

Civic Leaders, 1952



EMERSON L. GUYITT
Warden of Kent



W. A. DONOVAN
Mayor of Chatham

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BY VICTOR LAURISTON

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*"Romantic Kent", compiled and written
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the City of Chatham.*

Romantic Kent

MORE THAN THREE CENTURIES OF HISTORY
1626 - 1952

By *VICTOR LAURISTON*

Author of "The Twenty-First Burr",
"Inglorious Milton",
"Arthur Stringer, Son of the North",
"Postscript to a Poet",
"Lambton County's Hundred Years".



Kent County Municipal Building 1950

(PHOTO F. C. NICHOLSON)

Dedication

THIS, THE LONGEST BOOK I
HAVE EVER WRITTEN, OR CAN
EVER HOPE TO WRITE, IS
DEDICATED TO THE WOMAN
WHO HAS HELPED ME MOST,
A DAUGHTER OF HARWICH,

MY WIFE

Emily Grace Lauriston

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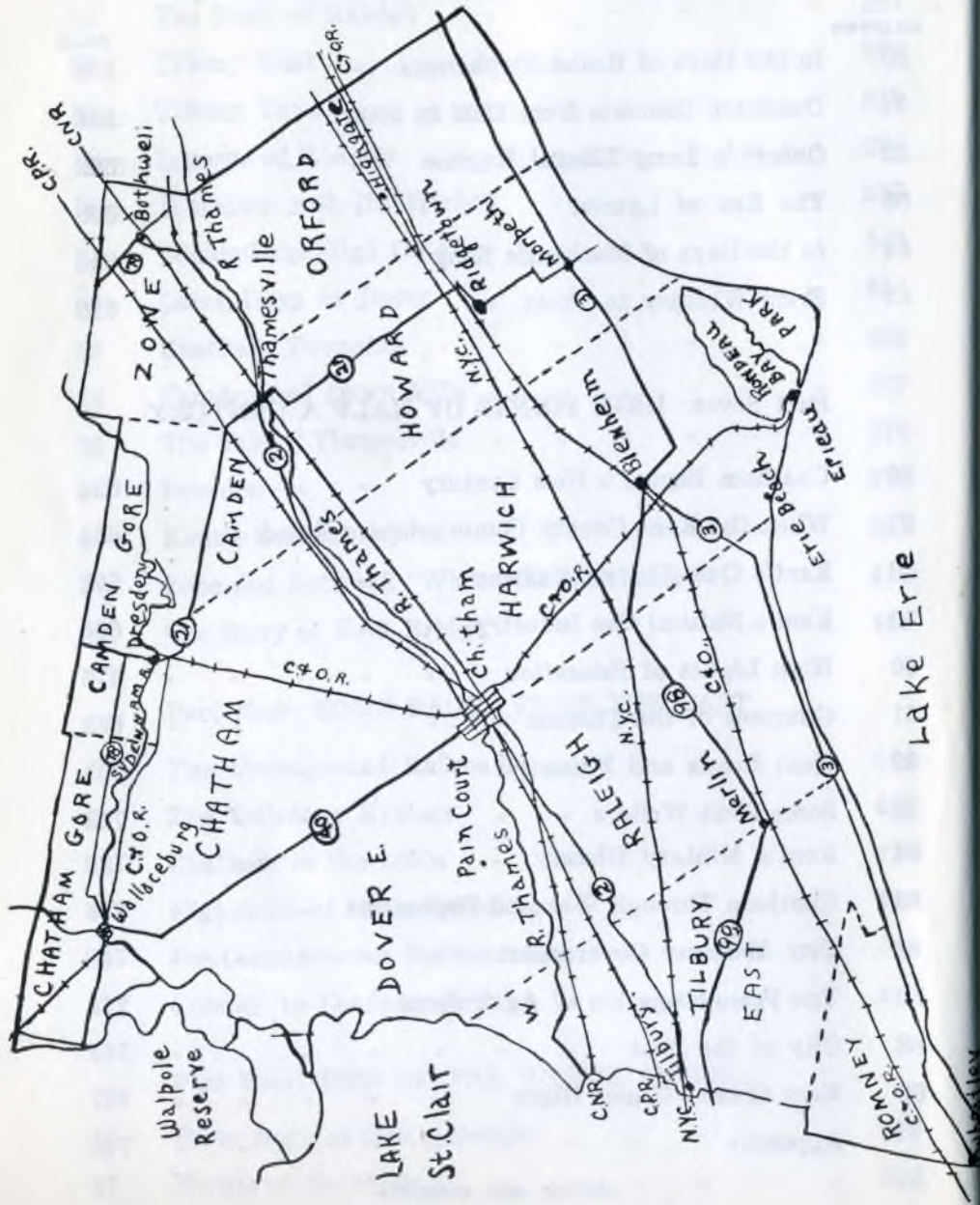
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ERRATA AND ADDENDA

Page 301, line 17, for "1898" read "1896".

Page 416, W. J. Collins named mayor of Wallaceburg, succeeding W. J. Picard (resigned).

Map of Kent County



Just Between Ourselves

On December 10, 1949, the county council asked me to compile a history of Kent. In the intervening two years and nine months this task has been my constant companion.

Lengthy though this history has become, it could name only a few individuals in comparison with the unnamed host who through more than a century have contributed to make Kent what it is. The unfolding story has deepened my conviction that it is not a few outstanding personages who make a community, but that every individual adds his or her quota. It is the honest toil of these "little people" which has made our county great.

