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HISTORY OF THE NEGRO COMMUNITY

IN

ESSEX COUNTY 1850--1860

BY

CAROLE JENSON

**Submitted to the Department of History of
the University of Windsor in partial
fulfillment of the requirements
for the Degree of
Master of Arts**

by

Carole Jenson, B. A.

Faculty of Graduate Studies

1966

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ABSTRACT

During the years from 1812 to 1863 Essex County became the Land of Canaan for American coloured people fleeing from southern slavery and slave hunters. Through the assistance of sympathetic white people, free coloured people dwelling in the northern states and well organized escape routes, thousands were able to make their way successfully to British North America. Such major communities as Amherstburg, Sandwich and Windsor became well known termini of the Underground Railroad system.

Because of its mild climate Essex County appealed to many of the refugees and they decided to remain in the area. During the 1840's and 50's coloured communities developed in Malden, Anderdon, Colchester, Gosfield, Sandwich and Maidstone Townships. Some of the people preferred to reside in town, but the majority of them settled on farms. Other fugitives merely passed through the county and took up residence in such places as

Buxton, Dawn Mills and the Queen's Bush.

As their numbers increased such questions as, aid to the needy, construction of churches and schools and prejudice against coloured people became important issues in their life. They did not, however, have to face these problems alone, for they had the support of a number of altruistic ministers, both coloured and white. These men saw the need for the organization of societies, providing guidance and stability for the refugees.

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A map of Essex County showing the location of some of the settlements of coloured people can be found at the end of Chapter IV. The original map, showing the location of these settlements can be found in "Negroes Essex County", Macdonald Historical Collection No. 18.

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INTRODUCTION

Thought

Of Equality--as if it harm'd me, giving others the same chances and rights as myself--as if it were not indispensable to my own rights that others possess the same.

1860

Walt Whitman

Freedom is a very precious thing and as our modern society has evolved, it has become more and more precious to mankind. Once attained, it should be well guarded. It is a natural thing for any man, brown or white to revolt against slavery and search for a home where he can live and work as a free man.

The British recognized, long before the Americans, that slavery could not survive as an institution and they passed laws to facilitate its decline. For this reason Canada became a land of freedom for the American slave.

What the coloured people did after their arrival in the area of Essex County has been the primary concern of the author in this paper. It is an area of study and research which has been scantily covered by historians.

Since the refugee slaves from the United States came in such large numbers, many of whom became permanent settlers in the area, they could not help but contribute to the growth and development of the county during the mid-Nineteenth Century. An attempt, therefore, has been made to give an account of their activities in some detail.

Without doubt the coloured people who fled to Essex County should be admired. The majority of them endured many hardships during their flight to freedom. [Once they arrived, the simple fact that they were free did not mean that they no longer had problems to solve.] Things with which they had been provided while in slavery now had to be worked for. They set about this task with an undaunted spirit. Their desire to become independent and their profound religious convictions are greatly admired by the author. They desired a better life for their children and attempted to see that they were educated.

I

THE EARLY YEARS OF SETTLEMENT

Slavery in Essex County

The part played by the coloured people in the settlement of Essex County has for far too long either been ignored or minimized by local Historians. It was through the efforts of the Negroes, as well as the white people, that large portions of forest and bush lands were cleared for farming and settlement. [Although hundreds of Negroes arrived ragged and empty handed, it was not long before they found work, for there was no lack of jobs in those early years of development.]

The first Negro inhabitants of Essex County were actually slaves, who were owned by the French settlers. Jacques Duperon Baby held approximately thirty slaves and Antoine Descomptes Labadie, a resident of Sandwich,

¹
E. J. La Jeunesse, "Census of the Inhabitants of Detroit Sept. 1, 1750", The Windsor Border Region, pp. 54--55 The inhabitants listed resided on the Canadian side and included; Chauvin with 2 slaves, Baubien with 1, Gilles Parent with 2, Janisse with 1 and many others.

bequeathed to his wife in his will of May 26, 1806, her choice of any two of these slaves.² Simon Girty, a resident of Malden, was also a slave owner. Colonel Mathew Elliott, a Loyalist from Virginia, who settled on a homestead in Malden Township, was reported to have had sixty slaves, who lived in huts behind the Elliott residence.³ This has been proven by the fact that in 1807 a company of renegade Negroes, thirty-six in number, deserted Colonel Elliott and served in the militia at Detroit.⁴

With the passage of a bill by the Upper Canada Legislature July 9, 1793 the right of the Governor or Lieutenant Governor to grant a license for importing Negroes, who would be subjected to slavery, was repealed. However, those Negroes who had been brought into the country before the passage of this Act, were not immediately freed, since provision was made to safeguard the interests of those already possessing slaves in the provinces:

Provided always, That nothing herein contained shall extend, or be construed to extend, to liberate any Negro, or other person subjected to--

² Francis Cleary, "Notes on the Early History of the County of Essex," Essex Historical Society Papers and Addresses, Vol. 1, p. 13

³ David Botsford, "History of Coloured Folk in District Filled with Humour, Pathos and Industry", "Negroes Essex County", Macdonald History Papers, No. 18

⁴ A. B. Farney, Dr. Fred Park, Farney Papers, p. 401
Fort Malden Museum

such service as aforesaid, or to discharge them, or any of them, from the possession of the owner thereof,---...--or shall have otherwise come into the possession of any person, by gift, bequest, or bona fide purchase before the passing of this Act, whose property therein is hereby confirmed, or to vacate or annul any contract for service that may heretofore have been lawfully made and entered into, or to prevent parents or guardians from binding out children until they shall have obtained the age of twenty-one years. 5

Furthermore, children born in slavery were to remain in the service of their mother's owner until they reached the age of twenty-five and were then to be discharged.

[Actually, slavery never really thrived in Canada because of the cold climate and small farms in the provinces.⁶ Canada's agricultural economy was too individualistic for Negro slavery which was designed for a plantation economy.]

The Act prohibiting the extension of slavery was unique for it was one of the first of its kind. Its passage may be credited to Lieutenant Governor Simcoe, who was influenced by his connections with the humanitarians and philanthropists of Great Britain. It made Upper Canada a place of safety for fleeing slaves long before slavery

⁵ "An Act to Prevent the Further Introduction of Slaves, and to Limit the Term of Contract for Servitude within this Province", The Statutes of Upper Canada to the Time of the Union, Vol I 1843 p. 18--19

⁶ Breyfogel, Make Free, p. 30 "Slavery as an economic institution became dependent upon a few semi-tropical crops." Jesse Macy, The Anti-Slavery Crusade, p. 21

was abolished by the British Parliament in 1833.

Development of the Underground Railroad

Slaves were escaping from bondage long before the Underground Railroad was organized. They fled to the forests, mountains and swamps in the southern states.⁷ Although a number of Negroes succeeded in escaping to some areas in the northern states where they could not be found, (it was not until the end of the war of 1812 that the news of the land to the far North where a coloured man could be safe from slavery spread among the Negroes.) "...--slaves began to find their way to Canada before the opening of the present century (Nineteenth) but information in regard to that country as a place of refuge can scarcely be said to have come into circulation before the War of 1812"⁸ Soldiers from Kentucky and Virginia returning to their homes after the war conveyed the news that the Canadian government was well disposed to defend the rights of the refugee Negroes under its jurisdiction.⁹ As slaves were sold and often transported to the deep South they in turn spread the news of free Canada to their unfortunate brethren. Some were instructed to follow

⁷ John H. Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom, p. 208

⁸ W. H. Siebert, The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom, p. 27

⁹ Ibid., p. 38

the Big Dipper pointing to the North Star, while others were guided by those who had already been in the North and had returned to assist them.¹⁰

The early Anti-Slavery societies were devoted to the cause of preventing the enslavement of free Negroes. Many free Negroes in the northern states had been lured back to the South and it was the goal of certain men along the border to attempt to prevent these kidnappings. These men may be considered some of the first agents of the Underground Railroad.¹¹ The Underground Railroad movement supposedly began in Columbia, Pennsylvania and by 1815 it had spread to Ohio. By 1831 there were numerous stations along the Ohio River giving aid to the escaping fugitives.¹² "Ohio and the eastern part of Indiana were predestined by geography to take first place as an avenue of escape for runaway slaves."¹³ Furthermore, "Ohio's early population--New Englanders, Quakers, anti-slavery Kentuckians--were generally disposed to aid fugitives."¹⁴

There were various means by which the slaves made

¹⁰ J. C. Furnas, Good-bye to Uncle Tom, p. 242

¹¹ Macy, Op. Cit., pp. 112--13

¹² Franklin, Op. Cit., pp. 241--42

¹³ Breyfogle, Op. Cit., p. 57

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 57

6

their escape. Some found it necessary to disguise themselves. Men posed as women, women as men, and those who were of a lighter complexion often escaped by passing as white people, while the darker Negroes acted as their servants. In their flight to the North they followed rivers, valleys and railroad lines.

As the Underground Railroad continued to increase its activities, its operations were carried on mostly by Quakers and free Negroes. One of the most prominent agents was Levi Coffin, a Quaker and the reputed president of the railroad. He had settled in Newport, Indiana, six miles from the Ohio line. His home was used as a depot for the refugees.

Harriet Tubman, having escaped from slavery herself, is believed to have assisted in the escape of three hundred slaves. She returned to the South approximately nineteen times to lead these people to freedom. Josiah Henson, also born in slavery escaped with his family and returned south many times to assist slaves to escape. There were many others who were as equally courageous as the aforementioned in assisting those in bondage to freedom.

¹⁵ Breyfogle, Op. Cit., p. 59

¹⁶ Franklin, Op. Cit., p. 255

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 255

Essex County was one of many termini of the Underground
 18 Railroad. There were several routes through Southern Michigan
 which the refugees made use of in order to reach Canada.
 Those coming from Indiana and Ohio could use the western
 route by way of Niles, Cassopolis, Vicksburg, Battle Creek and
 Marshall, while those taking the eastern route could come by
 way of Morenci, Adrian, Tecumseh, Ypsilanti and Detroit,
 19 Many people living in the southern counties of Michigan hid
 Negroes in their houses or barns, fed and clothed them and
 saw that they were conducted safely to the next station.
 20 There were several people in Detroit who aided the slaves by
 concealing them until the opportunity arose to cross the
 river to Windsor or Sandwich. Seymour Finney, who kept the
 Finney House at the south east corner of Woodward and Gratiot
 was well known for his assistance to the refugees.
 21 When this route was under close surveillance by the agents of the
 slave owners, the fugitives were directed northward to the

18

"Most of the communities along the border served at one time or another as terminals of the Underground Railroad. Fugitive slaves crossed the border from Detroit, Cleveland, Buffalo, from Upper New York and Vermont. They crossed the Great Lakes in open boats to land at tiny ports in Canada West or trekked north into the Maritime provinces." R. W. Winks, Canada and the United States, p. 10

19

G. Catlin, The Story of Detroit, p. 324

20

F. Clever Bald, Michigan in Four Centuries, p. 258

21

Catlin, Op. Cit., p. 325

St. Clair River. Another route of the Underground Railroad passed by way of Sandusky. The Negroes boarded boats and going by way of Marble Head and Kelley's Island they reached Point Pelee. During the winter months they were concealed under blankets and conveyed over the ice in sleighs.²²

Negro Settlers before 1850 in Essex County

Owing to the inaccuracy of the records and the inconsistencies of various authorities as to the number of coloured people who entered Upper Canada, it is difficult to estimate exactly how many people took up residence in Essex County. Before the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 was passed there were many families settled as free holders. The earliest known Negro land holder in the county was James Robertson, a veteran of Butler's Rangers. He was granted a lot in Colchester Township in 1787.²³ In 1822 there were 11 coloured property owners in Malden Township; in 1830 there were 21 names listed and in 1835 there were 31; in 1838 there were 40 and in 1848 there were approximately 45 listed

²² Siebert, The Mysteries of Ohio's Underground Railroad, pp. 249--50 After the enforcement of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law such ships as the *May Flower*, the *Arrow*, the *Bay City* and the *United States* carried many refugees to safety. The *Arrow* is reported to have landed at Detroit where the refugees disembarked and were sent on to Windsor by ferry. At one time Captain Atwood of the *Arrow* was prosecuted and fined \$3000. for letting fugitives off at Fort Malden.

²³ Fugitive Slave File 5, Fort Malden Museum

for Amherstburg and Malden.²⁴ While Benjamin Lundy was touring Canada West in 1832 he was informed that there were approximately 300 coloured settlers near the village of Amherstburg.

As early as 1815 Negroes were already settling in Colchester Township and by 1821 they were numerous enough to establish a church, which was one of the first coloured Baptist churches in Canada.²⁵ By 1845 there were 103 names of coloured families listed as free holders in Colchester Township. There were 2 blacksmiths, James Fielding and Alfred Cousmins, 1 shoemaker, Eli Highwarden, 1 tobacconist, George McRoy and the remainder were farmers. Fifty-four of the names listed had a total of 114 children of school age.²⁶ It is also significant that 66 of the men were over 40 years of age.²⁷ The fact that so many of the coloured people owned property clearly indicates that they had a great deal of initiative and industry.

The Negroes' Participation in the Rebellion of 1837--38

Their loyalty to the Government of Upper Canada was

²⁴ The Assessments for Malden Township 1822, 1830, 1835, 1838 and 1848.

²⁵ Rev. H. Talbot, Moderator, A History of Amherstburg Regular Missionary Baptist Association, Its Auxiliaries and Churches, p. 2

²⁶ Assessment for the Township of Colchester 1845,

²⁷ Ibid.,

displayed during the Rebellion of 1837--38. From December 29, 1837 to Jan. 26, 1838 a company of coloured volunteers served under Captain Calwell at Fort Malden.²⁸ Josiah Henson states in his narrative that he was captain of the Second Company of Essex Coloured Volunteers and that he and his men assisted in the defence of Fort Malden from Christmas 1837 to May 1838.²⁹ In January 1838 the schooner Ann manned by rebels and sympathizers bombarded the Essex County shore and went out of control when fired on by Canadian troops. After drifting down the Detroit River and going aground near Elliott's Point it was captured by Josiah Henson and the coloured volunteers.³⁰ Finally, Captain Angus McDonald is said to have been the captain of a company of coloured volunteers in Sandwich in 1838.³¹

Aid to the Refugees

During the early years of settlement there were few organized societies to aid the fugitive entering the country. However, there were certain individuals in Essex County who

²⁸ "Pay List of Captain Calwells Company of Coloured Volunteers at Amherstburg on Militia Duty from 29th December 1837 to 25th January 1838", Farney and Park, Op. Cit., p. 610

²⁹ Fred Landon, "Canadian Negroes in the Rebellion of 1837", Journal of Negro History, Vol. 7, No. 4, p. 378

³⁰ Ernest Green, "Upper Canada's Black Defendors", Ontario Historical Society Papers and Records Vol. XXVII 1938 p. 380

³¹ Ibid., p. 381

were active in anti-slavery work, and did their best to assist the refugees. One of the first of these persons mentioned was Captain Charles Stuart, who was born in Jamaica and grew up in a Scottish Calvinist atmosphere. In 1817 he came to Canada and settled at Amherstburg. Between 1817 and 1822 about 150 Negroes arrived at Amherst-³²burg. Captain Stuart came to know most of them and sold them land at a reasonable rate, along what are known to-day as Kempt, Brock and George Streets in Amherstburg. During the years 1829 to 1850 he carried on anti-slavery activities in both England and the United States. Upon his return to Canada he became Corresponding Secretary for the Canadian Anti-Slavery Association.³³

The elder William Wilks can also be given credit for serving the early coloured settlers. At the age of ten he had been brought from Africa and had lived until early manhood in Virginia. About 1794 he was converted and began to preach amongst his people. In 1818 he arrived in Canada and after living a year in Amherstburg, he purchased forty acres of land in Colchester Township. There he built a log meeting house and preached to the people every Sunday.³⁴ When

³² "Chronology of Captain Charles Stuart", Fugitive Slave File 5, (N. P.)

