-
ling an acre. Queen Victoria has a regiment in the province divided into
companies, and stationed at different military posts, for the protection
and defence of the country.

5. "Is there much prejudice among the inhabitants; if so in what forms is it exhibited?--In some parts of the province, particularly along the frontiers, the colored people are considerably annoyed by the same inhuman prejudice which is most shamefully prevalent in the States. Where 'old country people' have the ascendancy, and consequence the moulding of customs and manners, there is not the same prejudice to disturb them. Prejudice against colour exhibits itself on this side, 312 much as it does in the United States; but even where it is the strongest, the colored people have the satisfaction of knowing that the laws are equal and impartial, and that they stand upon the same broad platform of natural and constitutional rights with those of the florid hue. Prejudice in this country, as in the States, obtains rather among the ignorant and vicious than among the intelligent and respectable. It is evidently unnatural, of slaveholding affinity, hellish in origin, and ought to be rebuked and dismissed from the human breast, and sent down to its proper place.

6. "How does the climate agree with them, and do they look upon Canada as their permanent residence?...The climate agrees with them. They are generally a vigorous and athletic people, except in cases where their constitutions have been impaired previously to their entering the country. Generally they do not regard this country as their permanent home, unless slavery should be perpetuated in the Southern States. Should a general emancipation, for which they long and pray, take place, the majority would soon speed their way back to the embrace of their brethren and kindred at the south....I have long been familiar among these

self-exiled ones, and do not doubt their readiness to return to their kindred and country, as soon as their safety and the restoration of their rights would permit."

7. "In what business do they chiefly engage?....They have generally been bred up to industrious habits, and are ready to turn their hands to any employment by which they can gain an honest livelihood. Considerable numbers are engaged in mechanical pursuits. They find
313 constant employment, and many of them are doing good business. Some are carpenters, some house-joiners, masons whitewashers, painters, shoemakers, tailors, etc. etc. Many are engaged in agricultural pursuits. In some instances coloured men have been very successful cultivators of the soil, and many more would be, but for the fact they have not the means of purchasing land. Numbers of them are engaged as small traders, jobbers, day labourers, barbers, cooks, waiters, etc., in public houses, and on steam-boats and schooners. Unless broken down by misfortune, old age or infirmities, as is sometimes the case, they all take care of themselves."

Being myself an ardent friend of the coloured race, and agreeing in the main with the substance of Mr Wilson's replies, I am bound to state, that the magistrates of the western district, who formed a very different estimate, in 1840 addressed a powerful appeal to the Government, in which document, after stating the grounds of their objection to their extension in that district, prayed, "some legislative check might be placed upon the rapid importation of this unfortunate race, such as have of late inundated this devoted section of the province, to the great detriment of the claims of the poor Emigrant from the mother country

upon our consideration. We deem it desirable, that the increase in the colored population in the various townships during the last five years, should if possible be ascertained from the public documents of the district, and that the different assessors should be requested henceforth either to enter them separately in their rolls, or to distinguish them by some particular mark opposite their names, so that their number and date of arrival may be readily ascertained.

"In the meantime, most happy shall we be if the publicity given to our too well founded deliberate opinion on this lamentable subject shall not only have such an effect on the more respectable coloured settlers as a body, as to induce them to institute among themselves some reciprocal wholesome watchful check upon each other's moral conduct, but lead to so vigilant an observance on the part of all the magistrates and other public officers, of the character of all new comers in their
314 neighbourhood, as shall tend to discourage any further importation of this unfortunate race."

Thus while the white inhabitants of Canada are instituting measures to keep the coloured population from settling within their limits, the proprietors in the West Indies are calling out for their labour. In pursuance of my duties, I met the coloured population of the Western District at Colchester, Sandwich, and Amherstburg, on the 5th, 6th and 9th of October. They assembled in throngs to listen to me, and I addressed them as follows:-

"My friends,--

I thank you for your very numerous attendance this day, as well as for the cordial congratulations I have met with from you on

my return to this province. In the year 1834, I had the honour of being elected unanimously your agent; and, since that period, it has afforded me the greatest gratification to have represented you in the two large conventions, held in the British Metropolis in 1840, and during the present year. You will not, therefore, readily believe that I would accept of any situation, proffer you any advice, furnish you with any information, that I did not conscientiously believe was for your permanent improvement, advancement and prosperity.