Space will not permit individual acknowledgments to all the friends who have helped make this book. Elsewhere I will discuss the fine work of our local historians. The members of the successive historical committees of the city and county councils have been most helpful. For illustrations I am especially indebted to Gerry Craven of the *Ridgetown Dominion*, R. K. Shearer of the *Blenheim News-Tribune*, R. N. Epplett of the *Wheatley Journal* and C. A. Ross of the *Thamesville Herald*; to Deputy-Reeve W. Burton Shingles of Wallaceburg and Reeve Martin Burgess of Bothwell; to County Engineer W. D. Colby; to J. M. Harrison of the Chatham Board of Trade; to W. N. Sexsmith, curator of the Chatham-Kent Museum; to Frank C. Nicholson; to the veteran photographer, N. C. Gibson and particularly to W. Fred Bowers of the *Chatham News*.

For assistance in securing materials I am grateful also to our veteran county clerk, W. M. Abraham; to County Treasurer J. F. Fletcher for material and suggestions; and to Miss Gladys Hall for her arduous part in compiling the list of county councillors.

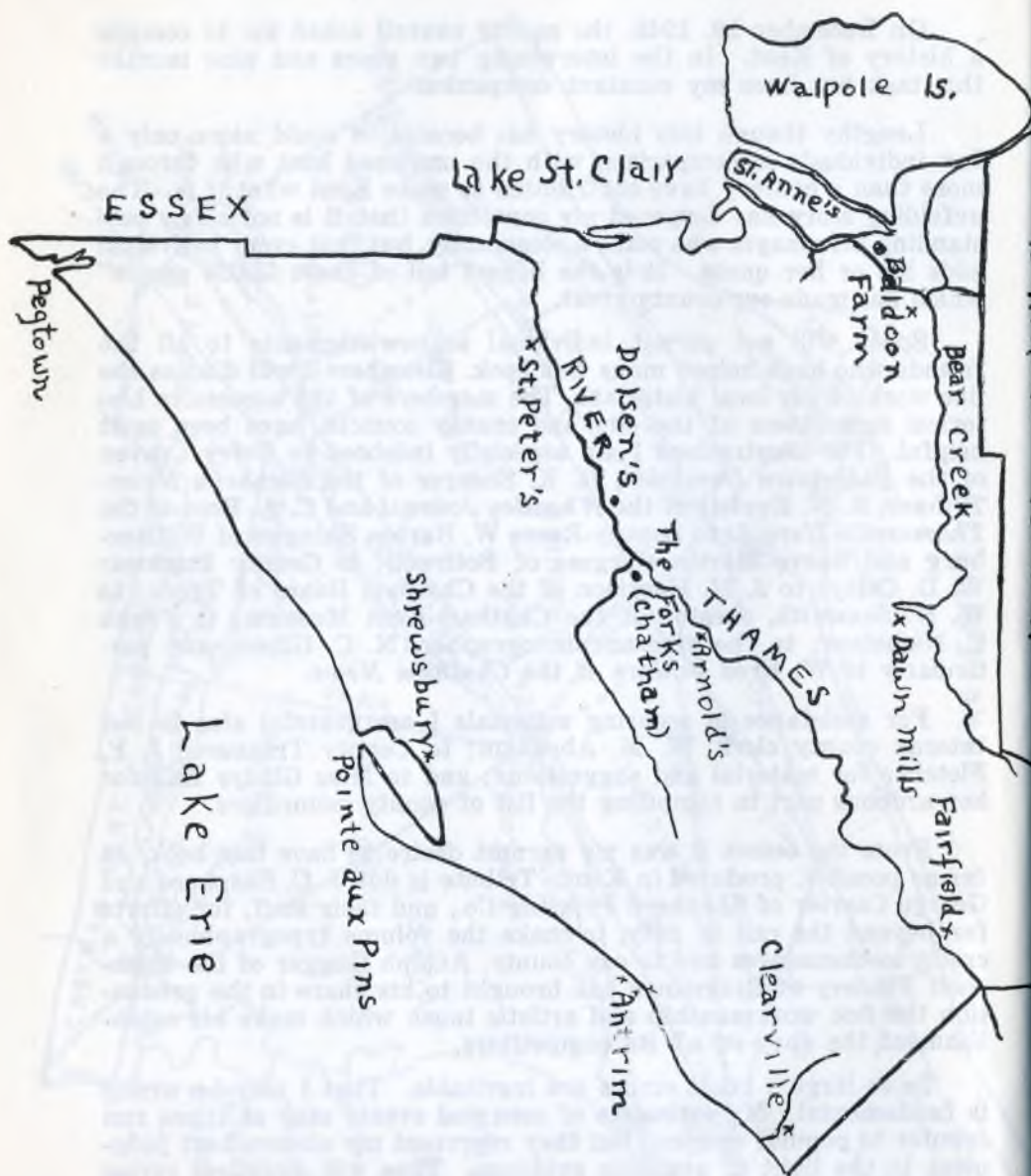
From the outset it was my earnest desire to have this book, as far as possible, produced in Kent. Tribute is due J. C. Shepherd and George Carrier of Shepherd Printing Co., and their staff, for efforts far beyond the call of duty, to make the volume typographically a credit to themselves and to our county. Adolph Gugger of the Bookshelf Bindery of Ridgetown has brought to his share in the production the fine workmanship and artistic touch which make his establishment the envy of all its competitors.

In so large a book, errors are inevitable. That I may be wrong is fundamental. My estimates of men and events may at times run counter to popular opinion; but they represent my sincere best judgment in the light of available evidence. Time will doubtless revise my conclusions in the interests of truth, which is eternal.

VICTOR LAURISTON

August 12, 1952.
Chatham, Ontario,

Landmarks of Pioneer Kent



Part One

OUT OF THE WILDERNESS

CHAPTER 1

The Days of the Attawandarons

THE year 1950 marked the completion of a century of municipal self-government for Kent. Yet this was not all the county's history. Before our municipal system was established under the Baldwin Act there had been, in Kent, more than six decades of white pioneering.

To understand the conditions those pioneers confronted, it is needful to go yet farther back, to the more remote era when the powerful Attawandarons occupied the fertile lands of what later became the southwestern Ontario peninsula.