³³ Ibid.,

³⁴ Talbot, Op. Cit., p. 2

a deacon in Detroit heard of his growing congregation, he arranged for Wilks's ordination and aided him in organizing the little group into a Baptist church in 1821. For the next seven years Rev. Wilks laboured amongst the people and left his property to the Church when he died in 1828.³⁵

When Levi Coffin visited Essex County in 1844, he found Isaac Rice labouring amongst the Negroes in Amherstburg. Since 1838 he had aided the refugees. At his missionary home he sheltered many hundreds of fugitives until other homes could be found for them and he also conducted a school. "This (Amherstburg) was a great landing point, the principal terminus of the Underground Railroad of the West."³⁶

Isaac Rice faced a heavy task in Amherstburg. He had little financial assistance and at one time was unable to pay the freight charges on supplies sent for the poor. In the summer of 1849 over fifty refugees had arrived and were badly in need of clothing. Isaac Rice appealed in a letter to the Western Citizen in Chicago for assistance.³⁷ He had been receiving some aid from the American Missionary Association since 1848, but according to him, it was not

³⁵ Ibid., p. 3

³⁶ Levi Coffin, Reminiscences of Levi Coffin, pp. 49--50

³⁷ Fred Landon, "The Work of the American Missionary Association Among the Negro Refugees in Canada West 1848--64", Ontario Historical Society Papers and Records Vol. XXI (1924) p. 201

sufficient to support the increasing number of refugees entering the country. Within a few years, he was, however, criticised for his begging activities.

In the years prior to 1850 immigration of the coloured people into Canada was gradual. Many of the earlier settlers remained in the county after the American Civil War, whereas the majority of those who came after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act returned to the United States.

II
RELIGION AND EDUCATION
AMONGST THE
COLOURED PEOPLE IN MALDEN TOWNSHIP

The Fugitive Slave Act

The passage of the Fugitive Slave Act by the Congress of the United States in 1850 meant that slaves could be reclaimed merely by the master presenting an affidavit of ownership to a federal judge or commissioner and also, there was great danger that through the affidavit of an unscrupulous slave-hunter, free Negroes of the North could be sent into bondages:

Sec. 6. That when a person held to service or labor in any State or Territory of the United States, has heretofore or shall hereafter escape into another State or Territory of the United States, the person or persons to whom such service or labor may be due,---...--may pursue and reclaim such fugitive person, either by procuring a warrant---...--for the apprehension of such fugitive from service or labor, or by seizing and arresting such fugitive, where the same can be done without process, and by taking, or causing such--

¹Landon, Western Ontario and the American Frontier, p. 207

person to be taken, forthwith before such court, judge, or commissioner, whose duty it shall be to hear and determine the case of such claimant in a summary manner; and upon satisfactory proof being made by deposition or affidavit, in writing, to be taken and certified by such court, judge, or commissioner, or by other satisfactory testimony, duly taken and certified by some court--...--to use such reasonable force and restraint as may be necessary, under the circumstances of the case, to take and remove such fugitive person back to the State or Territory whence he or she may have escaped as aforesaid. In no trial or hearing under this act shall the testimony of such alleged fugitive be admitted in evidence; 2

Consequently, many free coloured people as well as those just fleeing from slavery entered Canada.

Aid to the Refugees

Essex County, being the most southern part of Canada and having a mild climate was quite suitable for settlement by the coloured refugees. "Excellent soils--coupled with mild temperatures and abundant rainfall, form the basis of a rich and varied agricultural production, Markets for which were readily available."³

² Henry Commager, "Fugitive Slave Act September 18, 1850", Documents of American History, p. 322

³ Neil Morrison, Garden Gateway to Canada, pp. 1--2
In the southern portion of the county the soil is a sandy loam with the exception of Malden and Anderdon which is heavy clay. In the northern area of the county the soil is also heavy clay. Gazeteer and Directory of the Counties of Kent, Lambton and Essex, p. 324

Consequent to the sudden increase of the number of refugees, a number of settlements developed in the county in which the coloured community centred on church and school. Since Amherstburg was one of the principal termini of the Underground Railway, it was natural that anti-slavery supporters and ministers turned to that thriving community at the mouth of the Detroit River to give aid and advice both practical and spiritual to the fugitive.

The American Missionary Association continued to aid the missionaries in their pursuits. They concentrated their efforts at Malden, giving support to the Reverend D. Hotchkiss and Mr. Kirkland, as well as Isaac Rice.

"Amherstburg was a really strategic point for missionary work as more fugitives crossed--into Canada at this point than anywhere else on the frontier." Mr. Hotchkiss was stationed at Amherstburg some time during the latter months of 1850:

This devoted friend of humanity (Daniel Hotchkiss) has just entered upon his mission among the fugitive slaves in Canada West. He is stationed at Amherstburg by the American Missionary Association. We never saw the brother before yesterday,--he called on us and passed the night. We were truly happy to form an acquaintance with him and believe him to be--

⁴ Landon, "The Work of the American Missionary Association Among the Negro Refugees in Canada West 1848--64", Op. Cit., pp. 199--200

an able true-hearted soul and well qualified for his sphere of labour. ⁵

During the winter of 1850--51 hundreds of fugitives had stopped within the vicinity of Malden and almost every house was full. By January 1, approximately two hundred families had been given clothing by Reverend Hotchkiss and Brother Kirkland, his co-labourer. ⁶ By the middle of January Mr. Hotchkiss reported that aid had been given to between eighty and a hundred families. Those coloured people already residing in Malden Township had given what they could to aid their destitute brethren. There were however, several of the old settlers who were also in need themselves, because of the destruction of their crops by a hail storm some time during 1850. ⁷

Nevertheless, there were coloured families who were prospering. In the town of Amherstburg there were fifty-four families and out of these thirteen owned property and forty-one families paid rent. ⁸ When Benjamin Drew visited

⁵ "Daniel Hotchkiss", Voice of the Fugitive, (Jan. 1, 1851) Vol. I, No. 1, p. 2, Col. 3

⁶ "Aid for the Fugitive Slaves", Voice of the Fugitive, (Jan. 1, 1851) Vol. I, No. 1, p. 2, Col. 2

⁷ "A Letter from Rev. David Hotchkiss", Voice of the Fugitive, (Jan. 15, 1851) Vol. I, No. 2, p. 1, Col. 5

⁸ Rev. D. Hotchkiss, "A Letter to the Editor", Feb. 4 1851", Voice of the Fugitive, (Feb. 26, 1851) Vol. I, No. 5, p. Col. According to Rev. Hotchkiss there were approximately 244 coloured people in the Amherstburg--

Amherstburg in 185⁴, he reported there were between four to five hundred coloured people in the area. He was assured by some of those people, who had resided in the free states before coming to Canada, "that here the coloured people were doing rather better than the same class in the United States¹⁰".

While there were many individuals who needed some type of assistance upon their arrival, there was a general aversion to begging for food and clothing. "We know from experience and observation that such help is only temporary and degrading to all who are the recipients thereof; not only so, it has ever been a 'bone of contention' in Canada among the refugees.¹¹" It was believed that this was the opinion of nine-tenths of the coloured people and all those who acted as missionaries, with the exception of Isaac J. Rice of Amherstburg.¹² In April 1852 Isaac Rice was openly rejected by the directors and others of the Canada Coloured

vicinity. According to the Census of 1851--2 there were 138 males and 67 females in Amherstburg. In the township of Malden there were 142 males and 137 females. Census of Canada 1851--2 Fugitive Slave File 5,

⁹ Benjamin Drew, A Northside View of Slavery, p. 348

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 348

¹¹ Voice of the Fugitive, (Feb. 12, 1852) Vol II, No. 4, p. 2, Col. 1

¹² Ibid.,

Missionary Society. They claimed that begging was carried on in the name of the society which profited one or two individuals and a small clique. The needs of many sick persons had been disregarded.¹³ The directors, Rev. Henry Stafford, Pleasant Kidd, William A. Jackson and James Green, cautioned the public to be on their guard and withdrew themselves from any connection with the missionary society.¹⁴ After having been rejected by the Baptist congregation,¹⁵ Isaac Rice disappeared.

Achievements of the Refugees

The coloured people were without a doubt adapting themselves admirably to their new homes. In addition to farming many were engaged in various trades; some were shop keepers, blacksmiths, shoemakers and tabacconists.

According to Benjamin Drew one of the best hotels was kept by a "very intelligent coloured man".¹⁶ Levi Foster was known to have run a hotel and livery stable during this period and was apparently prospering, for he advertised the beginning of a stage line from Windsor to Amherstburg:

Mr. Levi Foster of Amherstburg Canada West would inform his friends and the public generally that he has neatly fitted up a hotel on--

¹³ "Isaac J. Rice and Baptist Mission", Voice of the Fugitive, (April 8, 1852) Vol. II, No. 8, p. 2, Col. 5

¹⁴ Ibid.,

¹⁵ Interview with Alvin McCurdy March 13, 1964

¹⁶ Drew, Op. Cit., p. 349

Market Street for the accommodation of such as may favour him with their patronage. His prices shall be liberal, and no time and pains spared to render satisfaction to his customers. He has also a variety of splendid carriages and horses to let connected with the above establishment for the accommodation of the public. 17

A refugee, James Smith, came to Malden with his wife because of the passage of the Fugitive Slave Bill.¹⁸ At this time they were not well off and depended upon their labour for their living. Smith soon found work in Sloan's stone quarry in Anderdon and made about four shillings per day. Mrs. Smith made what she could by sewing and with their small savings they began a grocery shop. As their business increased Mr. Smith gave up his job at the quarry to assist his wife in the store.¹⁹ His shop was reported to have been one of the best grocery shops in the town of Amherstburg.

William Lyons, a skilled joiner, had been working in Amherstburg for two years after coming from Ohio. He had approximately fifteen shillings a day for his labour. It was his opinion that "the coloured people here are doing well ---There is less whisky drinking by coloured people here than in any place I know of. They use less in my

¹⁷ "Foster's Hotel", Voice of the Fugitive, (June 3, 1852) Vol II, No. 12, p. 4, Col. 5

¹⁸ Drew, On. Cit., p. 353

¹⁹ Rev. William Troy, Hair-Breath Escapes From Slavery to Freedom, pp. 20--1

opinion than the whites in general.²⁰"

Elisah Valentine fled from North Carolina to Ohio and then made his way to Amherstburg. He followed the profession of a cook for two or three years on lake steamers and at times in hotels. He became a deacon of the Baptist Church. "I may say here, to the credit of Mr. Valentine and his wife that they would be an honour to any community. They are known as an industrious and highly respected family."²¹

In order to assist the new comers the society known as the True Band Society was formed in Amherstburg in September 1854.²² James Smith, previously mentioned, was a member of the Board of Directors.²³ The membership of the True Band Society in Malden was approximately six hundred persons. Both women and children could be members after the payment of a small monthly fee:

The objects of the association were comprehensive; they included the improvement of the schools, the increase of the school attendance among the coloured people, the abatement of race prejudice, the arbitration of disputes between coloured persons and the employment of a fund for aiding destitute persons just arriving from slavery, the oppression

²⁰ Drew, Op. Cit., p. 358

²¹ Troy, Op. Cit., p. 17

²² Siebert, The Underground Railroad From Slavery to Freedom, p. 230

²³ Troy, Op. Cit., p. 21

of begging in behalf of refugees by self-appointed agents and so forth. ²⁴

The True Band Society of Malden did a great deal of good work. In particular, they rendered assistance to Mr. Blackburn, a refugee slave from Tennessee. He had taken six months to make his way to Canada and suffered greatly from the intense cold of winter, having been frost bitten in both legs. When he arrived he was placed in the care of the society at Amherstburg. At this time Mr. Blackburn was entirely helpless, but through the aid of the society he was able to secure a position within twelve months and ²⁵ became independent.

Education

After having become established one of the primary goals of the coloured people was to see that their children acquired an education. In Amherstburg the children applied for admission to the common school. At a meeting held by the Public School Trustees on April 1, 1851 it was decided to call a meeting with the teachers for the purpose of hearing their opinion on the matter. There must have been some indication of discrimination on the part of the white people,

²⁴ Siebert, The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom, p. 230

²⁵ Troy, Op. Cit., p. 22

as the board brought up the question of appealing to the public to take the responsibility for keeping the coloured children from entering the public schools. At the meeting on April 2, 1851 teachers were advised to send all coloured children requesting admission to the schools to the trustees.²⁶

In the following year Mr. A. K. Dawson and Mr. A. Bartlet, public school trustees, were appointed to call on the coloured people and "if necessary engage a teacher for them".²⁷ A few days later Mr. Bartlet reported that he had engaged Mr. Underwood, a young coloured man, to teach the children. Since the coloured people were satisfied with Mr. Underwood, he was hired for the year 1853 at a salary of sixty dollars including the rent of a school room and fuel.²⁸ In the following year Miss July Turner was engaged as a teacher and remained until December 1856.²⁹

It was during the spring of 1854 that Benjamin Drew visited Essex County and found the coloured school in Amherstburg in operation. At the time there were twenty-four students in attendance. The school house was a small low building containing neither blackboard nor chair. Along the sides

²⁶ "King Street School References", Minutes of the Public School Trustees 1851--1882, April 1--2 1851

²⁷ Ibid., July 8, 1852

²⁸ Ibid., Jan. 15, 1853

²⁹ Ibid., Dec. 18, 1856

of the room there were long benches with desks in front of them. "The whole interior was comfortless and repulsive."³⁰ Obviously, the School Board was not over generous in giving aid to the coloured school at this time.

With the resignation of Miss Turner, Mr. J. B. Williams was hired in January 1857 to teach. However, he proved unsatisfactory to the coloured people, who petitioned the School Board to replace him.³¹ Mr. Taylor was then hired and Miss Green appointed as assistant teacher. Mr. Taylor remained at the coloured school until 1866.³² With the passage of time and the increasing demands of the coloured inhabitants, conditions in the school were improved. In 1858 Mr. Brush and Mr. Noble, members of the School Board, rented a house from Mr. Lewis at the rate of thirty-six dollars per year to be used as a school.³³

In 1864 the School Board purchased a house and lot on King street to be used as a school for \$450.00 from Mr. T. McGuire.²⁴ In 1868 the Board allotted \$200.00 for enlarging the school house. The school was in operation for a few

³⁰ Drew, Op. Cit., p. 348

³¹ "King Street School References", Op. Cit., Jan. 13, 1858

³² Ibid., Dec. 15, 1866

³³ Ibid., April 5, 1858

³⁴ Ibid., Feb. 22, 1864

years after 1900 and when it was closed down the children were sent to the common school.³⁵ In spite of the fact that the coloured people originally wanted their own school, no real effort was made on the part of the School Board to integrate the children in the common school. When Mrs. Levi Foster requested the Board to admit her children to the public school in 1871 the family received a refusal;

At a meeting of the Common School Trustees your wife's application for the admission of your children into the white department of the common school, as she chose to term it, was read and considered.