"You are well aware that, since the year 1839, I have been entirely devoted to the promotion of Emigration from the parent state to this province; and, during a great portion of that time, in the public service, with the sanction and by the authority of Government. It was no desire on my part to see my fellow-countrymen and subjects leave their mother country, that induced me to take the arduous and responsible duty of imparting that information and knowledge which they sought previous to their embarkation; but a sincere wish that their occupation and settlement, on their arrival here, when they had voluntarily determined on removal, might be facilitated, and that they should not wander through the province without some previous acquaintance as to those localities where they were required, and might be profitably employed. Of the thousands of my fellow-countrymen--whether the

315 peasantry from England, the labourers from Ireland, the fishermen and yeoman from Scotland, or the miners from Wales--who have settled in this province, I can lay my hand on my heart and boldly declare, that I have never received from any one amongst them, one word of upbraiding or

reproach, but that uniformly I have received their warmest and most grateful thanks for the information which I afforded them before they left their native shores.

I have no desire to see you remove from Canada, nor any intention of advising you to do so; but when I compare your present situation with what it might be; with the same amount of industry employed in a more genial clime; and under far more favourable auspices, I could not refuse the situation offered me by the Governor of Trinidad, during his visit to England, in the early part of the present year, of agent in this province, to afford such of you as desire to remove to the West Indies every information that you might possibly require. FOR NO OTHER PURPOSE AND WITH NO OTHER OBJECT HAVE I AGAIN CROSSED THE ATLANTIC OCEAN; and after hearing, at the convention held in London during this year, the numerous instances of the successful advancement of the coloured population in the West India Islands, I should not have done my duty to you in declining an appointment that might prove advantageous to you, beneficial to Trinidad, and gratifying to the people of this Province. I, therefore, crave your earnest attention to what I have to advance on this subject. You know, and sensibly feel, the extent of the prejudice which has been imported into this province from the United States; how effectually it has barred every individual of your colour from holding any situations in the Church, at the Bar, in the Magistracy, in the Senate; how frequently, it has excluded you from the public schools, exposed you to violence (popular), led to the

surrender of some of your body, claimed by the adjoining republic, and interposed every obstacle to the admission and enjoyment of those social and political privileges on which your welfare essentially depends. Frequently driven from the public conveyances both by water and by land; separated from the white community equally in places of public worship and public amusement; there appears no possibility of your making any advancement in the province, or removing the universal prejudice against yourselves. During the unhappy disturbances which agitated this colony in 1838, a young coloured friend of my own, the son of a wealthy planter in the West Indies, who had been well-educated, and had acquired considerable distinction for eminent services he had rendered during an awful hurricane in Barbadoes by his great nautical talent, shouldered his firelock, and stood a voluntary sentry, to preserve the country from the devastation of civil war, and the incursions of a foreign banditti. He would receive no remuneration for his services; they were the impulse of a brave and loyal spirit; but when a regular naval force was to be raised for the defence of the province, and to be stationed on the lakes, I did write to some of the authorities, asking, as a personal favour, as well as a reward to the valour of this young man, that he might receive an appointment as a commissioned officer, or its rank without pay; but this was refused, and solely on account of his colour. His merits were admitted, his services acknowledged, ---but his request denied. I will not multiply instances but I may tell you that in the West Indies these anomalies do not exist; that a colored gentleman represents the largest and most wealthy constituency in Barbadoes; and in Trinidad, one