The Attawandarons were destroyed about 1651. That the fertile land of which they were dispossessed, and which the conquering Iroquois never occupied, did not attract white pioneers till after the fall of Quebec in 1759 was due to a curious and little-known circumstance.

When Champlain, in his first westward explorations, came to the confluence of the Ottawa and the St. Lawrence, the easier navigation, and perhaps the shrewdly cunning counsels of his Huron guides, led him to travel up the Ottawa, which took him to the Huron country, centering in Lake Simcoe and Georgian Bay.

Later French explorers, *coureurs de bois* and fur traders, almost uniformly followed this same route. That thereby they avoided the fierce Attawandarons may have been an inducement at the outset. But after the Attawandarons fell, the northwest route continued to be favored; and the tide of white settlement by-passed the heavily timbered southwestern peninsula, though no portion of Canada should have been so attractive.

When Jacques Cartier first ascended the St. Lawrence in 1535, the Indians who welcomed him at Stadacona and Hochelaga were of

Huron-Iroquois stock. Champlain, barely seventy years later, found Algonquins there.

In the interval, a great western movement had taken place. It may even have been stimulated by Cartier's kidnapping of the too trustful Donnacona and his fellow chiefs.

One trek led south and west, till the migrant Indians found new homes south of Lakes Erie and Ontario and became the powerful and well organized Iroquois Confederacy. Another movement toward the north and west, the Haut Pays of the early French explorers, gave birth to the Huron nation.

That these groups did not occupy the land between the lakes was due to the fact that an earlier migration of Indians from the same basic stock had already settled there and made themselves too powerful to be safely attacked.

These Indians were the Attawandarons or "Neutrals". The self-bestowed name, Attawandarons, forms the earliest recorded tribute to the famed fertility of Kent and its environs. It signifies "the people with the country"—meaning "the best country". The French termed them "La Nation Neutre" because their strong position enabled them to hold aloof from, and at the same time profit by, the warfare between the Hurons and the Iroquois.

The Attawandarons controlled the flint beds at Point Abino, on Lake Erie. They had made themselves the most expert artificers of flint arrow-heads, spear points, knives and tomahawks. The great munition-makers of their day, they sold these products impartially to the Hurons and the Iroquois, yet retained an abundance for their own defence. Neither rival dared attack or even antagonize a people so powerful.

Though of kindred race, the Hurons and the Iroquois had long been at deadly feud; by a remarkable compact, however, as long as they were within the bounds of the Neutrals, they were to meet—and for many years did meet—on terms of apparent amity, often sharing not only the same wigwams but the same meals. The Neutrals were strong enough to enforce this singular armistice throughout the whole of their wide domain.

The Attawandarons were not the first occupants of this western land. Archæologists working east of Chatham as recently as 1949 unearthed on a bluff overlooking the Thames, Indian remains and pottery fragments definitely belonging to an earlier era. The painstaking researches of Wilfred Jury on the Clearville site in Orford had already uncovered artifacts indicating three successive Indian occupations.

Who were the pre-Attawandaron occupants of Kent and its environs may forever remain a question. They may have been the Eries, or Cat tribe, later established south of the lake to which they gave their name. They may have been the Mascoutins, the so-called "Nation of Fire", which in historic time dwelt in Michigan and against whom the Attawandarons waged fierce and cruel warfare.

Most powerful of the Indian nations of Champlain's day, the Attawandarons were not civilized. Their culture had not even

remotely approached that of the Aztecs in the days of Cortez. But they possessed in an unusual degree the skill in warfare necessary for self-protection; in hunting, fishing and the limited agriculture of their time; and, above all, as artificers in flint.

Their weapons were the war club, the javelin, the bow and arrow; but the warriors that bore them were of extraordinary size, strength and activity. Champlain, during his three months stay among the Hurons in the winter of 1615-16, gazed wistfully toward their realm, still as regards Europeans, an Unknown Land. But the Hurons urged the great danger of the exploration, and though accompanied by a French force armed to the teeth, Champlain's stout heart failed him.

The first white man to visit them was Champlain's adventurous interpreter, Etienne Brulé. At least, he was the first white man who visited them and came away alive. In the summer of 1615, Brulé mingled with the Neutrals. He brought back to Quebec glowing accounts of the rich land, abundant game, teeming fish, wonderful climate and numerous villages.

His glowing reports intrigued the Franciscan, Père Joseph de la Roche Daillon, of whom Champlain wrote, "he was distinguished for his noble birth and talents as he was remarkable for his humility and piety, who abandoned the honours and glory of the world for the humiliations and poverty of the religious life."

Placed in charge of the Huron mission, Daillon in October, 1626, set out to visit the Attawandarons, accompanied by a Huron guide and two French traders. His sole armament was the pack on his back, and a staff in his hand. After travelling five days, and sleeping in the primeval forest five nights, Daillon reached the first important Attawandaron village.

The Attawandarons received the visitors with open arms, presenting them with lavish gifts of game, roasted Indian corn, squashes and other products of the land. Daillon distributed gifts. Eventually, a council was called, where, through an interpreter, Daillon spoke. "I told them that I came on behalf of the French, to contract alliance of friendship with them. I also begged them to allow me to remain in their country, to be able to instruct them in the law of our God, which is the only means of going to Heaven."

His first reception was friendly beyond his hopes. Daillon, reassured, sent back his two French companions; and, all alone, traversed the peninsula from end to end. Courage was the quality above all others that these wild warriors admired; the daring of a man who, unarmed and unattended, strode fearlessly through their villages and into their wigwams astounded and overawed them.

Daillon was, however, handicapped by not knowing their language; losing his Huron interpreter, he was reduced to trying to teach the Indians by signs.