The trustees are of the opinion that it is inexpedient to alter the present arrangement of the different departments in as much as the coloured department is sufficient for the wants of the coloured people. 36

Advancement of Religion

The majority of the coloured people were deeply religious, hence, through the guidance of their own ministers and with aid from others, churches were established and Sunday schools conducted for the education of both young and old. The Amherstburg Baptist Association was formed in 1841 and was composed of three churches, the Amherstburg Baptist Church with 19 members, the Detroit Baptist Church

35

Interview with Alvin McGurdy March 13, 1964

36

"King Street School Reference", Op. Cit., April 5, 1871. This letter was written to Mr. Levi Foster and signed by the supporters of the common school--Ed Anderson, Charles W. Thomas, Andrew Botsford, James Dunbar, and Lex Jones.

with 17 members and the Sandwich Baptist Church with 11
³⁷
 members.

In Amherstburg, during the early years, worship was carried on in the homes of different members. The missioned and cared for refugees until they could acquire a means of livelihood. In 1845 the first church was built. Rev. Anthony Binga was the pastor of the Amherstburg church from 1841 to 1854. He became an itinerant preacher for a time in order to raise funds to aid in the construction of the church.³⁸ All timbers for the church were taken from the bush and hewn by hand and all sheeting and clap-boards were secured in the same manner. The master carpenter was Deacon George Crawford and his assistant was Nancy McCurdy. They were aided by Deacons Elisah Valentine, John Lyons, Ralph Adams, David Medley, Henry Foster and George French.³⁹

In 1847 two new churches, the Colchester Baptist and the First Baptist Church of Hamilton joined the Amherstburg Baptist Association.⁴⁰ Despite the fact that during 1849 there was a great deal of internal discord, the association

³⁷ Talbot, Op. Cit., p. 6

³⁸ Ibid., p. 4

³⁹ History of Coloured Church (Baptist), Notes from Alvin McCurdy

⁴⁰ Talbot, Op. Cit., p. 13

flourished spiritually and increased in membership and in churches⁴¹".

Rev. William Troy became pastor of the Amherstburg Baptist Church in 1854 and remained there for three years, after which he went to Windsor. He was born in Essex County in Virginia on March 10, 1827. His grandmother was a white woman and his mother a free person of colour, making him free as well.⁴² His father was a slave who eventually purchased his freedom, and the family moved to Cincinnati.

Rev. ^{Wm} Troy had been residing in Amherstburg only a few weeks when Benjamin Drew made his tour through the area. He informed Mr. Drew that about 100 persons usually attended divine service and the majority of these had been slaves.⁴³

The church had its largest membership in 1857 when 192 members were registered.⁴⁴

About five miles from Amherstburg in the township of Malden there was a small settlement known as Mount Pleasant. It was located on the eighth concession and a Baptist church

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 16. In 1855 the Little River Baptist Church joined the Association; in 1856 Windsor Baptist Church joined; in 1862 the Gosfield church joined and in the same year the Colchester church applied for admission. The Puce Baptist Church was admitted in 1863 and in 1870 the New Canaan Baptist Church applied for admission. Ibid., pp. 18--22

⁴² Troy, Op. Cit., p. 1

⁴³ Drew Op. Cit., p. 355

⁴⁴ Talbot, Op. Cit., p. 42

was built on Lot 88, when John Hedgeman donated a portion of his farm for their use. In 1858 there were 52 members, but in 1906 the church was no longer used.

The African Methodist Episcopal Church which had been organized in 1816 in Philadelphia sent missionaries to Canada in 1837. Rev. W. Cannon organized the Nazrey A.M.E. Church in Amherstburg. The property for the church was purchased in 1848 from Alexis Galliteau for £97.10.0. The trustees were Luke Snowden, Martin Maddison and Isaac Browdy.⁴⁵ Services were held in a log house until the present church was built.

Since the Canadian Conference of Churches was subject to outside interference, it was decided to organize the churches into an independent body known as the British Methodist Episcopal Church. The first bishops of the B.M.E. Church were W. Naseray, 1856--75, R.R. Disney, 1875--86 and Rev. Walter Hawkins, 1886--94.⁴⁶ Dispite the split with the A.M.E. Church the original church retained a membership.⁴⁷ In 1869 there were 65 members in the A.M.E. Church. In 1873 there were 41 members in the B.M.E. Church and 30 scholars.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Alvin McGurdy, 117th Anniversary of the Nazrey A.M.E. Church July 27, 1958,

⁴⁶ The B.M.E. Church, Notes from Mr. A. McGurdy

⁴⁷ The A.M.E. Church Members in 1859, Ibid.,

⁴⁸ Minutes of the 17th Session of the Annual Conference of the British Methodist Episcopal Church held at St. Catharines from June 21 to 28, 1873.

The Colonial Church and School Society also carried on missionary work among the refugees in Amherstburg. Rev. John Hurst, who was stationed at St. John's Church Sandwich in 1860 reported that the coloured people were taking an interest in the Church of England. He also found a diminishing of prejudice against the white people. The coloured people attended the Sunday School with the white people.

Conclusion

When S. G. Howe visited Malden in 1863 he found that there were 71 property owners in town. He claims that there was one coloured tax payer to every 11 of the coloured inhabitants. In 1870 there were 101 householders listed. These people had a variety of occupations; George Crawford was a carpenter, William Carter a blacksmith, Jacob Taylor a teacher, Nancy McCurdy a carpenter, Henry Fitzbutler a teacher, Levi Foster a livery keeper, (by this time he had given up his hotel because of the temperance movement), George Taylor a shoemaker, Anderson Ueney a barber and Elizabeth Smith a crocer.

(Both the churches and the schools provided a center of stability for the refugees.) It was to these places that

⁴⁰
Colonial Church and School Society Report for the
Year 1859--60, pp. 29--40

⁵⁰
Amherstburg Assessment Roll May 5, 1870

they turned for guidance, and their physical as well as spiritual needs were provided for. They were encouraged to make use of those trades which they had learned in slavery. From all evidence the coloured people did prosper in Malden Township.

In spite of the fact that the coloured people were forced to have their own schools, they were not rejected in all levels of life by the community. The Town Council often had a member of the coloured community among its representatives and at various times they held positions on the Public School Board. ⁵¹ They added to the growth and advancement of the community and proved that they were as capable as any white person.

⁵¹ "Notes from Mr. Natress", Fugitive Slave File 1

III
AGRICULTURE AS A LIVELIHOOD FOR THE REFUGEES
IN
COLCHESTER, ANDERDON AND GOSFIELD TOWNSHIPS

Desire for Land

The primary goal of many of the fugitives from slavery both independently and under the guidance of various organizations was to purchase land and to clear it for farming.¹ Since a large number of the former slaves were accustomed to tilling the soil, they applied their past experience and knowledge to the fertile lands of Essex County. Within the pages of the "Voice of the Fugitive" articles referring to the quality of farm land in Canada can frequently be found:

We know it is a very common thing to hear slave holders and those who favour the American Colonization schemes say that Canada is very cold, that crops will not grow as they will in the States, and that the fugitive will perish here with cold. Now so far from such statements being true, the climate is very little colder here than it is in the northern part of--

¹ Landon, "Agriculture Among the Negro Refugees in Upper Canada," Pamphlets on the Negroes in Upper Canada, p. 2

Kentucky. In proof of this, we have good crops of tobacco raised here every year for market, and sweet potatoes, a root which requires a warm climate, grow and do well, in the southern part of Canada West. In addition to this, all kinds of grain and vegetation that grows in the North Western States is raised here, as the soil is of a superior quality and the climate favourable. ²

In Colchester, Anderdon, Gosfield and Maidstone Townships tracts of land were farmed by the coloured people.

Acquisition of Land in Colchester

In Colchester Township there were four known settlements of coloured people, the Village of Colchester, New Canaan, Gilgal and Pleasant Valley. In 1851 there were 300 males and 233 females registered as inhabitants of the township.³ When Benjamin Drew passed through the area in 1854, he was informed that there were 450 coloured persons in the vicinity of Colchester Village. Large portions of the land under cultivation had been cleared by these refugees.⁴ Robert Nelson, who had been in the area since 1844 claimed that the coloured residents cleared approximately two-thirds of the land in Colchester Township.⁵

² "The Price and Quality of Canada Lands", Voice of the Fugitive, (March 12, 1851) Vol. I, No. 6, p. 2, Col. 2

³ "Census of Canada 1851--2", Fugitive Slave File 5,

⁴ Drew, Op. Cit., p. 367

⁵ Ibid., p. 371

The farms along the Lake Erie shore as far back as the fourth concession were inhabited almost entirely by white people with only an occasional farm owned by a coloured man. "These farms are not generally so thoroughly or so neatly cultivated as those of the whites, though there are some white men's farms no better than theirs."⁶ Beyond the fourth concession the farms belonging to the coloured people were more numerous. The refugees had penetrated deeper into the bush than any of the white settlers.⁷

Some of the refugees leased small portions of wild land for six or seven years. However, by the time the land was cleared the lease had expired in many cases and the settlers were turned off the land and were forced to move further into the woods. They profited by their mistakes and began to acquire land of their own.⁸

David Orier, a refugee, who arrived in 1831 claimed to have cleared between 70 and 80 acres of lease-land, from which he derived no benefit. He was of the opinion that the white people took advantage of the refugee in order to have their land cleared.⁹

In spite of the hardships that had to be overcome,

⁶ Drew, Op. Cit., p. 368

⁷ Ibid., p. 369

⁸ Ibid., p. 371

⁹ Ibid., p. 373

there were many families who became prosperous. Robert Nelson claimed to have owned 191 acres of land and a house; Ephraim Waterford owned a farm of 200 acres of wild land with five acres clear; Eli Artis held 25 acres of land of which he had eight acres cleared; Ephraim Casey owned a farm of 60 acres and stock, which he had purchased from a white man and Rev. William Ruth held 50 acres of cleared improved land and an orchard as well as 70 acres in New ¹⁰ Canaan. Other well known residents of the township were; J. Hughbanks, who came to Essex in 1847, held 60 acres in Colchester Village and was a member of the School Board for twelve years; S.C. Hickson, who settled in the county in 1858, held 163 acres on the North Middle Road and was also a school trustee; Esquire Hamilton, who came to Canada about 1846, held 37 acres on the Gore Road in south Colchester; D. R. Davis, who settled in Essex in 1851, owned 150 acres on the fifth concession and Henry Graham, who came to the county in 1847 became the owner of 260 acres on ¹¹ the second concession in south Colchester.

The settlement of New Canaan was established by Rev. ¹² E. Kirkland about 1851. It was located north of Harrow

¹⁰

Ibid., pp. 370--5

¹¹

Notes from Alvin McGurdy

¹²

Voice of the Fugitive, (Feb. 12, 1851) Vol I, No. 4, p. 2, Col. 5

on the Gesto Road and approximately ten miles east of Amherstburg. In the area there was six thousand acres of Canada Company Land for sale, priced from \$2.00 to \$2.50¹³ per acre.

Mr. E. Kirkland reported that the people in the settlement were progressing well in clearing their lands and those who had arrived in the fall of 1850 already had large clearings.¹⁴ A good school and meeting house had been constructed under his guidance.¹⁵ By 1852 there were about twenty families in the area. Their school held daily classes and religious services were also held regularly in the settlement.¹⁶

When Benjamin Drev visited Colchester he was told that "New Canaan is going to be one of the finest and most beautiful places. It has every advantage necessary to make it a fine settlement. It is covered with heavy timber and has a first rate soil. The settlers are doing extraordinarily for the time they have been there".¹⁷ By this

¹³ "Canada Lands", Voice of the Fugitive, (June 4, 1851) Vol I, No. 12, p. 2, Col 1--2.

¹⁴ "Temperance, Schools Etc.", Voice of the Fugitive, (March 26, 1851) Vol. I, No. 7, p. 1, Col. 3

¹⁵ Voice of the Fugitive, (Feb. 12, 1851) Vol. I, No. 4, p. 2, Col. 5

¹⁶ First Annual Report Presented to the Anti-Slavery Society of Canada by its Executive Committee March 24, 1852 p. 17

¹⁷ Drev, On. Cit., p. 376

time there were about forty families settled there. Their holdings were about 100 acres each in area and approximately three-quarters of the settlers had already paid off their land and were making improvements.¹⁸

Gilgal and Pleasant Valley were two other farming settlements in the vicinity of Harrow. The former was located on Walker Road near Harrow and was established by the McCurdy family.¹⁹ The latter was just east of Harrow. Both settlements had a church and school.

By 1860 there were 170 land owners amongst the refugees in Colchester Township. One man, Charles Hatfield appears to have owned property on three different concessions, 200 acres on Concession 4, 5 acres on the Gore and 25 acres on Concession 1. Lawson Atkins held 200 acres on the fourth concession; James Poston held 200 acres on South Middle Road and James Smith owned a 200 acre farm on North Middle Road.²⁰ There were 24 coloured people who held farms between 100 and 200 acres in size, 42 who held property between 50 and 100 acres and approximately 107 who had holdings of less than 50 acres. Included in the list were the names of seven women who held property; the widow

18

Ibid., p. 372

19

Notes from Alvin McCurdy

20

Assessment of Coloured Population in Colchester Township 1860

Tisdale held half an acre on the first concession, Nancy Pettiford owned 50 acres, Sarah Matthews owned 25 acres, Elizabeth Lang owned 33 acres, Rebecca Hyroarden owned 25²¹ acres and Sarah Bard owned 50 acres.

The majority of the refugees had little difficulty in finding employment after their arrival. Robert Nelson stated, "It is reported throughout the world, that coloured people cannot live here; I have been here ten years and have seen none starving yet. Any man that will work can get ten dollars or twelve dollars a month cash, and more if he takes it in trade."²² In 1866 there were 201 heads of families listed as residents of Colchester. From all indications²³ the majority of these people resided on their own farms. The fact that so many of the refugees came to own fairly large holdings of property is further proof of their industry and independent spirit.

Settlements in Anderdon

There were two known settlements of refugees in Anderdon Township, Marble Village and Haiti. The former was a collection of huts which gradually increased in number around the vicinity of Anderdon quarry. The latter extended

21

Ibid.,

22

Drew, Op. Cit., p. 370

23

The County of Essex Gazetteer and General Business Directory for 1866--7

in area from the second to the seventh concession in Anderdon.

Captain Sloan was the owner of the Anderdon quarry, now Allied Chemical Company property. He was a retired British naval officer, who was interested in anti-slavery work. "If not directly concerned in the business of the Underground ²⁴ Railway, he was at least very kindly disposed towards the fugitives from oppression." Captain Sloan had a son of the same name, who was a mariner on the Great Lakes. He was also sympathetic towards the plight of the coloured people, and frequently transported them from ports ²⁵ in Ohio to Amherstburg.