gentleman of the council, and one stipendiary magistrate, are coloured gentlemen. I have been informed this day, by one of the most intelligent of your body, that you hope to overcome all these difficulties and disadvantages, by a considerable accession of your numbers from the United States; permit me, my friends, without offence, to point out to you the utter fallacy of any such expectation, and this I can do to reference to undeniable facts. It is only since your numbers have so greatly augmented, in this beautiful section of Canada, that all the farmers in the adjoining township of Gosfield have united together in firm resolve never again to give employment to a coloured man; it is only since your numbers have so increased, that Nelson Hacket was secreted in a dungeon to be given over to his master, and that Mr Gallego was thrust out of a public steam-boat, a public stage coach, and a public tavern, whilst travelling on the public service and whilst as an accredited agent of the Government of Jamaica. But to come to a more perfect comparison of numbers. In the Western half of Canada, there are upwards of half a million white inhabitants--there are less than 20,000 colored. The number that escape from United States Slavery, and arrive safely in this province, does not amount to 2,000 yearly; whilst the emigration from the United Kingdom, during the past year of 1842, amounted to 50,000 sould. You will further remember, that it is only in the Niagara District, in the vicinity of St Catherine's, and in this western section of the province where your numbers abound, that such fearful extent of prejudice exists; and, therefore, when these facts are considered with the abundant and ample testimony furnished by the Anti-

Slavery Society in England, as to the wonderful improvement to be witnessed in the West India Islands by persons of similar color, it is only just that you should be in full possession of these facts, in order that you may best judge for yourselves which is most to your advantage-- your continued residence in Canada, or your voluntary removal to the West Indies. The Island of Trinidad, of which I am commissioned to speak, is large, fertile, healthy, and, to a great extent, uncultivated. The Government offer to you nothing more than your passage thither, and employment on your arrival. You will not be debarred from any political privileges, nor your children excluded from the public schools. The public domain is given to no one; industry and idleness are not placed on the same level. The industrious man can soon, by his own efforts, obtain means to purchase and possess it; the idler deserves to do without. It is my intention to accompany those of you who resolve to go to Trinidad, if the lateness of the season and the defective ordinance of Trinidad does not oppose an obstacle. Should it do so, however,--and after my correspondence with the merchants of Quebec, I fear it may--

318 I purpose visiting that island, in order to report to you on my return, by the period when the navigation of the St Lawrence will permit those of you who desire to remove to it, the opportunities which its soil and agricultural occupation offer for your consideration. One of your friends, William Augustus--whom you will remember, and whom I can never forget, as he was one of the deputation who presented me with the valuable token I have received from your body,--wrote to his friends here that he had succeeded beyond all expectation in Trinidad, and that it is his firm

opinion that its rich savannahs and profitable employment hold out extraordinary inducements to those of you he has left behind. With all the advantages of this section of Canada, its richer soil, its softer clime, you have to labour seven months for your maintenance during the remaining five, closed against you by the climate; whilst in the West Indies there is no impediment on the score of climate to your constant, uninterrupted and profitable occupation. (footnote- William Augustus, in his letter, has stated that an industrious black labourer can save more in one year in the West Indies, than he could by any possibility in Canada in seven.) After all that I have said to you, it is for yourselves to determine whether you remain or remove; but I should alike fail in my duty to you, to my own conscience, and to the Government, that has honoured me by constituting me its agent, did I not further tell you that it is after all on yourselves only that your success depends.

"Almighty God has declared, by a decree as immutable as Himself, that 'by the sweat of his brow man must earn his bread;' and do not suppose that without the exercise of that industry, even in your removal to a country more adapted to your constitutions, possessing more fertile soil, and genial climate, you can either secure his blessing, your own advancement, the respect of your fellow-subjects, or the furtherance of that holy and righteous cause--the emancipation of your fellow-creatures, millions of whom are still held in cruel bondage in the adjacent republic of the United States."

The favourable opportunity, afforded by the disposition of vast numbers of these people, who met me at this convention, and who were most
319 desirous of proceeding to Trinidad, was then lost by the inefficiency of

the ordinance of that Colony to furnish the sufficient amount required to bring them through the chain of lakes to Quebec; and this year, the obstacle to their removal is in the Home Government, which considers their removal of doubtful advantage."