Then came a dangerous reaction. "This pale-face must be a sorcerer; in fact, our cousins, the Hurons, say so, and the Hurons are knowing fellows." Knowing, perhaps, but not disinterested; the Hurons had established a profitable fur trade with the French; many of the peltries they handled came from the beaver-meadows on the

Grand River and the Eskunissippi, the Attawandarons getting all the toil of hunting, the Hurons all the advantages that came of being middlemen between them and the French. A direct trade between the French and the Neutrals would rob them of these profits.

The Huron emissaries told their credulous neighbors that this great magician "had in their country breathed a pestilence into the air; that many had died from his poisonous arts; that presently the Attawandarons would see all their children dead and all their villages in flames; that these French folk were unnatural in their diet, eating poison, serpents, aye, and the lightning—for these Frenchmen eat even the thunder-griffon." The Hurons told that the French were furnished with tails, and that the women though they had but one breast, produced six children at a birth.

With the imagination of the Attawandarons fevered by these delirious whisperings, the crafty Hurons subtly suggested that they slay the missionary. A single blow of the fist felled the heroic priest. He escaped death only by a miracle. Continuous ill-usage followed, on which he philosophizes, "all this is just what we look for in these lands."

Eventually he returned to Huronia, to write his report. From its faded manuscript and archaic French has come down to us our first word picture of the Attawandaron country. Daillon saw the landscape kindle into the crimson and gold of autumn and then melt into the delicious languor of Indian summer. After traversing the heart of the peninsula, "Incomparably beautiful," he writes, "incomparably the most extensive, the most beautiful and the most fruitful land I have yet explored." Through his few artless lines we see the cornfields waving their golden tassels in the wind, the golden citrouilles gleaming in the leafy fields, the beavers casting up their earthworks, the streams silvery with their shoals of fish, the squirrels scuffling in the tree-tops, the wild turkey fluttering in the copse, and innumerable deer and elk wandering in the glades, the rich earth yielding its superabundance of grain, the "very good oil."

At this time the Attawandarons controlled both sides of the Niagara River, Lake Ontario as far as Burlington Bay and the whole Canadian shore of Lake Erie; while their inland jurisdiction covered the central and southern tracts of the peninsula. They were governed by the great chief Souharissen, whose authority was unchallenged throughout the twenty-eight villages and towns that then picturesquely dotted the wilderness. Such a unity of command among the Indians was almost without precedent; but so was this chieftain's prowess. He had made successful war on seventeen hostile tribes, and had always returned with droves of captives or heaps of ghastly trophies. In one of these forays he led his fierce warriors from the banks of the Grand River and the Thames to the farther shore of Lake Michigan, stormed a large fortified town of the Mascoutins, exterminated the defenders, and drove the rest of the nation beyond the lake into the very heart of Wisconsin. Souharissen could at a day's notice put on the warpath several thousand warriors.

Daillon left Canada in 1629, never to return. Not long after, the Jesuit fathers took over the Huron missions; and on November 2, 1640, Jean de Brebeuf, "the Ajax of the mission" and Joseph Chaumonot left Huronia to open a new mission among the Neutrals.

Descendant of a noble French family, Brebeuf was of broad frame and commanding presence, endowed with a giant's strength and a tireless endurance, and, above all, a fearless heritage. Of extraordinary piety and a pronounced ascetic, he was, at the same time, sympathetic and kindly.

Joseph Marie Chaumonot was Brebeuf's complete antithesis. Childlike even to credulity, timid even unto fear, with an intellect incapable of high development and a character that possessed nothing striking, he yet became, "by dint of divine grace and the austere practice of the highest virtues," one of the most beautiful figures in Canada's early missionary life. In one respect, he had no equal. Possessed of a prodigious memory, he mastered the Huron language and its linguistic affinities, of which the Attawandaron dialect was one.

The cunning machinations of the Hurons had preceded the Black Robes. The Hurons spread the message that, if the Attawandarons allowed the pale-faced sorcerers to dwell among them, famine and plague would desolate their villages, their women would become sterile, and the nation itself would fade from the face of the earth. They even tried to bribe the superstitious Attawandarons to murder their benefactors.

At the Attawandaron villages, Brebeuf and Chamonot met, not hospitality, but hostility. But, undeterred by insult and ill-usage, defying fatigue and cold and the greatest personal dangers, the missionaries during four months traveled the winter trails through the forest from village to village, carrying the message of the Cross, and pointing the way to heaven to silent and unresponsive audiences.

Maps dating from this time give the names of five important Attawandaron communities west of the Grand River, with appellations bestowed by the missionaries. These were Our Lady of the Angels, near Brantford; St. Alexis, possibly on the site of the Southwold earthworks; St. Joseph, somewhere between St. Alexis and Detroit; and St. Francois, near the present township of Bosanquet on Lake Huron. At the most remote of the villages, St. Michael (Mihel) or Khioeta, on the Detroit, they were cheered by a "partially friendly" greeting.

That winter was unwontedly severe and prolonged; but, more bitter to the missionary than any physical discomfort, was the failure of his embassy, the impenitence of this people, and their repeated and ungrateful rejection of his message.

As the Jesuits retraced their steps northward through the woods, a snowstorm beset them. The drifts were impassable, and the scowls of the aborigines were more forbidding even than the face of nature. But, at the most critical moment, they encountered unexpected kindness. A woman, defying the threats, reproaches and insults of her clan, welcomed the pilgrims to her lodge, set before them the best of

her stored food, obtained fish from the river to enable them to keep their fast days, and; by her gentle, thoughtful care, entertained them till they could resume their journey. During this precious interval, Brebeuf and Chamonot mastered the vocabulary of the Neutrals, and compiled a grammar and dictionary of their dialect.

Unlike Daillon, Brebeuf saw the country under a wintry pall which perhaps best accorded with his sombre earnestness. It was his habit, wherever possible, to withdraw for his devotions to some wild and lonely glen where the awesome solitudes was rendered even more impressive by the solemn organ-voice of the forest. In these wild fastnesses he found many a natural cloister and oratory; the towering trees, the lofty walls of rock, must, for him, have been reminiscent of the man-made fortress walls of Bayeux, the ancient Norman town where he spent his boyhood.