One of the neighbours of Captain Sloan was Mr. R. Wingfield, who provided land for the settlement of the refugees. The lots were on the north side of the Texas Road and on the west side of Concession 2 north of the quarry and were known as ²⁶ Gore lots.

Besides being engaged in farming, many of the residents of Anderdon worked in the quarry or in Thomas's sawmill. The majority of these people lived along the Texas Road. Because of their past experience in agriculture in the

²⁴ Botsford, On. Cit.;

²⁵ "Notes", Fugitive Slave File 8

²⁶ Botsford, On. Cit.;

²⁷ Ibid.,

United States, the coloured refugees were adept in the handling and curing of tobacco leaves. The soil in Anderdon is no longer considered suitable for the cultivation of tobacco, but in the last century a great deal of tobacco was grown in the area and shipped from Amherst-²⁸burg. Much of this work was done by the refugee coloured people.

Farming in Gosfield Township

In 1851 there were 33 males and 30 females residing in Gosfield Township.²⁹ When Benjamin Drew visited the township he found that there were 78 coloured people living there. With the exception of two or three heads of families the remainder held clear deeds to their land.

One of these men, John Chapman arrived in Gosfield when it was primarily wild land. There were only three coloured people in the area at this time and farmers raised only enough to provide for their own needs. By the time Mr. Drew arrived all were making a good living.³⁰ Another refugee, Thomas Johnson, took a 50 acre piece of land and cleared it. Upon his arrival in Essex he had leased land but after clearing it, he was forced to give it up. When

²⁸

Ibid.,

²⁹

"Census of Canada 1851--2", Op. Cit.,

³⁰

Drew, Op. Cit., p. 379

this experience was repeated a second time, he was determined to purchase his own farm.³¹ In 1861 there were 87 coloured residents of Gosfield. In the records there is also mention of one coloured school.³² In 1866 there were 29 heads of families listed as residents of the township.³³ They did not live in a closely knit community but were scattered throughout the township.

Churches and Schools

At the time of the founding of the Amherstburg Baptist Association, the log church in Colchester built by Elder William Wilks was the only coloured church edifice in Essex County. When the property was lost to the Longpoint Baptist Association Mathew Matthews gave one-quarter of an acre of land for the establishment of a Baptist Church on the third concession about three miles west of Harrow.³⁴ In 1862 it had its highest membership of 26 and in 1906 it was extinct.³⁵

In 1854 the Baptist Church at New Canaan requested

³¹ Ibid., p. 381

³² "Coloured Population of Essex County Census 1861"
"Negroes, Essex County" Macdonal Historical Collection No. 18

³³ County of Essex Gazetteer and General Business Directory for 1866--7

³⁴ "Notes on Interview from Tommy Johnson Oct. 1961",
Fugitive Slave File 2

³⁵ Talbot, Op. Cit., p. 42

membership in the Amherstburg Association and was accepted.³⁶ It again applied for membership in 1870, for during the intervening years it had lost its membership through failure to attend meetings. In 1854 there were seven members and in 1871 there were eight. In 1872 the church was extinct.³⁷

The Baptist Church in Gosfield applied for admission to the Amherstburg Association in 1862, when it withdrew from the Longpoint Association.³⁸ There were 29 members registered in the church in 1862 and 33 in 1875. The church was extinct in 1908.

In the early days the Methodists had preaching stations at Liberty Chapel and the Plains, also one called the Lake and one in Anderdon. All of these stations were served by Elder Butler.³⁹ When a conference of Methodists was held in St. Catharines in 1873, there was mention only of two stations and these were both in Colchester at New Canaan and Harrow.⁴⁰ At New Canaan there were 21 members and 30 scholars at this time, and at Harrow there were

³⁶ Ibid., p. 17

³⁷ Ibid., p. 42

³⁸ Ibid., p. 19

³⁹ "Churches and Cemetery", Fugitive Slave File 2

⁴⁰ Minutes of the Seventeenth Session of the Annual Conference of the British Methodist Episcopal Church held at St. Catharines June 21--8 1873

17 members and 10 scholars. Although the number of members of the aforementioned churches are very small, it does not mean that others did not attend church services. When Rev. John Hurst visited New Canaan not less than 100 people⁴¹ came to hear him preach.

From the number of schools that the coloured people had, it was quite evident that they placed a great deal of importance on education. They had their own schools at New Canaan, Pleasant Valley, Gilgal, Sloan's Quarry and the one mentioned in Gosfield. Members of the McCurdy⁴² family are reported to have taught in the school at Gilgal. In 1852 they had a "flourishing school" at New Canaan in which Miss Lyon was the teacher.⁴³

Before 1850, coloured, indian and white children attended the Sloan school. Because of prejudice the coloured people were forced to appeal to Ottawa sic for permission to establish a separate school. Some 125 families, resident of Marble Village signed a petition and eventually they were granted permission to have their own school without financial backing from the government. The children were moved to a small building on the Sloan property. In order to maintain

⁴¹ Mission to Fugitive Slaves in Canada, Colonial Church and School Society Report for the Year 1859--60, p. 39

⁴² Interview with Alvin McCurdy Sept. 13, 1964

⁴³ "Coloured Settlements and Schools", Voice of the Fugitive, (Jan. 29, 1852) Vol. II, No. 1, p. 2, Col. 1

the school the children were required to pay twenty-five cents a month. In time the coloured people were able to purchase from Mr. Wingfield a small tract of land with a log house on the second concession.⁴⁴

The school opened in 1850 and Miss King was the first teacher. Her salary was approximately \$200.00 a year. Other teachers who later served at the school were: Miss Julie Turner, George Simons, Mr. Coxfield, Mr. Pooock, Mr. Harris, Miss Christian, Jacob Taylor, Alexander Mackenzie, Miss Round, Miss Madeline Foster and J. H. Alexander.⁴⁵

Conclusion

The state of freedom in which the coloured people could live in Canada allowed them to turn to any type of occupation which suited their interest and ability. The fact that cheap land was still available for development was of great importance to their uncertain status in an unfamiliar land. They had the choice of working for others or for themselves. It was the latter state of independence which Henry Bibb in the Voice of the Fugitive and others who were interested in aiding them, encouraged them to

⁴⁴ "Records Kept by Peter Stokes, King Street, Amherstburg about the Coloured People Securing their Own School", "Negroes Essex County", Macdonald Historical Collection No. 18, p. 17

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 18

strive for. They were no longer one of many slaves working for the master, but rather independent souls, who were able to use their own initiative for their own benefit and that of their brethran.

IV
RURAL AND URBAN LIFE
IN
SANDWICH AND MAIDSTONE TOWNSHIPS

The Continuing Tide of Refugees

Because of their proximity to Detroit, Sandwich and Windsor stood out in importance as the termini of the Underground Railroad. Along the banks of the Detroit River many touching scenes of courage and thanksgiving were viewed by the inhabitants. On the Detroit side some poor refugees, closely pursued by their masters were seen hurriedly boarding a ferry. On the Canadian side they were seen shedding tears of joy upon arriving at a land where they were free.

As previously stated, the Fugitive Slave Act greatly increased the number of arrivals. "We do not believe that the time has ever been when there were more slaves making their escape to this province than there are this fall and winter from the South notwithstanding all that there has been said and done to enforce the Fugitive Slave law."¹

¹ "No more Slaves can Escape", Voice of the Fugitive, (Dec. 17, 1851) Vol I, No. 26, p. 4, Col. 1

To state exactly how many fugitives arrived at Windsor and Sandwich is impossible, since no accurate records were kept and many people went inland. During the years 1851--52 the Voice of the Fugitive reported a continuous influx of coloured people. It was reported in the edition of August 27, 1851 that: "Fugitive slaves are constantly arriving here from all parts of the South. We have just been called on by a very fine looking man from Louisiana,--...--several from Kentucky and Missouri and some from North Carolina"². In the following year another report stated: "The Underground Railroad is doing good business this spring. Not less than fifteen passangers have landed here from the South within a few days, who never knew what freedom was before"³. In December of the same year it was again reported that: "The Underground Railroad cars are making regular trips and landing passangers here almost every day, who come with cheerful hearts, leaving the condition of slavery behind; and the slave hunters are frequently seen and heard at the Detroit River edge, but dare not venture over, lest the British lion should lay its paw upon their guilty heads."⁴

² "Still They Come", Voice of the Fugitive, (Aug. 27, 1851) Vol. I, No. 18 p. 2, Col. 1

³ "The Cry is Still They Come", Voice of the Fugitive, (April 22, 1852) Vol. II, No. 9, p. 2, Col. 1

⁴ "Progress or Escape", Voice of the Fugitive, (Dec. 27 1852) Vol II, No. 25, p. 2, Col. 4

Henry Bibb and the Voice of the Fugitive

Among the new arrivals was Henry Bibb, an escaped slave who had been residing with his wife in Michigan during the 1840's. At that time he was actively associated with the Liberty party in the United States.⁵ In 1850 Henry Bibb and his wife settled in Sandwich. He, however, continued his close association with anti-slavery societies and agents across the border.

During his sojourn in Sandwich Henry Bibb was an active participant in assisting the refugees. He aided in establishing a church of the Methodist faith in Sandwich, a Men's Educational and Mechanics Society, the Refugees' Home Society and in the formation of temperance and anti-slavery societies in Sandwich, Windsor and Amherstburg. Perhaps his most outstanding achievement was the publication of the newspaper, the Voice of the Fugitive.

The paper was first published in Sandwich January 1, 1851. It was used as an instrument to encourage both free men of colour and those in bondage to take refuge in the British provinces, and strongly advocated agriculture as one of the best means of making a living upon arrival.

An examination of the Voice of the Fugitive reveals that the editor, Henry Bibb, aimed at publishing a paper

⁵ Landon, "Henry Bibb A Colonizer", Journal of Negro History, (Oct. 1929) Vol. V, No. 4, p. 437

which would appeal to both sexes. Advice was frequently given to women in regard to conduct, dress and cooking, while for the men advice was given concerning farming methods and opportunities for employment. The paper also kept its readers informed about the latest progress on discussions on slavery in Congress and in the states at large. Occasionally, jokes would appear in the paper, revealing the writer's lack of prejudice.

Support for the Voice of the Fugitive came from subscriptions and contributions from distant areas as well as from the sale of space for the advertisements of local business establishments. Among its agents were Levi Foster and David Hotchkiss in Amherstburg, Mr. Fisher in Toronto, George Cary in Chatham, James Grant in Dawn Mills, Mr. Lightfoot, Francis King and others in Michigan.

Organization of Societies for Settlement of the Refugees on the Land

The first known society in Essex County for encouraging the coloured people to settle on the land was organized in 1845 by Rev. T. Willes, a coloured Methodist preacher, and was called the Sandwich Mission.⁷ Two hundred acres of

⁶ "List of Agents", Voice of the Fugitive, (Jan 1, 1851) Vol. I, No. 1, ;. 2, Col. 1

⁷ "Coloured Settlement", Voice of the Fugitive, (Jan. 29, 1851) Vol I, No. 2, p. 2, Col. 4

timber land on the ninth concession in Sandwich Township ⁸ had been purchased with money raised in the United States. In 1851 the mission was reorganized as the Coloured Industrial Society. The trustees of this organization were George Williams, Alfred Kelley, William Keys and Alfred Brinson. Rev. Israel Campbell and Rev. John Jackson were ⁹ the agents for the society. A resolution was decided upon by these men who stated:

We---...--have been appointed a Board of Trustees to establish a settlement of coloured people in the township of Sandwich, Canada West, and an institution in which that class of the community may receive a liberal education and thereby improve their present illiterate state and also so promote such religious and orderly conduct among them which will tend to their spiritual as well as their temporal happiness. --....--We hope and trust that the friends of our race will come forward with liberality to assist us in the establishment of an institution thereon which will be conducted in the principles of true religion and which it is intended shall place us in a far more exalted position among our fellows than at present. This institution when completed will not be open for the purpose of gain but for the purpose alone of improving our race which we shall endeavour to do to the best of our ability. --....--We are now striving by opening the settlement to place it in the power of every coloured man to purchase a lot for a mere trifle and thereon be enabled to earn an honest livelihood without being dependent on the charity of others. 10

8

Ibid.,

9

"Sandwich Mission", Fugitive Slave File 5

10

"Coloured Industrial Society", Voice of the Fugitive, (Jan 29, 1851) Vol I, No. 2, p. 2, Col. 4--5

The land purchased in Sandwich was divided into lots of ten acres that were sold to those who were willing to comply with the rules and regulations. The trustees reserved twenty-five acres for a church and school to be built in the future. In 1854 when Benjamin Drew visited the area he was told that eight families were settled there, having cleared forty acres for cultivation. Some of them were able to support themselves by farming while others had to work out to supplement their incomes. At this time the roads were in a very poor condition, being wet and muddy.¹¹ Five years later the society purchased thirty more acres in Sandwich for the settlement of the refugees. A free school was opened which was attended by conductors and depot agents of the Underground Railroad.¹²

One of the pet projects of Henry Bibb was the Refugee Home Society, an organization to promote the settlement of Negroes on the land. Members of the Anti-Slavery Society of Michigan and several invited guests from British North America met in Detroit on May 21, 1851 for the purpose of considering the "moral, social and financial condition of the coloured population of Canada West".¹³ At this time the

¹¹ Drew, Op. Cit., p. 335

¹² "Sandwich 1859", Fugitive Slaves File 5

¹³ "Friends of the Anti-Slavery Cause", Voice of the Fugitive, (June 4, 1851) Vol. I, No. 12, p. 1, Col. 4

Refugee Home Society was founded. Their aims were expressed in the preamble to a constitution adopted in Farmington, Michigan:

Whereas it is supposed that there are, at the present time, between thirty-five and forty thousand refugee slaves in Canada, whose number has been constantly increasing since the passage of the Fugitive Slave Bill.

And whereas, on their arrival, they find themselves in a strange land, uneducated, poverty-stricken, without homes, or any permanent means of self-support; however willing they may be to work, they have neither the means to work with, nor the land to work upon; and the sad story of the numerous fugitives who have been dragged back by the strong arm of the American Government, is a sufficient proof that there is no protection for the slave this side of the Canadian line. The only protection for their liberty on the American Continent is emphatically under the shadow of the British throne.

In view of the above facts the friends of humanity in Michigan, in May 1851, organized a society which has undertaken the purchase of thirty thousand acres of land in Canada, on which to settle fugitives from slavery.--...--the refugees from Southern slavery, who are now in Canada destitute of homes, or who may hereafter come, being desirous of building themselves up in Canada, on an agricultural basis, and who do not buy, sell or use intoxicating drinks as a beverage shall by making proper application to this society and complying with its constitution and By-Laws, be put into possession of twenty-five acres of farming land and their children shall enjoy the blessings of education perpetually. 14

By December of 1851 land had been purchased for the
15
Refugees in Sandwich Township. By 1854 the Refugee Home

¹⁴
"Refugees' Home Society", Voice of the Fugitive,
(Aug. 12, 1852) Vol. II, No. 17, p. 2, Col. 1

¹⁵
"Refugees' Home", Voice of the Fugitive, (Dec. 17,
1851), Vol. I, No. 26, p. 2, Col. 2

Society had purchased approximately two thousand acres of land about nine miles from Windsor in the townships of Sandwich and Maidstone.¹⁶ Money for the purchase of this land was raised through contributions and one-half of the money received from the sale of the land was to be used to buy more land.¹⁷

After being persuaded by Henry Bibb, Horace Hallock and Rev. Charles C. Foot, Laura Haviland, an American woman, who spent many years of her life assisting the unfortunate coloured people, consented to conduct a school eight miles from Windsor in the Refugee Home Society settlement. The society had erected a frame house for school and meeting purposes.