This official ambiguity, which, in saying nothing, intimates a great deal, is in entire variance with the opinion of the whole white population of Canada--in direct contradiction to the testimony adduced of the prosperity of the coloured population in the West Indies, at the two great conventions held in the city of London,--and is viewed by the West India proprietors as an act of hostility to their interests. The coloured population, both of the British provinces and the United States, are not reluctant to quit those countries for the West Indies; they are well aware that the slavery which did exist in the British colonies was far different from that existing in the United States; that instances of purchased manumissions were very frequent; that by the restriction of the sale of them from one island to another, they were domiciled and settled; and that the transition from slavery to freedom, by the wisdom, of the previous preparation and wise precaution, became so natural and imperceptible, that the blessed boon was sustained by tumult, violence or excess, indeed was celebrated by grateful thanksgiving, prayer and praise. The lateness of the season, and the inefficiency of the provision for their removal, compelled me to postpone my operations until the present season, when they were altogether stayed by the determination of the Colonial department not to place on the estimates for Trinidad the allowance for an agent in British North America.

I left Canada in the month of November, with the intention of proceeding to Trinidad, having an application to the Government of Canada for a pecuniary advance to enable me to do so, but on receiving a communication from Sir Charles Metcalfe, regretting there were no public funds at his disposal for that purpose, but most generously proffering me his individual assistance, on personal grounds, which I did not feel warranted in accepting, I resolved to visit England, en route to Trinidad, and left New York for that purpose and arrived in this country at the close of the year.

Emigration and Colonization; Embodying the Results of A Mission to Great Britain and Ireland, During the Years 1839, 1840, 1841 and 1842. London, John Mortimer, Adelaide St., Trafalgar Square, 1844.....by Thomas Rolph, Esq., Late Emigration Agent for the Government of Canada.

APPENDIX C

STATISTICS
OF
THE NEGRO COMMUNITY OF CHATHAM, ONTARIO

<u>Source</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Negro Population</u>	<u>Total Population</u>
<u>Canada Census</u>			
Vol. I, p. 15	1851	353	2,070
Vol. I, p. 58	1861	1,770	4,466
Vol. I, p. 252	1871	963	5,873
Vol. I, p. 294	1881	781	7,867
	1891	not available	9,052
Vol. I, p. 326	1901	660	9,191
Vol. III, p. 223	1911	504	10,846
Vol. I, p. 465	1921	435	5,766
Dominion Bureau of Statistics	1931	436	14,569
Idem	1941	437	17,369
Idem	1951	not available	21,218

ABSTRACT

Victor Lauriston in his elaborate history of Kent County, Romantic Kent, dates the arrival of the first Negroes in the Chatham area as the year 1787. He tells his readers that these Negroes came as slaves to an enterprising Indian woman, named Sarah Ainse. This leads us logically to a striking fact that the Canadian Negro came to this country in the years before the end of slavery in the United States either as a slave to some white owner, or exceptionally an Indian one, or as a refugee from slavery in the United States.

To consider this unique form of immigration a study of North American slavery is necessary. The first Negro slaves were brought to the English colony of Jamestown in 1619 by a Dutch man-of-war. Although these first arrivals were treated as indentured servants, and, eventually, were freed, the precedent of depending upon Negro enforced labor had been established. Slave labor also had an existence in French Canada. Justice Riddell has found that Indian slavery was common in French Canada, and that Negro slavery was introduced into the Quebec colony in 1689. Because of the individualistic economy needed for the difficult terrain of Quebec, Negro slavery was successful only in the wealthy households where the Negro could function as a domestic servant. Yet evidences of such slavery existed in Canada after the Conquest until 1806. In Upper Canada, Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe had the first Legislature of the province virtually abolish slavery in 1793. The provisions of this act made slaves free from other countries when they entered Upper Canada. This laid the foundations for Upper Canada as a haven for refugee slaves from the United States.