Eventually the missionaries returned to Huronia. There, Brebeuf continued to labor among the Hurons till he was martyred by the Iroquois. He died, as he had lived, with a sublime and unflinching courage. Today, in the Hotel Dieu at Quebec, the base of a silver bust contains the skull of the martyr; he is deservedly revered as one of the saints of his church.

No further attempts were made to Christianize the Attawandarons. Events moved too fast. But, unwarned by the attacks of the Iroquois upon the Hurons, the Attawandarons, confident of their strength and their traditional immunity from attack, continued their comfortable way—quite unaware that, though they had driven out “the pale-faced sorcerers” the doom predicted by the cunning Hurons was coming ever closer.

The Jesuits have left a picture of these first recorded inhabitants of Kent at this, the zenith of their power. Their habits, food, clothing, ceremonials and government like their language, were closely akin to those of the Hurons and the Iroquois. In physical strength and proportions, the Attawandarons surpassed their Iroquois kindred. In summer they went naked, their bodies tattooed from head to foot with charcoal pricked into the flesh. In war they were more cruel and ruthless: in particular they tortured and burned their women prisoners, a practice not recorded of the Hurons. Their wanton life was open and shameless. Long immunity from attack by their neighbors, the fertility of the soil, the wealth of stream and forest life, the superabundance of vegetable and animal food, tempted them to indulge every animal appetite.

“St. Joseph de Kent” as modern French writers have termed it was the first community of importance in our county. Its exact location is uncertain.

But archaeologists, both professional and amateur, have uncovered in Kent relics marking the sites of numerous Indian villages. Among these investigators, Edmund Bassett Jones, at one time city engineer of Chatham, was especially prominent in the 80s and 90s of the last century, at a time when little interest was felt in historical research. In the Chatham Evening Banner, November 27, 1896, Jones describes his discoveries at two Indian sites near Chatham:

"The central villages near Chatham, of which there were two, were situated on McGregor's Creek. One is partly on the Protestant and partly on the Catholic cemetery, and partly on McGeachy's land, and is divided by the creek in two parts, the east and the west village. The other village is about half a mile to the north, and is divided by the creek into the north and south village. The south village near Wilson's Bridge appears to have been partly surrounded with a palisade, beginning at the bank of the creek at the west boundary of the village, and enclosing a semi-circular piece of land of about three acres, and ending on the creek bank to the east. There are still traces of the ditch and embankment upon which the palisades were placed, but the plow has nearly finished the work of demolition. There is no doubt but that these villages were protected by walls or palisades. It is comparatively easy to locate the position of several lodges within the enclosure by the debris left on certain spots, such as arrow points, fragments of flint, stone hammers and fragments of broken bone. Every such place indicates the site of a lodge. These lodges were arranged in the form of a semi-circle and enclosed a space of about one and a half acres.

"This spot," Jones adds, "would appear to be the forum where many a pow-wow was held. In peaceful times it was used as a playground. Games of ball were seemingly common if we are to judge by the number of stone balls found on these village sites. Here also captives were tortured to death at the stake. There is every reason to believe that the Neutrals were cannibals, as I have found charred remains in their ash heaps or kitchen middens where all refuse was found."

This site may have been the St. Joseph of the Jesuit missionaries.

With a generally swampy terrain, the Indian trails, and the villages themselves, would seek higher ground—the banks of the rivers, and the high gravel ridge along Lake Erie. The westerly trail from the Grand River followed the latter route.

A noteworthy site, which may have been one of the five named by the missionaries, is the so-called Fort, about a mile north of Clearville. David Boyle described it as early as 1888-89, and nearly sixty years later the patient and painstaking Wilfred Jury carried on excavations. At this point Clear Creek, flowing southward, made a considerable detour around a low, terraced tableland, the slopes showing evidence that the stream had once been much higher. Such a site would appeal to the Indian mind: and Jury's investigations showed remains of three successive villages at different levels. An interesting discovery made here by J. H. Smith was a human skull with certain symbols or hieroglyphics carved on the vertex; including characters that might represent signs of the zodiac, a serpent being particularly distinct. This startling discovery found a place in the Royal Ontario Museum.

Jones located another Indian village on a pine-covered site a short distance east of the original pavilion at Rondeau Provincial Park. An ossuary in this vicinity yielded numerous Indian skeletons that, in

the 70s, Jonathan McCully and his fellow medical students at Toronto found exceedingly useful. Farther west, the indefatigable Jones tells of finding numerous flints and arrow-heads "back of the celery farm and peat beds at the Eau and around Shrewsbury."

In Raleigh, south of the Ridge in the vicinity of Highbanks, other Indian village sites have been found, with relics such as corn stones and pestles, smoothing stones, pipes and fragments of pottery. Large quantities of charcoal unearthed here, under the microscope revealed cedar fibres, although the oldest white residents could not remember the time when cedars grew in the vicinity.

There is historic record of yet another site. Major Littlehales, who accompanied Lieutenant-Governor Simcoe on his overland trip to Detroit in 1793, mentioned in his diary that, near Baptiste Creek, the party's attention was drawn to ruins of a few bark wigwams and bleaching skeletons. Traditionally, the site was the scene of a fierce fight between the Ojibways and the Iroquois. Jones, who investigated later, and excavated a pit in which, some time after 1850, the remains were buried by a man named Harmon, adjudged from fragments of pottery and flint clippings that this had been one of the Attawandaron villages destroyed by the Iroquois.

For the day of wrath came for the too-confident Attawandarons. The fearful desolation which within nine years swept their lands might well appear to the Church, whose message they had twice rejected, a swift and terrible judgment.