The school was opened in the autumn of 1852. Besides day classes a Sabbath school was held, which was of special interest to the older inhabitants. Many frequently came five or six miles with their ox teams to attend these meetings with their families. "Every man, woman and child who could read a verse in the testament---even with assistance took part in reading the lesson, and liberty was given to ask questions."¹⁸

¹⁶ Drew, Op. Cit., p. 323

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 324

¹⁸ Laura Haviland, A Woman's Life Work, pp. 192--3 Among those who attended was a couple in their eighties, who missed very few Sabbaths during Laura Haviland's stay.

The task which Laura Haviland faced was an arduous one. Along with the day classes during the week she held an evening school for twelve heads of families who were anxious to learn to read the Bible and hymn books.¹⁹ The conditions under which she lived were very crude, for she mentions that: "The winter was quite severe, and I frequently was awakened with the snow drifting in my face, and not unfrequently found the snow half an inch or more deep over my bed on rising in the morning."²⁰ Yet, her spirit was undaunted and she remained the year at her post, as she had promised, until she was replaced by Brother Meglothin, who had just arrived with his family from Virginia.

Laura Haviland reported that upon her arrival she found that the settlers had built small log houses and had cleared from one to five acres each of the heavily timbered land. In these clearings they raised corn, potatoes and other garden vegetables. There were even those who had sown two or three acres of wheat "and were doing well for their first years".²¹

In 1854 there were twenty families occupying farms of twenty-five acres each on the Refugees' Home Society's land.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 196

²⁰ Ibid., p. 196

²¹ Ibid., p. 192

Since the report stated that forty lots had been taken up it is possible that the other twenty lots were held by single persons.²²

It appears that a thriving settlement grew out of the efforts made by the Refugees' Home Society to settle people on the land. "Near the corner of the Puce River and the Base Line there were at one time a school and three Negro churches--the Baptist, A.M.E. and B.M.E..²³" Many of the men in this area became moderately successful farmers. By 1861²⁴ there were 375 coloured inhabitants in Maidstone Township. One of the settlers Manuel Eaton had a small factory where he made potash and pearl-ash from wood ashes. In his grove the people often met for barbecues. Another resident of the

22

Drew, Op. Cit., p. 323 The following is a list of some of the inhabitants who were settled on land purchased by the Refugees' Home Society: Edward C. Walker and Horace Hallock, trustees of the society, bought farm lot 7 East Puce River from Alanzo Reid and wife in March 1853. In 1858 it was recorded that the Trustees sold property to A. W. Summerville (34½ acres), Willis Hamilton (25 acres), John Ward (25 acres), J. H. Holland (10 acres), John Grun (10 acres), E. Grant (25 acres), Edmond Greaves (2½ acres), George Washington (25 acres), Mrs. Taylor (35 acres), Daniel Hurst (25 acres), J. L. Williams (25 acres), A. Howe (12½ acres) and Francis Bloss (25 acres). "Puce River Coloured Settlement", Notes from Alvin McCurdy

23

M. Wallace, "The Negroes", "Pioneers of the Scotch Settlement on the Shore of Lake St. Clair", Ontario Historical Society Papers and Records, (Sept. 1949) Vol. 42--43, p. 195

24

"Coloured Population of Essex County Census 1861", Negroes, Essex County", Macdonald Historical Collection No. 18

township, Albert Scott, was a veterinarian and was well known throughout the county. Tom and Josh Lucas, who lived in the village of Puce were owners of a large scow and were prosperous in their business.²⁵

The societies for promoting settlement on the land did not reach the proportions anticipated by their founders. The question arises whether such plans were advisable in the first place, for they tended to isolate the refugees from the white inhabitants. The coloured people congregated in their own churches and their acceptance of separate schools led to much dissension in later years when the time came to integrate the coloured students with the white children. Yet, there was a strong argument on the side of the Refugees' Home Society and other such schemes. The small grant of land gave the refugees responsibility to the societies, while at the same time it gave them the opportunity to lead an independent life. The societies gave preference to the refugees directly from slavery, for the free refugees from the northern states had had opportunities to make money and because of this experience they needed less guidance and protection. Without doubt the societies aided the coloured people to find personal dignity.

Wallace, Op. Cit., p. 196

Town Life

In spite of the emphasis placed upon the benefits to be found in farming, some preferred to face the hazards of town life. As town dwellers they were subject to an integrated life, and would therefore feel more strongly the effects of any prejudice.⁷ Nevertheless, town life had its benefits for it offered more opportunities for employment.

In 1852 Windsor was a thriving village. New buildings were being erected and sidewalks laid;

Our stores and shops are here thronged with customers from sunrise in the morning until nine o'clock at night, mostly by our French farmers, and many come here from Detroit to trade, especially when they want to get a good bargain or a good English manufactured article. Our docks are so frequently crowded with steam boats and sailing vessels, loading and unloading, that there is scarcely room for the ferry boats to land. 26

This prosperity created a variety of jobs in Windsor and Sandwich, as well as offering a market for farm produce. It was reported that "There is plenty of work for fugitives here on the Canada railroad within twelve miles of Windsor, chopping wood, grading etc. to be done. There are about fifty at work there now"²⁷. One refugee, Joseph W. Brown, found employment at the Great Western Railway of Canada

²⁶ "Progress of Improvement in Windsor", Voice of the Fugitive, (June 3, 1852) Vol. II, No. 12, p. 2, Col. 4

²⁷ "Fugitives in Canada", Voice of the Fugitive, (April 8, 1852) Vol. II, No. 8, p. 2, Col. 4

when the line had been completed to Windsor. He had made his way to Windsor from St. Louis with a widow and her child and only enough money to pay their railroad fare. He later married the widow and worked at odd jobs until securing a steady position on the railroad. "J. Brown through his industry has purchased a house and lot and is still making progress."²⁸

According to Benjamin Drew there was no real need to raise money for the fugitives in Windsor, except perhaps for the first few days after their arrival, for there was plenty of work to be found. "Women get half a dollar for washing, and it is difficult to hire them at that."²⁹ Women could also obtain employment as domestics. One example given by Rev. Troy tells of the success of the Monroe family. Mrs. Monroe and her eleven children found their way to Windsor from Kentucky and were met by Rev. Troy. Shelter, food and clothing were provided for them and the daughters soon obtained employment as domestics, while the younger children were sent to school.³⁰

One haven for the refugees in Windsor which stood out in importance was the Windsor barracks, which was at that

²⁸ Troy, Op. Cit., p. 90

²⁹ Drew, Op. Cit., p. 322

³⁰ Troy, Op. Cit., p. 42

time located on the site of the City Hall Square. In 1851 after the troops in the barracks had been withdrawn to London, the building served as a shelter.³¹ At one time the barracks proved to be a point of contention. A reporter from the New York Recorder, who visited the area, misrepresented the condition of the refugees in the barracks, stating that their lot had not been improved by fleeing to Canada. This complaint was refuted by the Voice of the Fugitive stating that: "There may be some persons there who are sick and are suffering from disease; but we know of none who have their health and strength who do not earn from 50 to 75 cents per day at common labour."³² One room in the barracks was used as a school room and meeting place for newly founded societies among the fugitives.³³ In 1856 the buildings were burned by a white man who claimed that they housed petty thieves.³⁴

The coloured inhabitants of Windsor and Sandwich took great pleasure in their newly found freedom and attempted to take the fullest advantage of it as possible. They actively participated in the organization of societies,

³¹ "Windsor Barracks", Fugitive Slave File 5

³² "Slaves in Canada", Voice of the Fugitive, (Aug. 13, 1851) Vol. I, No. 17, p. 2, Col. 4

³³ "Windsor Anti-Slavery Society", Voice of the Fugitive, (Oct. 21, 1852) Vol. II, No. 22 p. 2, Col. 3

³⁴ "Windsor Barracks", Op. Cit.,

such as the Windsor Anti-Slavery Society, a Temperance Society in both communities and a Young Men's Debating Society.

The Windsor Anti-Slavery Society was organized in October 1852 as an auxiliary to the parent Anti-Slavery Society formed in Toronto March 1851.³⁵ The society adopted a constitution, and claimed that they were determined to enlighten men about slavery. At a later meeting they decided to aid any refugees urgently requiring it.³⁶ This was a time when temperance was in the mind of many religiously minded people and the newly arrived fugitives also felt the force of the movement. Henry Bibb promoted the cause among the refugees. The Voice of the Fugitive frequently carried reports of the progress made by the society in Windsor and Sandwich. A Young Men's Debating Society carried on discussions about emancipation and temperance. It appears that the coloured inhabitants of Windsor and Sandwich were kept well informed about social developments.

³⁵ "Windsor Anti-Slavery Society", Voice of the Fugitive, (Oct. 21, 1852) Vol. II, No. 22, p. 2, Col. 3 Among the first members of the society were Mr. and Mrs. H. Bibb, Mary Shadd Coleman Freeman, Alex McArthur, Mary Reynolds, Henry O'Brian, John White, A. Casaway, Mildred Jackson, Nelson Smith, Peter Poyntz, Peter Lock, Thomas Brown, Thomas Jones and Silas Jones. ibid.,

³⁶ "Windsor Anti-Slavery Society", Voice of the Fugitive, (Nov. 18, 1852) Vol II, No. 23, p. 2, Col.

Progress of Churches and Schools

in

Sandwich and Maidstone Townships

There was a variety of religious denominations amongst the coloured inhabitants of Sandwich and Maidstone Townships. These included Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians and Free Will Baptists. Some refugees also attended the mission conducted by the Colonial Church and School Society.

Regular Baptist services were held in Sandwich as early as 1843 under the auspices of the Baptist Communion.³⁷

In these early years a small log cabin served as a church and the people often held prayer meetings in the homes of the various parishioners.³⁸ In 1847 they discussed the possibility of building a church and Mrs. Willis was appointed to collect money for the project.³⁹ A crown patent for a lot on which to build the church was given to Henry Grant, Isom Thompson and Henry Turner July 10, 1847.⁴⁰ The location of this land grant was Lot 22 west side of Peter Street.⁴¹

³⁷ Frederick Neal, Township of Sandwich Past and Present, p. 195

³⁸ Talbot, Op. Cit., p. 91

³⁹ Minutes of the Sandwich Baptist Church of Christ July 9 1847, Original document from Alvin McCurdy

⁴⁰ "Land Grant to the Baptist Church, Sandwich, July 10, 1847", Province of Canada

⁴¹ "Coloured Baptist Church, Town of Sandwich", Notes from Alvin McCurdy

The corner stone of the structure was laid in August 1851 and a brick edifice was constructed through the hard labours of the congregation.⁴² When the church was completed Rev. N. J. Lightfoot was chosen as their first pastor. He was followed by elders Wilson, Reed, Jackson, Morris, Henderson, Morgan and Slaughter. The church at Sandwich did not have as many members as the Amherstburg church under Rev. Troy,⁴³ but "neither did its membership dwindle as that of Amherstburg in its times of drought".⁴⁴ In 1867 the Sandwich church had a congregation of 45 members.

The Windsor Baptist Church was founded by Rev. William Troy. Home prayer meetings were held in 1853. In the same year Rev. Troy visited England to obtain a grant and funds for the construction of a church.⁴⁵ On May 24, 1858 the corner stone for a church was laid on the east side of McDougall Street, north of University Avenue.⁴⁶ There were 26 members attending prayer meetings in 1856 and in 1868 the church had 146 members.⁴⁷

⁴² Talbot, Op. Cit., p. 91

⁴³ Canadian Baptist Home Missions Digest 1963--1964
Vol. 6, p. 267

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 267

⁴⁵ Talbot, Op. Cit., p. 97

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 97

⁴⁷ Canadian Baptist Home Missions Digest, p. 272

Baptist congregations could also be found at Puce and Little River. In 1846 a log building was constructed at Puce which was used as a school during the week and as a church for the Baptist and Methodist groups alternately on the Sabbath.⁴⁸ As their congregation increased, the Baptists purchased the Methodists' share of the building. Among its first ministers were Elder Foot, Elder Hotchkiss and Elder John Washington. A new church structure was begun by Elder John Falkner in 1871 and was almost completed in 1874.⁴⁹

The church at Little River was reported to have joined the Amherstburg Baptist Association in 1855. At that time it had a membership of eight. In 1865 there were 29 members but in 1881 the church was extinct.⁵⁰

Members of the British Methodist Episcopal Church in Windsor met in a frame building before their church was constructed on McDougall Street near Assumption Street. The church was built by the refugees at night, after the labours of the day were over.⁵¹ Some of the pastors of the local church were Rev. Mr. Oliver, Rev. Mr. Blunt Rev. Mr. Washinton,

⁴⁸ Talbot, Op. Cit., p. 48

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 88

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 42

⁵¹ Rev. J. T. Dawson, "Local Church Built at Night by Former Slaves", "Essex County Negroes", The Windsor Historical Scrapbook, Vol 43 p. 2

Rev. Mr. Buckner and Rev. Mr. Ball.⁵² In 1873 this church
had 131 members and 105 scholars.⁵³

To 1873 the Puce River British Methodist Episcopal congregation was connected with Windsor. Mr. Hawkins proposed at the annual conference that Puce River Church be detached from Windsor, and was thereafter to be known as the Puce River Mission.⁵⁴

One minister who did much for the refugees in the areas of Sandwich, Windsor and Amherstburg was Rev. John Hurst, who came to Canada as a missionary of the Colonial and Continental Church Society of England. From 1860 to 1863 he was rector of St. John's Church in Sandwich, having also a mission at All Saints Church in Windsor.⁵⁵ After three years he resigned from St. John's to devote all his time to All Saints. Mr. Hurst stated that: "My visiting amongst all colours and classes soon brought some of the coloured to church and a few coloured children came to the Sunday School".⁵⁶

⁵² Ibid., p. 2

⁵³ Minutes of the Seventeenth Session of the Annual Conference of the British Methodist Episcopal Church held at St. Catharines from June 21 to 30 1873.

⁵⁴ Ibid.,

⁵⁵ Archdeacon Palmer Westgate, St. John's Church, Sandwich, Windsor--Ontario 1802--1952, p. 23

⁵⁶ Mission Fugitive Slaves in Canada Being a Branch of the Operations of the Colonial and Continental Church Society Report for the Year 1860--61, p. 32

His twelve year old daughter instructed some of these younger children. However, this was not so readily accepted by certain white citizens. Some of the poor children were met and abused in the streets, which discouraged them from attending the classes. As a result, Rev. Hurst conducted a Bible class in the coloured school, giving about thirty young people⁵⁷ instructions.

[The Rev. Hurst found that the coloured people were more hospitably treated in the town of Sandwich at this time.]