In this capacity, several Upper Canadian towns became terminals of the nebulous but influential Underground Railroad, notably amongst them, the southern Canadian town of Chatham. Chatham, Upper Canada, and, later, Canada West, was nothing but a small fort and trading post in the early nineteenth century. From the 1830's on, the outpost grew into a village, until by 1837, the village was noted as a military centre and as a refuge for American Negro slaves. It comes as no surprise, then, that in the Rebellion of 1837, the refugee Negroes were devoutly loyal to the Government cause, and on 6 November, 1838, this loyalty was utilised by the erection of a Colored Company in Chatham. On 12 November, 1838, a second Colored Company was, likewise, formed at Chatham.

Also in the 1830's, humanitarians such as Thomas Fowell Buxton and Dr Thomas Rolph concerned themselves with the welfare of the refugee slaves. Buxton pleaded their cause for land with the authorities; Rolph felt strongly that they had no future in a white man's land. Hence, he and a young Toronto Negro, Peter Gallego, advocated emigration of the refugees to Trinidad or Jamaica. Their experiment might have had some success, but by the 1840's the scheme came to an end.

As early as 1839, according to a valuable letter in the Voice of the Fugitive, in an April issue of 1851, a government school for Negro children was founded. Two schools existed by the 1850's; a directory for 1864 lists one Negro school with 130 students in attendance. A letter from a school trustee in January, 1860, issue of the Chatham Planet states definitely that the Negro schools were separate in kind not only in

jurisdiction. Chatham, therefore, never had Separate Negro schools in the legal sense.

The Second Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 forced thousands of refugee slaves in the Northern free states to flee to Canada. The increasing crisis within the slavery system, itself, likewise caused thousands of Southern slaves to flee to the free, northern colonies of British North America. Such influences raised the Negro population of Canada West, in the 1850's, to a possible figure of 30,000 to 60,000 refugees. This sharpening of the economic and social crisis within the American Union had reactions in Canada West by the forming in Toronto of the Canadian Anti-Slavery Society. Two American humanitarians, Benjamin Lundy, a Quaker Abolitionist, and Dr S. G. Howe, an American Government investigator, travelled at length through Canada West, in 1855 and 1863, respectively. Their reports are invaluable sources of information, regarding all aspects of mid-nineteenth century Negro life in Canada West.

In 1854, the Anglican missionary society, The Colonial Church and School Society, opened a mission for the Negro refugees in London, Canada West. Soon branch missions were founded in Dresden, Chatham and Windsor. The Chatham mission had a fleeting existence which ended unhappily because of local reaction to the marriage of its Negro Anglican minister to his English catechist.

Plans to assist the Canadian Negro to emigrate to warmer climes were still on foot in the 1850's. Dr Delaney had an imaginative plan

for a "back-to-Africa" movement. John Redpath and John Brown, Jr. operated a bureau in Boston, fostering emigration to Haiti. Other more obscure people revived the idea of emigration to Jamaica. All of these plans met with limited success, and, on the whole, were vigorously opposed by the leaders of the Chatham Negro community.

Religion flourished in their midst. Of the several Negro churches, the Baptist Church attached to the Amherstburg Conference seems to have had the most success and influence. Only the Anglicans, of the older Christian Churches, seem to have made any effort to succor the refugee in the Chatham area. This mission had ephemeral results because as the Negroes moved back to the United States after the Civil War, such a large Negro Anglican congregation as the one in Dresden, melted away.

An incident which helped to launch the American Civil War was prepared partly in Chatham. In the Spring of 1858, John Brown, the Puritan fanatic dedicated to a violent destruction of slavery, hatched his Harper's Ferry Raid in the Canadian town of Chatham, Canada West. Once the Civil War was won by the North, a primary cause of Negro immigration to Canada was removed. The end of the Civil War with a Northern Victory, and the simultaneous end of American slavery concluded the first great phase of the life of the Chatham Negro Community.