Armed with the match-locks they had lately acquired from the Dutch at Fort Orange, the Iroquois, in the winter of 1648, stole through the forests to fall on their ancient foes, the Hurons. With the opening of spring they stormed the Huron towns and exterminated, enslaved or dispersed the inhabitants.

Some of the Hurons who escaped the tomahawk sought refuge in the Attawandaron land; but the Iroquois no longer respected the traditional right of sanctuary. Now they turned their arms against the Neutrals. Superb physique and high courage availed nothing against the "irons with indwelling devils" as the Huron refugees aptly termed the match-locks.

None the less, the Neutrals fought desperately. In the pioneer days of Upper Canada, many a memorial of their final agony was turned up by the settler's plough.

The campaign of 1650 was indecisive. The Iroquois stormed and destroyed one large fortified town; but they were later defeated with the loss of two hundred warriors.

In the spring of 1651 they returned with reinforcements. A landing was effected on Burlington Bay; this formed the key to the Attawandaron defences, for it commanded the portage that led through the Dundas Valley and across to the Grand River. A tremendous battle was fought at the landing place, in which the Attawandarons suffered a disastrous defeat. Their dead filled a mound which, after the rains and snows of a century and a half had beaten against it, still measured fifty feet across and fifteen feet in height.

At news of the disaster, the inland towns were abandoned; the Iroquois with torch and tomahawk swept the peninsula. The women of the Neutrals were carried away, prisoners of the conquerors; of the men who escaped, the more vigorous sought refuge beyond Lake Huron, while the children, the sick, the aged, hid in the fens and forests, most of them to perish miserably.

The destruction was complete. For a century after the Iroquois invasion the French maps of the western peninsula carry the legend, "nation détruite." The ceaseless wars of the Iroquois left them no leisure to colonize the empty land. Diligent research has revealed the record of but one petty Iroquois hamlet in the whole broad expanse—Tinawatwa, a group of a score of hunting lodges, commanding the fishing and hunting of the Upper Grand and marking the west end of the portage from Burlington Bay.

The Attawandaron husbandry had created numerous clearings in the forest, some of which survived as open glades to puzzle the United Empire Loyalists; but mostly the ancient corn-fields and gardens of squash and pumpkins were speedily overgrown by lofty trees and dense underbrush. The very sites of the towns and villages which had rejected the message of the Jesuits were forgotten, till archaeologists of a more peaceful era recovered them by patient research. Game, large and small, rapidly multiplied; as early as 1669, the Sulpician missionary, Galinée, describes the peninsula as merely the stalking ground for deer, and the special bear garden for Iroquois huntsmen from south of the lakes. The black bear established himself so strongly that, two centuries later, he still raided the pig-pens of the pioneers.

In 1669, Dollier de Casson and Galinée, when they discovered Lake Erie, noted that as a result of the destruction of the Neutrals by the Iroquois eighteen years before, their journey could now be made in safety. Oddly, in September of the self-same year, the Jesuit, Father Freners records that, visiting the Oneida village of Gandoge, peopled by remnants of three nations destroyed by the Iroquois, he found descendants of the slaughtered Neutrals, adopted by the Iroquois and incorporated into the Oneida tribe to replace its fallen warriors.

In time, wandering Ojibway tribes, particularly the Mississaugas, drifted in from the north; and, though they never settled the land to any great extent, by the time of the American Revolutionary War they had established some sort of title to the territory between the Ottawa and Detroit which the British authorities, for purposes of purchase, recognized as valid.

CHAPTER 2

£ 1,200 Worth of Empire

AFTER the downfall of the Attawandarons, their country became a land without a history. The triumphant Iroquois had fought, not to acquire it, but to destroy the arrogant race before whom they had cringed so long.

True, white men began occasionally to visit the surrounding waters. In 1669 the Jesuits, Dollier de Casson and Galinée, blundered on Lake Erie from the Grand River and camped near a ravaged Indian townsite at Rond Eau. Nine years later Hennepin first heard the roar of the mighty Niagara; and the ensuing winter La Salle's companions built above the Falls his ill-fated *Griffon*, the first sailing ship to traverse the Upper Lakes, and which in August, 1679, ascended the River St. Clair and entered Lake Huron. Fort Pontchartrain, where Detroit now stands, became a link in the chain of French outposts planned to restrict the British colonists to the Atlantic coast.

But these activities merely grazed the fringes of the desolated land. There survive no records of permanent Indian settlements; of adventurous explorers, traders and missionaries journeying the winding trails through the heavily timbered wilderness. Nomadic Indian hunting parties doubtless paused to view the ruined village sites, once teeming with life, which the encroaching undergrowth was gradually obliterating; but for the most part, wolves and foxes, bear and deer and game birds, inhabited the land, unmolested except by one another.

It was a rich land. In the era following the last ice age, retreating glaciers had left moraines of stones and gravel, the hard backbone of the southwestern peninsula. Of these the Ridge immediately north of Lake Erie was the most conspicuous. In the lower levels, through countless centuries, the decaying vegetation of swamp and forest had been supplemented by soil that streams in flood had stolen from the higher terrain to the east, or that the rising and receding waters of the lakes had deposited. A rich land, empty of people, it thus remained through more than a century after 1651, waiting for those who in God's good time would seek homes here.

The American Revolution changed the entire picture. The land nobody wanted became instantly a tremendous asset to the British government, confronted with the problem of finding new homes for the Loyalists, most of whom had sacrificed their all for the Motherland.

Britain still held Fort Detroit as security for the proper treatment of the Loyalists. After the Peace of Paris in 1783, many of these courageous people settled there. But it was tragically evident their sojourn on the Detroit would be merely temporary.

The former Attawandaron country was fertile—and empty. But, before the home government could utilize it, a legal title of some sort must be secured. The British tradition of just dealing with the Indians, the meticulous British regard for the forms of law, demanded this.