"An alternate afternoon service which had been held in Windsor was given up and transferred to Sandwich amongst the coloured people, to their great satisfaction."⁵⁸ A proposal to begin a Bible class for the adults was received enthusiastically by the coloured people. The Rev. Hurst continued his services throughout the 1850s, giving aid to new arrivals and those in destitution.

The matter of education was often a point of contention between white and coloured inhabitants. "The coloured population have the right to send their children when qualified into the grammar school. None have availed themselves of this right. Here, as in many other parts of the province the coloured people, by accepting of that provision of law

⁵⁷
Ibid., p. 32

⁵⁸
Ibid., p. 33

which allows them separate schools fail of securing the best education for their children.⁵⁹ Benjamin Drew complained of the fact, that the coloured teachers were not qualified. Also, school taxes were not usually levied on the coloured inhabitants and when the wealthier citizens were later taxed they immediately sent their children to a public school, where they were not welcome.⁶⁰

In January 1851 the Voice of the Fugitive reported that there was no school in Windsor and that there was a great need for one. In Sandwich, Mrs. M. Bibb began a school with twenty-five pupils at her home. It was hoped they would soon have a proper building for instruction for double the number were interested in attending.⁶¹ By 1852 it was reported that a government school was being conducted in Sandwich. Mr. Jackson was the teacher at this time and the school had from twenty to thirty scholars. In 1854 Benjamin Drew found a school established by the Refugees' Home Society at Sandwich. The teacher was Miss Gifford, who had in her charge approximately thirty coloured children.⁶²

⁵⁹ Drew, Op. Cit., p. 342

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 341

⁶¹ "Schools for Coloured People in Canada", Voice of the Fugitive, (Jan. 1, 1851) Vol. I, No. 1, p. 2, Col. 2

⁶² Drew, Op. Cit., p. 343

In Windsor in 1852 Mary Ann Shadd taught from eighteen to
twenty pupils in a private home.⁶³ Mrs. Mary E. Bibb, wife
of Henry Bibb taught in a private school in Windsor in 1854
after the death of her husband. The school registered 39
coloured and 7 white children.⁶⁴ It was Mrs. Bibb's opinion
that: "Where separate schools exist the advantage in respect
to buildings and teachers is on the side of the whites and
unless separate schools are abolished the progress of
coloured people in education will be retarded."⁶⁵ David
Johnson complained that they were taxed for school purposes,
but his own children were thrown out of the common school
in Windsor.⁶⁶

In spite of the prejudice with which they were confronted,
there was definite progress in education.⁶⁷ One of the main
aims of the refugees was to see that their children received
an education and they were so thankful for it that the
manner in which it was obtained was the least of their
concerns. They were in a land where they were free and the
privileges of citizenship would eventually be obtained.

⁶³ "Coloured Settlements and Schools", Voice of the Fugitive, (Jan 29, 1852) Vol. II, No. 3, p. 2, Col. 1

⁶⁴ Drew, Op. Cit., p. 321

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 341

⁶⁶ Troy, Op. Cit., p. 26

⁶⁷ Mission to Fugitive Slaves in Canada Report for the Year 1863, p. 17

V

CONCLUSION

Financial Conditions of the Refugees

There is a considerable variation in reports dealing with the financial state of the coloured people who came to Essex County. Some contend that the majority of the refugees who arrived were poor, while others state that there were many who came with financial means. The fugitives can be divided into two groups; those who fled to Canada directly from slavery, and those who had been living as free men in the northern states, who fled to Canada after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act.

It is probable that the most destitute refugees belonged to the first group. "For the most part they arrived in Canada ignorant of letters with habits contracted in slavery or gendered by that fearful prejudice which crushes them in the United States"¹. In spite of their illiteracy, if

¹
"From the Anti-Slavery Rep. Refugee Slaves in Canada",
Voice of the Fugitive, (May 20, 1852) Vol. II, No. 11, p. 4
Col. 1

they were willing to work, most of them were able to find employment shortly after their arrival. Thomas Jones, an escaped slave from Kentucky, stated that he arrived in Windsor without means, but found work chopping wood. He informed Benjamin Drew that he was worth three or four thousand dollars. Mr. Jones also stated: "The coloured people are doing very well. They are poor, some of them, but are all able to have enough to eat and wear, and they have comfortable homes, with few exceptions.---.....--Some few don't seem to care whether they have good houses or not, as is the case among all people."² Mr. Leonard Harrod stated that: "I have been in Canada nearly two years. I was poor-- as low down as a man could be---.....--"³. When Benjamin Drew spoke to him in Windsor in 1854 he said that: "I have hired a place to work, and have bought two acres of land"⁴. Yet, another man stated that: "He could chop more cord wood for himself in one day here where he knew that he should get the cash for it, than he ever chopped for his master in two days at^{IV} the South, where he had only to expect the lash for it"⁵.

² Drew, Op. Cit., p. 326

³ Ibid., pp 339--40

⁴ Ibid., pp 339--40

⁵ "The Cry is Still They Come", Voice of the Fugitive, (April 22, 1852) Vol. II, No. 9, p. 2, Vol. 1

The progress that was made by the poor and illiterate fugitives verified the statement that: "Here we have motives, which induce us to work, mainly, the protection of life, liberty and property together with a rich reward for honest labour which prompts us to active perseverance and self-respect."⁶

Siebert aptly summarized the condition of the refugees by saying:

As a class the fugitives in the towns, as in the country were accounted steady and industrious. ---...---At Windsor almost all the members of this class had comfortable homes and some owned neat and handsome houses; at Sandwich a few were householders, the rest were tenants; in Amherstburg the assurance was given that the coloured people of Canada were doing better than the free Negroes in the United States: the settlers at New Canaan were reported to be making extraordinary progress considering the length of time they had lived there; and out of a coloured population of seventy-eight at Gosfield all of the heads of families with two or three exceptions, were free holders. ⁷

The influx of the labouring class was of benefit to the economy of the country. "In this county they added not only to the county's treasury largely but to the butchers and merchants."⁸ Not all the refugees came empty handed. Many of the free coloured people of the North brought with

⁶ Ibid.,

⁷ Siebert, The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom, pp. 226--7

⁸ Voice of the Fugitive, (July 29, 1852) Vol. II, No. 16 p. 2, Col. 3

them from "one to five thousand dollars"⁹. The presence of this class of coloured people was greatly appreciated for they were able to help those who had recently escaped from slavery.

Frequent arrivals of their friends from slavery often produced much excitement. At one time a company of twenty-seven arrived brought by John Fairfield, a Virginian. He often went into the heart of slave holding states and brought companies away, passing himself as their owner until they reached the free states. He telegraphed some friends in Windsor and a dinner of reception was provided in one of the coloured churches and a great jubilee meeting was held. 10

Aid to the Refugees

Aid to the refugees came from many sources. The first and foremost was the assistance given to them by the agents of the Underground Railroad. Then, many were aided by being supplied with clothes and food, much of which came from philanthropic minded people of the northern states. Acknowledgement of their generous contributions often appeared:

Among these messengers of mercy was the Rev. J. F. Dolbear and Mr. Coe of Lenawee County, Michigan; W. M. Stedman of Portage County, Ohio, L. C. Chatfield of Medina County, Ohio and Joseph Macomber of Farmington--.....--Their visit to this place will be long and gratefully remembered by the fugitives. We think that they must have relieved the pressing--

⁹ Voice of the Fugitive, (Nov. 4, 1852) Vol. II, No. 23, p. 2, Col. 2--3

¹⁰ Haviland, Op. Cit., p. 199

wants of some 100 families before they left here. 11

Some of the new arrivals were in immediate need of assistance, particularly those having large families, widows with children and the ill. When Mr. Power accompanied by Mr. Benham visited the Windsor area with supplies, they found approximately eighteen families in the barracks, who were greatly in need of assistance. ¹² It appears, therefore, that there were many who needed help at first.

Yet, this question of aid was a matter for debate amongst the coloured people themselves. It was admitted that some aid was needed, but they were opposed to the begging which was carried on for the refugees:

We agree with Brother Ward in opposing this perpetual begging of old clothing for the refugees in Canada; not that we depreciate the motives of those who, from the benevolence of their hearts,--

11

"Aid to the Fugitive Slaves", Voice of the Fugitive, (Jan 1, 1851) Vol. I, No. 1, p. 2, Col. 2. Other such visits acknowledged in the paper were: "The anti-slavery friends of Jackson County, Michigan have just sent on to Sandwich and Windsor by Rev. A. Cassidy, sundry articles of clothing and provisions with which to 'feed the hungry and clothe the naked'", "More Help for Refugees, Voice of the Fugitive, (Feb. 26, 1851) Vol. I, No. 5, p. 2, Col. 2. Also, "The anti-fugitive slave law friends in Macomb through the agency of B. H. Thurston brought to Windsor and delivered into the hands of Coleman Freeman, for distribution among our fugitive brethren who were the most needy in this vicinity: 180 lbs. of wheat flour, 190 lbs. of buckwheat flour, 60 lbs. of rye flour, 80 lbs. of salt pork, \$2.80 in cash and one barrel of second hand clothing". "Help for the Fugitives", Voice of the Fugitive, (March 12, 1851) Vol. I, No. 6, p. 2, Col. 4

12

"Visit Among the Fugitives in Canada", Voice of the Fugitive, (Feb. 12, 1851) Vol. I, No. 4, p. 1, Col. 4--5

have sent boxes upon boxes among the missionaries here to be distributed--...--We know from experience and observation that such help is only temporary and degrading to all who are the recipients thereof; not only so, it has been a 'bone of contention' in Canada among the refugees.--...--'Self-help' is now becoming the watch word among refugees in Canada. 13

Approximately two years later in 1854 when Benjamin Drew interviewed Thomas Jones, he found that the feeling towards aid was still in question. Mr. Jones stated:

If a man have aid furnished him, he does not have so much satisfaction in what he has, --he feels dependent and beholden, and does not make out so well. I have seen this, ever since I have been here--the bad effects of this giving. I have seen men waiting, doing nothing, expecting something to come over to them. Besides it makes a division among the coloured people. The industrious are against it, the other class favour it and so they fall out. 14

The question of aid was a significant one for it further confirmed the fact that it is part of man's nature to think for himself. The atmosphere under which they were now living gave them the right to express an opinion of approval or disapproval over a question of living conditions, whereas in slavery the majority were denied all such rights.

Citizens of Essex County

By the close of the Nineteenth Century the coloured

13
Voice of the Fugitive, (Feb. 12, 1852) Vol. II, No. 4
 p. 2, Col. 1

14
Drew, Op. Cit., pp. 326--7

inhabitants of Essex County had achieved success in every walk of life. Amongst them could be found lawyers, doctors, entertainers, ministers, school teachers, store keepers, barbers, business men and skilled labourers.

Delos Rogest Davis, who was born August 4, 1846 in Colchester North became Canada's first coloured lawyer. He eventually became a solicitor for Amherstburg and Colchester North.¹⁵ James L. Dunn, who came to Windsor with his family in 1854¹⁵ owned the Dunn Varnish Works. He employed six men in this business, making varnish for Massey Harris Company. He also owned a liquor store on Sandwich Street East in Windsor. Mr. Dunn became Windsor's first coloured alderman.¹⁶ Dr. Henry Fitzbutler graduated from the Detroit School of Medicine in 1870. For a time he practiced in Amherstburg,. Later he went to the southern states to assist during an epidemic of yellow fever.¹⁷ Elijah McCoy, born in Colchester about 1845, was a noted inventor. He became a railroad engineer and later invented a graphite lubricator used in railroading. His first patent was

¹⁵

A Souvenir from Amherstburg Ontario 1898, p. 22

¹⁶

Whealen, "Pioneer Windsor is Recalled by Rev. William Harrison", Progress, The Oldest International Coloured Publication in the World--Emancipation--Windsor, Ont., 1954, p. 18

¹⁷

Interview with Mr. Alvin McCurdy Jan. 10, 1964

taken out July 2, 1872, and forty years later he had filed nearly a hundred patents at the Patent Office in Washington¹⁸ D.C.

Among the store keepers were: Henry Stephenson, who came to the county in 1851, and opened a shop in which he sold tobacco and cigars made by himself; Mr. Burton, who ran the only confectionary store in town; Mr. Craven, who ran a shoemaker shop on Pitt Street and Billy Alberts, who ran a cleaning store on Sandwich Street. In the early¹⁹ days the coloured people had the only band in the district.

The coloured inhabitants participated in community affairs. The town council of Amherstburg often had a member of the coloured community amongst its representatives. Also, the Public School Board often had coloured representatives. Their interest in political affairs was evidenced by the fact that they took advantage of their new rights as soon as possible. Unmolested they had the pleasure of attending the polls and casted their votes for civil officials in the county.

The attitude of the coloured people toward their new life in Canada found expression in the Emancipation Day

¹⁸ Fred Hart Williams, "Inventor had Wide-Spread Fame", Fugitive Slave File 1

¹⁹ Whealen, Op. Cit., p. 18

celebrations. These events were held in Caldwell's Grove on Pike Road, Prince's Grove, Sandwich, and later at Lagoon Park, Sandwich. The celebrations were discontinued in 1915²⁰ and were not held again until 1930.

Conclusion

The coloured people who came to Essex County during the years prior to the passage of the Emancipation Proclamation of Lincoln in 1863, came as refugees from slavery. After the war of 1812 the news spread that in the north there was a land where the coloured man could dwell in freedom under the protection of the British Crown. The immigration of these people increased gradually until the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act in 1850, after which there was a rapid influx. The desire to be free, news of a well organized Underground Railroad which would assist them to freedom and fear of the slave hunters were factors which spurred them to escape.