Chiefs of the Mississaugas, with a fairly definite ownership, ceded the territory along Lake Erie east of Catfish (later Kettle) Creek. To Colonel Alex McKee, Indian agent, was entrusted the task of negotiating a cession of territory farther west. A minute of the Land Board of the District of Hesse, bearing date December 7, 1789, reads:

"The Board, considering the views of government toward the settlement of this district and at the same time preserving due regard to the comfort of the native Indians, a cession of all that tract of land commencing at the entrance of the Channail Ecarte on the River St. Clair, running up the main branch of said channell to (blank) then a due east line to the River a la Franche, up the River La Franche to its source, or until it strikes upon the boundary of the last purchase from the Messasages, bounded by the waters of the River and Lake St. Clair, Detroit and Lake Erie."

T. Smith, who kept the minutes, appears to have been weak alike in orthography and syntax. His "River La Franche" (correctly "La Tranche") was, of course, the later Thames.

In a strictly legal sense, nobody owned this land. McKee's task, manifestly, was to find chiefs willing to claim ownership and then sign a treaty. Writing from Detroit on May 5, 1790, to Sir John Johnson, McKee outlines his activities:

"Sir, I am but a few days returned from a tour into the Indian country, where I went some time ago to sound and collect the Indians on the south side of the lake, concerned in the purchase to be made from them of land; all those I have hitherto met with I find inclined to comply with the wish of government.

"Since my return home, dispatched messengers to assemble those in the vicinity of this place as soon as arrived from the wintering grounds, which I now expect will be in the course of a few days. I understand there will be Indians, tho', disposed to reserve spots on which they now comfortably live. We shall however endeavor to allow of as few of those as possible, as there seems on our part a great aversion to admitting it, yet nevertheless I fear it cannot be entirely avoided; and particularly as there is an Indian settlement at the River Canard that cannot be removed without creating confusion and perhaps trouble, nor will it be consistent with good policy or humanity to force them to quit it.

"It was my intention by soliciting these lands (as Indians were already fixed there) to have accommodated several families, likewise, who to my knowledge from their attachment to Government have been drove from their ancient settlements and who in case of emergency might be depended upon, as well as any other inhabitants, entertaining at the same time an idea that all this description would be encouraged to live within the protection of the British Government. My application, I understand, has been laid before the Land Board at this place, which I can only apprehend is no more than to comply with common form, it resting with the governor-in-council to act as he may judge proper; it is from him therefore I am to hope a completion of my desire."

Though McKee's letter to Johnson mentioned Indians being allowed to reserve locations on which they were living, he does not seem to have taken the Land Board into his confidence. Meanwhile, from far and near, the Indians were gathering, to the all-important council to be held at Fort Detroit on May 19, 1790.

Under the McKee Treaty, then concluded, His Britannic Majesty, George the Third, acquired a tract of land, comprising most of the present counties of Essex, Kent and Elgin and part of Middlesex. The purchase price of this entire territory was £1,200. In Kent's centennial year, a single house and lot almost anywhere in this territory would have commanded an equivalent price.

The archives at Ottawa hold the historic document, signed by His Majesty's representatives and by the chiefs of the Ottawas, Chippewas, Pottawattomies and Hurons who, rightly or wrongly, claimed ownership. None of the signers were of the Iroquois nation.

The consideration for which these Indians surrendered the richest portion of Ontario, is set forth in the document as "Twelve hundred pounds currency of the Province of Quebec at five shillings per Spanish dollar for valuable wares and merchandise." Thus, the Indians received, not the actual cash, but what purported to be £1,200 currency (approximately \$4,800) worth of trade goods.

The land ceded is described as "A certain tract of land beginning at the mouth of Catfish Creek, commonly called 'Riviere au Chaudiere' on the north side of Lake Erie, being the western extremity of a tract purchased from the Massesagey Indians in the year 1784, and from thence running westward along the border of Lake Erie and up the Streight to the mouth of the Channail Ecarte and up the main branch of the said Channail Ecarte to the first fork on the south side, then a due east line until it intersects the Rivier a la Tranche, and up the said Riviere a la Tranche to the northwest corner of the said cession granted to His Majesty in the year 1784, then following the western boundary of said tract, being due south direction, until it strikes the mouth of said Catfish Creek or otherwise Riviere au Chaudiere, being the first offset."

Catfish Creek, or Riviere au Chaudiere, was the later Kettle Creek. The "Streight" was the Detroit, and the Riviere a la Tranche was the Thames. Channail Ecarté—now written Chenal Ecarté and colloquially termed 'the Sny Carty'—was one of the mouths of the Sydenham.

To ensure the Indians receiving exact value, the trade goods payable in lieu of the £1,200 (currency) were detailed in four lists. The first list specified 480 blankets, of various grades; divers kinds of cloths; 140 yards of cloth at 8s a yard; and ribbons and thread, with a dozen black silk handkerchiefs valued at £1 10s, total value £722 and some shillings.

The second list begins with 20 dozen plain hats at 15s a dozen. Then comes a long list of hardware items, including 60 guns and 20 rifles with 2,000 flints. Concessions to the squaws included 30 dozen ivory combs. One thousand fish hooks and 600 pounds of brass kettles brought the total of the second list to £290.

Fire steels and pipes, to a value of £1 6d make up the brief third list.

Bringing the total value to the stipulated £1,200, the fourth list featured 39 gallons of rum at 3s 9 d a gallon. Also included were a bullock, at £13; 400 pounds of tobacco, 24 lace hats, 11 gross of pipes and two gross of cutteaw (couteaux or knives).