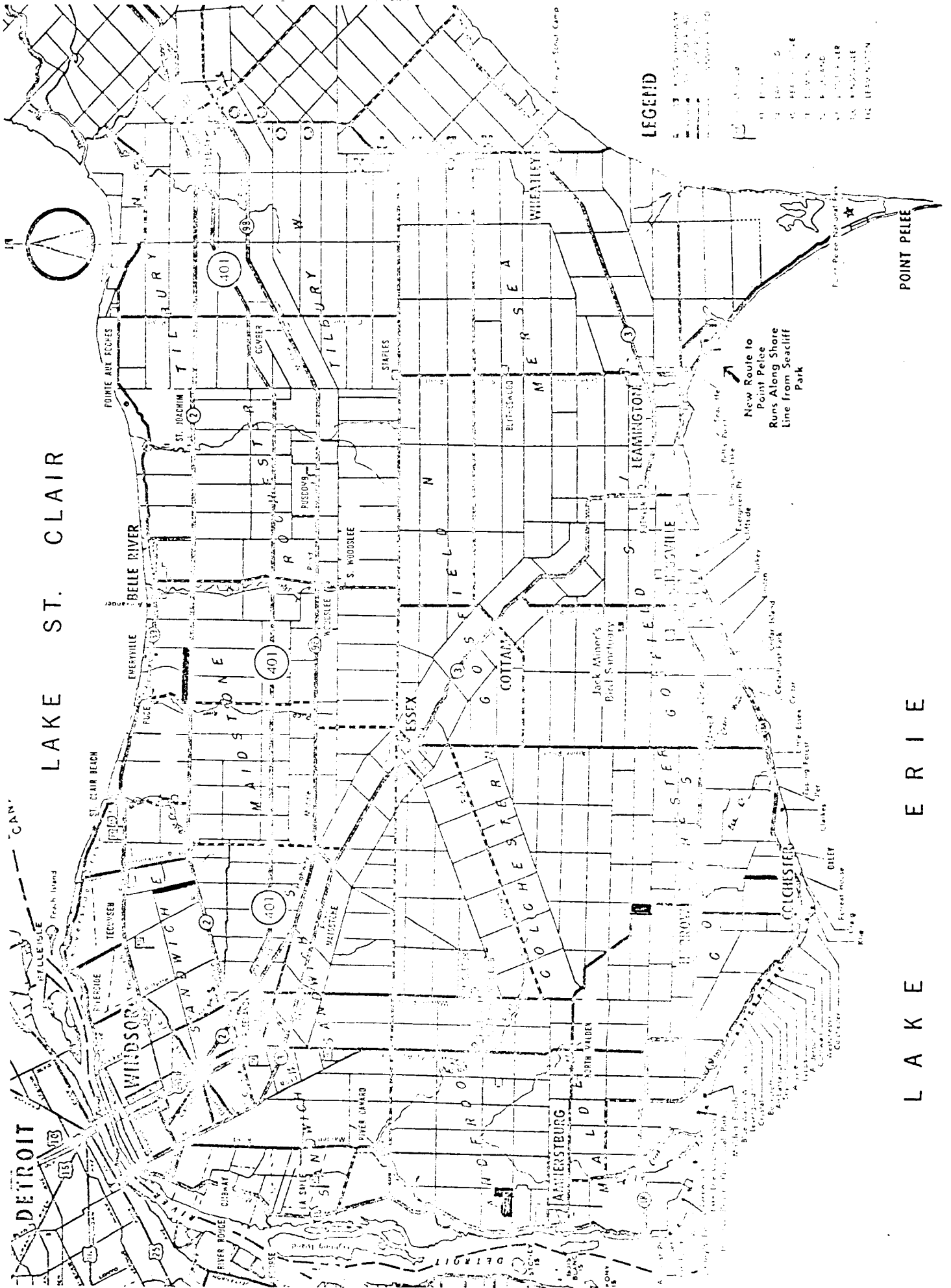
Upon their arrival the coloured people immediately set about bettering their way of life. Some came well equipped with skills learned in slavery, some arrived with money and possessions acquired during their sojourn in the northern states, while others took what work they could find until they could become more independent. At that time an

20

Interview with Mr. Walter Perry Feb. 6, 1966

extra labouring hand was welcomed. They became a permanent part of the history of this area and contributed much to the economy of the county. Agriculture was benefitted through their efforts in clearing land and business was stimulated in the growing communities through their presence. Their far-sightedness was revealed through their determined efforts to see that their children were educated. There were even those adults who attempted to learn the basic skills of reading and writing. Churches and schools became the centers of religious and social life.

Without doubt there were many hardships which the refugees had to endure. They were not always so readily accepted by their white neighbours. Their lack of knowledge and their trusting natures often placed them in a position in which ruthless white people would take advantage of them, such as in the land leasing incident. There were even cases in which the employer would not pay the coloured labourer as much money as the white labourer, or give him produce instead of cash. Also, the prejudice confronted in education, became an important issue during the last half of the nineteenth century. By the fact they were a visual minority their presence here ultimately raised the whole question of civil rights in Ontario and eventually throughout Canada.



APPENDIX A

AN ACT to prevent the further introduction of Slaves, and
to limit the term of contracts for servitude within
this Province Passed 9th July, 1793.

WHEREAS it is unjust that a people who enjoy freedom by law should encourage the introduction of Slaves; And whereas it is highly expedient to abolish Slavery in this Province, so far as the same may gradually be done without violating private property: Be it enacted by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Council and Assembly of the Province of Upper Canada, constituted and assembled by virtue of and under the authority of an Act passed in the Parliament of Great Britain, intituled, "An Act to repeal certain parts of an Act passed in the fourteenth year of His Majesty's reign, intituled, 'An Act for making more effectual provision for the Government of the Province of Quebec, in North America,' and to make further provision for the Government of the said Province," and by the authority of the same, That from and after the passing of this Act, so much of a certain Act of the Parliament of Great Britain, passed in the thirtieth year of His present Majesty, intituled, "An Act for encouraging new Settlers in His Majesty's Colonies and Plantations in America," as may enable the Governor or Lieutenant Governor of this Province, heretofore parcel of His Majesty's Province of Quebec, to grant a license for importing into the same any Negro or Negroes, shall be, and the same is hereby repealed; and that from and after the passing of this Act, it shall not be lawful for the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, or person administering the Government of this Province, to grant a license for the importation of any Negro or other person to be subjected to the condition of a Slave, or to a bounden involuntary service for life, into any part of this

Province; nor shall any Negro, or other person, who shall come or be brought into this Province after the passing of this Act, be subject to the condition of a Slave, or to such service as aforesaid, within this Province, nor shall any voluntary contract of service or indentures that may be entered into by any parties within this Province, after the passing of this Act, be binding on them, or either of them, for a longer time than a term of nine years, from the day of the date of such contract.

II. Provided always, That nothing herein contained shall extend, or be construed to extend, to liberate any Negro, or other person subjected to such service as aforesaid, or to discharge them, or any of them, from the possession of the owner thereof, his or her executors, administrators or assigns, who shall have come or been brought into this Province, in conformity to the conditions prescribed by any authority for that purpose exercised, or by any ordinance or law of the Province of Quebec, or by proclamation of any of His Majesty's Governors of the said Province for the time being, or of any Act of the Parliament of Great Britain, or shall have otherwise come into the possession of any person, by gift, bequest, or bona fide purchase before the passing of this Act, whose property therein is hereby confirmed, or to vacate or annul any contract for service that may heretofore have been lawfully made and entered into, or to prevent parents or guardians from binding out children until they shall have obtained the age of twenty-one years.

III. And in order to prevent the continuation of Slavery within this Province, be it enacted by the authority aforesaid, That immediately from and after the passing of this Act, every child that shall be born of a Negro mother, or other woman subjected to such service as aforesaid, shall abide and remain with the master or mistress in whose service the mother shall be living at the time of such child's birth, (unless such mother and child shall leave such service by and with the consent of such master or mistress,) and such master or mistress shall, and is hereby required to give proper nourishment and clothing to such child or children, and shall and may put such child or children to work when he, she or they, shall be able so to do, and shall and may retain him or her in their service until every such child shall have attained the age of twenty-five years, at which time they and each of them shall be entitled to demand his or her discharge from, and shall be discharged by such master or mistress, from any further service: And to the end that the age of such child

or children may be more easily ascertained, the master or mistress of the mother thereof, shall, and is hereby required, to cause the day of the birth of every such child as shall be born of a Negro, or other mother subjected to the condition of a Slave, in their service as aforesaid, to be registered within three months after its birth, by the Clerk of the parish, township or place, wherein such master or mistress reside, which Clerk shall be authorised to demand and receive the sum of one shilling for registering the same; and in case any master or mistress shall refuse or neglect to cause such register to be made, within the time aforesaid, and shall be convicted thereof, either on his or her confession, or by the oath of one or more credible witness or witnesses, before any Justice of the Peace, he or she shall for every such offence forfeit and pay the sum of five pounds to the public stock of the district.

IV. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That in case any master or mistress shall detain any such child, born in their service as aforesaid, after the passing of this Act, under any pretence whatever, after such servant shall have attained the age of twenty-five years, except by virtue of a contract of service or indentures, duly and voluntarily executed after such discharge as aforesaid it shall and may be lawful for such servant to apply for a discharge to any of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace who shall and is hereby required thereupon to issue a summons to such master or mistress to appear before him to shew cause why such servant should not be discharged; and the proof that such servant is under the age of twenty-five years shall rest upon and be adduced by the master or mistress of such servant, otherwise it shall and may be lawful for the said Justice to discharge such servant from such service as aforesaid; provided always, That in case any issue shall be born of such children during their infant servitude or after, such issue shall be entitled to all the rights and privileges of free-born subjects.

V. And be it further enacted that whenever any master or mistress shall liberate or release any person subject to the condition of a Slave from their service, they shall at the same time give good and sufficient security to the Church or Town Wardens of the parish or township where they live, that the person so released by them shall not become Chargeable to the same, or any other parish or township. 1

I
The Statutes of Upper Canada to the Time of the Union,
 Vol. I, pp. 18--20

APPENDIX B

Pay List of Capt. Calwell's Company of Coloured Volunteers
at Amherstburg on Militia Duty from 29th Dec. 1837 to
25th Jan. 1838

Sergeant. Henry Turner. 3rd Jan. 1838 to Jan. 25 1838
on duty for 23 days. Rate per day 2 shillings 1 pence
John Smith.
William Hamilton

Corporal. W. M. Carter. Pay per day. 1 shilling 6 pence
Moses Brandford
Isom Johnson

Privates.	James Mathews.	1 shilling 4 pence
	Rueben Ford	Davy Gamble
	Rice Johnson	Thomas Wingate
	Nathan Wilson	Henry Stepney
	William Walkins	Edmond Moxley
	Alfred Washington	Robert Lewis
	Joseph Bell	Peter Robinson
	Antony Hit	James Green
	Jorden Jones	Daniel Binga
	James Meggs	Daniel McKinney
	Pleasant Morrow	John McFarlane
	Nat Hanford	Amanuel Burnet
	Samuel Groat	Benjamin Batts
	Frank Butler	Edwin Williams
	John Rushinbo	Dan Banks
	Joseph Curtis	Adam Addison
	Randel Homes	Peter Moore
	George Wilkinson	Frank St. Clair
	Samuel Hughes	Samuel Williams
	Jesse Bell	James Lyons
	William Thornton	William Ruth
	John Green	

Pay List Jan. 3 to Jan. 17 1838

Anthony Parker
George Smith
William Binga
Stevan Taylor
Peter Curtus
William Rushinbo
Thomas Dartice
Alfred Porter
James Grant
Andrew Mickens
Bison Asbury

James Halley
David Medley
Edmond Mathews
Anthony Binga
Charles Johnson
Henry Thornton
Jacob Thompson
Irvin Banks
Ellis Simmons
Peter Johnson
Thomas Gibson

Pay List Jan. 3 to Jan. 12 1838

Spencer French
Hanson Lions
William Hav
John W. Bird
Levi Simpson
John Mulder
Joseph Carter
Nathaniel McGuire
William Mitchell
Gamble Lee
Joseph Green
George Cole
Edward Butler
James Thompson
Vincent Hardy
William Warner
Anamel Morgan
Stevan Major
Thomas Johnson
Nelson Brown
Butler Fitzue
Jeremiah Harris
John L. Smith
Oliver Pines
Reuben Arnold
David Barret
William Bell
Peter Wilson
Daniel Johnson

Carter Blackstone
Phillip Vone
Nelson Peddiford
Robert Green
Frederick Reed
Peter Mulard
John Anderson
Henry Pollard
James Alexander
Thomas Nolin
Harry Field
Sam Jones
John Brooks
Andrew Marry
Moses Lury (Looney)
Jonathen Binga
Oliver Armstrong
David Thurman
Nathan Daniels
Benjamin Stewart
Thomas Bess
Levi Brooks
Edward Williams 2nd
Robert Washington
Henry Barret
Samuel Henderson
Peter Stokes
Jefferson Golden
William Hughes 1

1
A. B. Farney, Dr. Fred Park, Farney Papers,
pp. 610--13

APPENDIX C

Constitution and By Laws of the Refugees' Home Society

Whereas it is supposed that there are, at the present time, between thirty-five and forty thousand refugee slaves in Canada, whose number has been constantly increasing since the passage of the Fugitive Slave Bill.

And whereas, on their arrival they find themselves in a strange land, uneducated, poverty stricken, without homes, or any permanent means of self-support; however willing they may be to work, they have neither means to work with, nor land to work upon; and the sad story of the numerous fugitives who have been dragged back into perpetual slavery by the strong arm of the American Government, is a sufficient proof that there is no protection for the slave this side of the Canadian line. The only protection for their liberty on the American Continent is emphatically under the shadow of the British throne.

In view of the above facts, the friends of humanity in Michigan, in May 1851, organized a society which has undertaken to raise £50,000 for our cause, and to preserve and report such communications to the society.

Article 1. The title of the society shall be known as the Refugees' Home Society.

Article 2. The object of the society shall be to obtain permanent homes for the refugees in Canada, and to promote their moral, social, physical, intellectual, and political elevation.

Article 3. The officers of this Society shall consist of President, Vice President, Recording Secretary,

Corresponding Secretary, Treasurer, and an Executive Committee of at least five persons, two of whom shall constitute a Board of Trust.

Article 4. It shall be the duty of the President to preside over all meetings of the Society; in his absence, it shall be the duty of the Vice President to preside; and in the absence of both, the society shall appoint a president pro tem.

Article 5. It shall be the duty of the Recording Secretary to record in full the proceedings of the Society's meetings in a book provided by the Secretary for that purpose, and to do such other business as usually devolves on such officers.

Article 6. It shall be the duty of the Corresponding Secretary to correspond for the Society with other kindred societies, and private individuals who are interested in our cause.

Article 7. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to receive and deposit all funds collected for the Refugees' Home in the Savings Bank of Detroit, to the credit of the Executive Committee, no part of which shall be drawn therefrom except it be by an order which shall be signed by at least three of the Executive Committee.

Article 8. It shall be the duty of the Board of Trust to hold property for the Society, and to deed the same to settlers thereon, when directed to do so by the Executive Committee.

Article 9. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer, and of all agents who collect funds for the Society, to report the result of their collection in detail, at least once in every month, through the Society's organ.

Article 10. It shall be the duty of the Executive Committee to appoint agents to collect funds and to transact all other necessary business for the Society, and to have a written annual report for the Society, in which its pecuniary and business transactions shall be fully set forth and published to the world.

Article 11. This Society shall not deed land to any but actual settlers who are refugees from Southern slavery, and who are the owners of no land.

Article 12. All land purchased by the society shall

be divided into twenty-five acre lots or as near as possible, and at least one tenth of the purchase price of which shall be paid down by settlers before possession is given, and the balance to be paid in equal annual instalments.

Article 13. One third of all money paid in for land by settlers shall be used for educational purposes for the benefit of said settlers children, and the other two thirds for the purchase of more land for the same object, while chattel slavery exists in the United States.

Article 14. Any person can become a life member of this Society by paying into its treasury, at one time, the sum of \$3.00.

Article 15. No land bought by individuals from this Society shall be sold or transferred by them to any other person or persons, except it be to their heirs, the wife, husband, or children, as the case may be, otherwise it shall back to the Society.

Article 16. This Society shall meet for the transaction of business at least twice per year, and extra meetings may be called by the Executive Committee, if the business of the Society should require it.

Article 17. When a settlement under the supervision of this Society shall increase to as many as six families or more, they shall erect a school for the instruction of their children.

Article 18. Any Society may become auxilliary to this Society by contributing to the funds of the parent institution.

Article 19. This Constitution may be altered or amended by a majority of two-thirds of the votes of its members present if due notice shall have been given for such alteration or amendment three months previous to its being voted upon.

By Laws

Article 1. No person shall receive more than five acres of land from this Society at less than cost.

Article 2. No person shall be entitled to a free grant of land from this Society, except they are widows,

men with families, or aged persons; and in all cases they shall clear off that portion of the land which the society proposes to deed to them free of cost, within two years from the time they enter it, unless prevented by casualties, otherwise they shall pay the society for it just what it costs.

Article 3. This society shall be under no obligation to hold in reserve any lot for those who shall not have settled on it, or commenced improvements within three months from the day they made the first payment.

Article 4. No person shall be allowed to remove any timber from said land until they have first made payment thereon.

Article 5. All matters of difficulty arising among settlers on said land, where the laws are violated which are intended to regulate the settlement, shall be left to arbitration with the Executive Committee, and by whose decision the parties shall abide.

Article 6. All applications for lots of land shall be to the Executive Committee.

Article 7. No dwelling-house can be erected on said land by settlers containing less than two rooms, nor shall they have chimnies of wood and clay, but of brick or stone.

Article 8. Any settler who shall wilfully violate the Constitution or By Laws of this Society, shall forfeit and pay to the agrieved party according to the nature of the offence, which shall be left to the decision of the Executive Committee and if the same offence is repeated, the fine shall be doubled; and repeated the third time, the offender shall be expelled from the settlement or said lot of land, receiving such compensation as the Executive Committee shall decide his improvements entitle him to. 1

¹
 "Refugees' Home Society", Voice of the Fugitive,
 (Feb. 12, 1852) Vol. II, No. 4, p. 1, Col. 1--3

APPENDIX D

Assessment for the Township of Colchester 1845

Coloured Population

NAME	OCCUPATION	CHILDREN	AGE
Moses Brown	Farmer		60
Jason Greeves	" "		40
William Have	" "	2	34
James DeLancey	" "		78
David Jordon	" "	1	38
Alexander Hosey	" "	1	38
James Matthews	" "	2	45
Jesse Read	" "		40
Lewis Carter	" "		35
Patrick Tanner	" "	1	58
Lewis Lucas	" "		53
William Haws	" "	2	46
Peter Tompson	" "	1	37
Henry Skinker	" "		40
George McRoy	Tobacconist	1	25
Robert Nelson	Farmer		40
William Jackson	" "		40
Henry Lewis	" "		48
Philip Vaughn	" "	1	31
Shadrack Bruce	" "		50
David Mitchel	" "	1	60
George Mulder	" "	4	60
David Greer	" "	3	40
Alfred Cousmins	Blacksmith		27
John Hunt	Farmer	2	26
Dimery Heathcoat	" "	1	22
Nathan Powell	" "	3	38
Alfred Pines	" "	4	68
Eli Artis	" "	2	29
John More	" "	1	38

NAME	OCCUPATION	CHILDREN	AGE
Solomon Obanion	Farmer		56
James Cosby	" "		50
Edward Benett	" "		60
Benjamin Stewart	" "		48
Nelson Pettiford	" "		58
William Richardson	" "		50
George Turner	" "	1	60
David Fraser	" "		60
Joseph Youngblood	" "	3	60
George Tompson	" "	1	48
James Halley	" "		48
David Homes	" "		42
William Ruth	" "	1	48
Luke Mathews	" "		25
Bartley Reynolds	" "	4	50
Edwin Matthews Sr.	" "		61
Mathew Matthews	" "		22
Edwin Matthews	" "		26
Edward Butler	" "		60
Hannah Hurst	" "	2	48
James Hayes	" "		48
Peter Millard	" "	2	48
Irving Banks	" "		48
Washington Hurse	" "	4	48
Josiah Fletcher	" "		42
Peter Brown	" "	2	48
John Brooks	" "	1	48
Levi Brooks	" "	4	48
Thomas James	" "	2	48
Henry Johnson	" "		48
Benjamin Butler	" "	1	48
Peter Robinson	" "		48
Vincent Hardy	" "	4	48
James Green	" "		48
William Lang	" "	1	48
John Green	" "		48
Levi Simpson	" "	4	48
Miles Powell	" "	1	48
Solomon Smith	" "		48
James Brown	" "		48
Charles Scott	" "		48
William Mumford	" "		48
George Washington	" "	1	48
Edward Gunn	" "		48
Richard Whitehead	" "		48
George Baty	" "		48
Martha Ann Meigs	" "		48

NAME	OCCUPATION	CHILDREN	AGE
Samuel Munay	Farmer		85
Richard Washington	" "		50
William Campbell	" "	4	50
David Barret	" "	3	46
Alexander Marshal	" "	1	30
Alther Walker	" "		60
Reuben Moon	" "	1	50
Jacob Deeks	" "	2	45
William Cranson	" "		23
Watson Towns	" "	1	55
Thomas Gilson	" "		46
John Hunt	" "	2	26
Jeremiaha Gazle	" "		40
Hannah Beazlay	" "		35
Thomas Baker	" "	3	51
John Dalico	" "	1	42
Eli Highwarden	Shoemaker	4	46

APPENDIX E

Assessment of Coloured Population of Colchester Township 1860

NAME	PROFESSION	AGE	NO. OF CON.	NO. OF LOT	ACRES
Artis Henry	Farmer	32	S.M.R.	E. ½ 17	100
Artis Archibald	"	25		W. ½ 17	100
Allen Benn	"	40	S.M.R.	SP-12	50
Artis Jacob	"	40	S.M.R.	W. ½ 14	100
Allen John	"	60	N.M.R.	p-E ½ 8	50
Artis Lewis	"	49	S.M.R.	W. ½ 18	95
Anthony David	"	58	4	E.p-17	25
Artis Eli	"	40	3	NE.p-17	25
Armstrong Jonathan	"	25	--	--	--
Armstrong John	"	47	3	p-10,11	30
Atkins Lawson	"	60	4	6	200
Bird Sarah	"	61	7	E. ½ 3	50
Bubbins Henry	"	36	S.M.R.	p-11	20
Butler William	"	56	N.M.R.	E. ½ 8	50
Brown William	"	42	N.M.R.	E. ½ 12	100
Brooks Levi	"	51	6	p-3	33
Bubbs William	"	38	S.M.R.	N. ½ 19	100
Butler John	"	60	N.M.R.	SP.W. ½ 11	50
Banks Irving	"	54	Gore	SP-13	54
Brown Isaac	"	29	Gore	NP-11	60
Butler Agnes	"		3	SEP-17	25
Barrett Eldred	"	49	2	SP-11	20
Butler Philip	"	25	N.M.R.	WP.E ½ 12	12
Brooks John	"	50	4	WP-8	55
Benn Shadrac	"	50	1	NP-8	5
Brown Mo	"	46	4	W. ½ 11	100
Charis Wily	"	50	S.M.R.	P-13	97 ½
Charis Malakah	"	48	S.M.R.	E. ½ 6	50
Campbell Harden	"	47	5	SP-8	100
Elingman S. W.	"	60	S.M.R.	P-E. ½ 10	5
Clingman Gabriel	"	45	LP	18	1
Chandler A. W.	"	32	1	P-71	1 ½
Conway Solomon	"	39	1	r--68	10

NAME	PROFESSION	AGE	NO. OF CON.	NO. OF LOT	ACRES
Carter Lewis	"	40	NP	12 13 14	3
Coats William	"	30	2	P-7	2
Conway George	"	61	1	P-50	35
Caswell Crosby	"	57	4	E.P-11	50
Don Quixott S.	"	56	S.M.R.	E.P-11	28
Davis James	"	40	S.M.R.	W. 1/4	100
Dennis Peter	"	48	5	WP. E 1/2 17	50
	"	"	5	EP-7	50
Davis John	"	30	4	p-8	1
Edwards William	"	35	N.M.R.	NE P-11	50
Fairfax Stephen	"	34	N.M.R.	E. 1/4 13	100
Fisher William	"	46	S.M.R.	EP-8	50
Fletcher Jonah	"	38	4	E. 1/4 16	100
Fairfax Isaac	"	43	S.M.R.	EP-11	30
Green John	"	52	Gore	NP-9	35
	"			EP-7	5
Green Edward	"	60	6	p-6	32
Green Joseph	"	70	2	p-4	70
	"		Gore	p-5	80
Greer David	"	60	TP	17 18 19	3
Hickman Samuel	"	36	N.M.R.	W. 1/4 13	100
Hall Richard	"	38	N.M.R.	W. 1/4 15	75
Hill James	"	45	N.M.R.	EP-15	50
Hamilton Charles	"	28	N.M.R.	E. p 1/4 14	100
Harden Thomas	"	30	N.M.R.	NP-11	50
Hardy Vincent	"	27	5	SEP-7	11
Hardy Samuel	"	30	5	SEP-7	11
Hardy Aron	"	23	5	SEP-7	11
Hill James	"	39	5	SP-7	28
Hopkins Mariah	"	50	p-6	10	
Hope William	"	50	4	NP-8	2
Hatfield Charles	"	45	4	6	200
	"		Gore	NPW 1/5	5
	"		1	p-32	25
Howard David	"	38	S.M.R.	SE. 1/8	50
Hurst Joshua	"	50	4	NP-7	1
	"		4	WP-11	50
Hurst Washington	"	60	Gore	p-16	24
Hanis Samuel	"	49	7	p-8	25
Hurst John	"	44	S.M.R.	WP-11	49
Harris Jeremiah	"	50	6	WP. E 1/4 3	50
	"		2	H 1/4 3	100
Hughes George	"	35	2	SEP-7	2
Hyroarden Rebecca	"	53	3	p-6	25
Hurst Ranoom	"	36	2	WP-6	50
	"		3	WP-6	5

NAME	PROFESSION	AGE	NO. OF CON.	NO. OF LOT	ACRES
Holly James	Farmer	67	3	NEP-11	38
Jackson Peter	"	38	1	SP-6	80
James Thomas	"	62	1	N. 1/4	100
James Willis	"	40	Gore	P-6	4
Jackson York	"	40	1	p-16	25
Johnson Henry	"	50	1	p-8	90
Johnson James	"	50	1	W. 1/8	100
Kersey Stephen	"	77	1	p-8	8
Kersey Spencer	"	70	1	W. 1/8	75
Kersey Alexander	"	25	1	NP-8	3
Kersey Ephraim	"	66	1	p-8	45
Lang Elisa	"	42	1	p-8	33
Leatherman Lewis	"	43	S. M. R.	W. 1/7	100
			S. M. R.	SE. 1/6	50
Lewis Berry	"	50	Gore	SEP-11	31 1/2
Lowry Mark	"	77	1	NP-80	4
Mason Edwar	"	48	S. M. R.	EP-11	2
Nichtel Levi	"	30	S. M. R.	SP-15	50
Muncey Andrew	"	42	7	SP-10	50
			S. M. R.	p-5	10
Muncey Bern	"	44	S. M. R.	NP-10	50
Milton Joseph	"	50	S. M. R.	SW. 1/8	50
McCoy George	"	40	Gore	SP-11	31
Matthews Sarah	"	46	1	p-5	25
Millard Peter	"	64	1	EP-8	100
McGruden Moses	"	30	1	p-6	1
Matthews James	"	60	S. M. R.	W. 1/9	100
Mulder John	"	80	Gore	WP-9	50
Merchant John	"	30	2	p-9, 10	18
Matthews Mathew	"	38	1	SWP-5	75
			1	WP-4	50
			1	SWP-6	5
McCurdy Wm.	"	42	4	NP. E. 1/9	75
McCoy Nelson	"	30	Gore	p-11	10
Morgan Emanuel	"	45	3	NW. 1/16	25
Mason Joseph	"	54	1	TP 11, 12	2
Marshall Alex	"	55	1	EP-8	90
			1	WP-4	150
Noris Washington	"	40	1	NP-1	1
			S. M. R.	SP-E. 1/12	50
Noris John	"	23	S. M. R.	WP. W. 1/12	50
Noris Abraham	"	26	S. M. R.	NP. E. 1/12	50
Nelson Thomas	"	60	5	p-15	62 1/2
Nelson John	"	27	1	WP-17	50
Nelson Robert	"	62	TP	7, 8	2
				5, 6	2
Pines Elijah	"	24	3	p-17	25

NAME	PROFESSION	AGE	NO. OF CON.	NO. OF LOT	ACRES
Poston James	Farmer	42	S.M.R.	W. #16	100
			S.M.R.	N. #21	100
Pettiford Nancy	"	70	3	P-11	50
Polema William	"	25	4	NP-8+6	19
Powel Nathan	"	53	6	P-3	6
Pvel Willis	"	84	6	P-4	12+
Poston Dudley	"	39	S.M.R.	WP-12	87+
Philips Washington	"	40	4	NP-6	1
Palett Alfred	"	49	S.M.R.	E-6	30
Raydor Amos	"	50	4	P-6	9
Robertson William	"	23	5	P-6	20
Robertson Daniel	"	40	6	NP-6	100
Reynolds John	"	26	2	NWP-7	49
Reynolds Bartlet	"	70	2	P-7	47
Ruth William	"	70	3	SP-N. #11	50
			S.M.R.	NP-E. #15	67
Ridgway Ed.	"		N.M.R.	N. #E. #15	50
Reid Josie	"	70	1	P-68	15
Stewart Benn	"	49	N.M.R.	WP-17	35
Strothers Raiben	"	39	S.M.R.	WP-15	25
Shepherd John	"	45	S.M.R.	EP-15	25
Simpson Levi	"	70	6	SP-4	25
Smith Daniel	"	46	S.M.R.	SEP-14	50
Sanders Jane W.	"	21	S.M.R.	NP-11	4
			S.M.R.	SEP-E. #11	50
Scott Charles	"	70	7	NP-1	35
Simpson Gabriel	"	56	7	NP-	9
Simpson James	"	40	3	P-16	25
Sawyer Benn	"	48	3	WP-9	75
Smith Henry	"	51	1	NP-80	11
Squire Hamilton	"	28	1	NP-80	6
Smith James	"	30	N.M.R.	10	200
Smith Ed. J.	"	40	1	59	--
Sawyer Thomas	"	28	4	NEP-W #9	6
Thirman Johnathan	"	49	S.M.R.	EP-14	50
Turner William	"	28	S.M.R.	E. #7	100
Taylor Berohaw	"	45	S.M.R.	N. #10	50
Tanner Patrick	"	70	TP	15, 16, 17	3
				15, 16	2
Tisdale Widow	"	35	1	P-71	1
Thornton William	"	75	3	WP-6	70
Towns Watson	"	68	Cove	P-5	40
Urbanks Johnathan	"	58	TP	4	19+
			1	P-68, 69, 70	30
Vaughn Philip	"	45	S.M.R.	EP-10	50

NAME	PROFESSION	AGE	NO. OF CON.	NO. OF LOT	ACRES
White John S.	Farmer	28	4	WP-13	50
Walker Thomas	"	50	8MR	NWP-8	50
Whitehead Rich.	"	38	7	NP-8	25
			2	P-9	3
Waterford Henry	"	40	4	P-17	175
Williams John	"	45	TP	16, 1	1
Wallace Josiah	"	20	4	NKP-W#18	25
Youngblood Joseph	"	67	3	SP-11	50

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