At the signing of the treaty, Chief Egoucheway spoke for the Lake Confederacy, which included the Ottawas, Chippewas and Potawatommies, Simon Girty and Isadore Chene acting as interpreters. The opening passage of his speech is thus rendered by Chêne:

"Father, we are now within the Paternal House where everyone is free to speak his mind; therefore, Father, I request the same of our Fathers, the Officers, our brethren, the Merchants and of all of you, my brothers of my own color and those Indians of the other tribes. You have told us that you have received letters from Our Father, the General, and our Father, Sir John Johnson, acquainting you that Our Father, the Great King, had written to them to know if we would cede him a piece of land extending from the other side of the River (the Detroit) to the line of that ceded by the Mississagas.

"Father, is there a man among us who will refuse this request?

"What man can refuse what is asked by a father so good and so generous that he has never refused us anything? What nation? None, Father. We have agreed to grant all you ask according to the limits settled between us and you, and which we are all acquainted with. We grant it you, all, Father, in the presence of our Fathers, the Officers, and Our Brothers, the Merchants."

Major Patrick Murray, commander at Detroit and head of the Land Board, replied:

"I return thanks to the Great Spirit, through whose favor we have the happiness of meeting as one family, and shall inform His Excellency, Lord Dorchester, of the unanimous and dutiful manner in which you have complied with His Lordship's desire, by ceding to the King for the purpose of settling such of His Majesty's subjects as may come to live upon it. Your Fathers, the Governor and Superintendent General, have directed an ample consideration to be given you for the land, and you have agreed with Captain McKee upon the sum as fully sufficient. It remains now only with me to pay you the consideration agreed upon, which shall be done tomorrow, as soon as your several nations are assembled for the purpose."

The deed was done; but there were quick repercussions. The Land Board, according to a minute of May 22, wanted Deputy Agent McKee, to explain to it or to the Governor why the purchases from the Indians had not been made without reserve. McKee's reply, dated May 23, said, "I found it impracticable to obtain so extensive a tract without paying some attention to the Claims of the Indians," adding that he had complied with the express orders of His Excellency, that all possible regard be had to their ease and comfort, which would have been materially affected had not this reserve been made."

In a much sharper note Major Murray dissented from the minute. "I do not think this Board ought to presume to advise His Excellency the Governor on subjects so intimately connected with the Indian department." He warmly praises the manner in which the transaction was handled adding "I do not conceive that an Inquisition on the Conduct of Officers who from their situation are Responsible to their proper Superiors is a fit Occupation for this Board."

The McKee Treaty was signed, sealed and delivered; the price of the land itself was paid; the southwestern peninsula was ready to welcome the Loyalists—as ready, that is, as a trackless expanse of hardwood timber and swamp could be.

A memorial cairn was erected in 1934 at the entrance to the Blenheim town park to commemorate the treaty.



McKee Treaty Cairn at Blenheim

Pioneers of the Thames

WHITE settlement in Kent very definitely antedated 1790. Local traditions give no definite dates, nor do we know who was the first adventurous white man to establish a home in the wilderness. Our most dependable records are those of the earliest surveys, following the treaty; and reading between the lines we can draw our own inferences.

The first pioneers of Upper Canada settled along the waterways. The easiest access was by the lakes and streams. The bateau or canoe was the customary means of transport. The vast forests which covered the country were usually swampy; it was along the waterways, and especially along the rivers, that the ground was highest and best drained, assuring more successful cultivation and relative freedom from malaria and kindred ills. With a clearing close to a lake or navigable stream, it was easier to secure supplies and to market production, a circumstance not to be disregarded when the only other routes of travel were uncertain and treacherous Indian trails.

Detroit was the great source from which Kent drew its earlier settlers. Here, hardy French-Canadians had been living since the days of Cadillac; here in later times the United Empire Loyalists found temporary refuge. And, because the earliest Kent pioneers came from or via Detroit, the convenient Thames became their gateway.

One date survives conspicuously in pioneer tradition. In 1790, the year of the McKee Treaty, the first white child was born in Kent. He was Edward Parsons, son of a Loyalist squatter on the south bank of the Thames in Raleigh township. A hundred and sixty years later, residents on the Lower Thames identified themselves as Edward Parsons' descendants.

His father, Thomas Parsons, was not the first settler; and certainly, not the first person to claim title to land. The Detroit Land Board handled and recorded transactions relating to the District of Hesse, which included Kent; and its records show, as early as 1780, a transaction which led to much dispute, in relation to land in what was later Dover township. The record, relating to the east 16 feet of Lot 42, Old Detroit Survey, reads:

"Registered a deed from Teka-Megh-a-sii and Me-gi-ri O-chi-pu-e, Chiefs, 22 August, 1789 to Sarah Ainse, witnessed by T. Williams, Justice of the Peace, and dated 19th September, 1780, for a tract of land on the north side of river a la Tranche, beginning at the entrance of the said river, running hence up opposite the fork and one hundred and fifty acres in depth, bounded in front by said river A la Tranche.—Registered by T. Williams in the Detroit Register." The price or consideration is given as "80 New York currency goods and a belt of wampum, witnessed by Thomas Smith and dated 11th October, 1783."

The McKee Treaty made it necessary or advisable to establish the squatter right of Sarah, or, as she is popularly known, "Sally"

Ainse. Accordingly there is a considerably later registration of a petition of the Ochipues of River la Tranche.

"The Chief Augushavay and three others of the same nation doth hereby declare that the Indians at River La Tranche when they sold their lands at River La Tranche, that they told Captain McKee that there was a tract of land that they gave their sister Sally Ainse which they would not sell as she had always used them well and likewise they gave Col. McKee a string of wampum and he the said Col. McKee told them that she was a good woman and received the wampum saying he would do all he could and and speak to the commanding officer about it; this was before the deed was signed—as witness our hands in Detroit 13th day of July, 1791. Tuckinagosey, Agushavay, Shunaduck, Warvisque, Maskeways, Ketwetiskino, Nuango. The Indian chiefs, not knowing how to write, have made their marks with totems in the presence of (Sgd.) James Graham, Wm. Dugan."

Nathan Bangs, the pioneer Methodist circuit-rider, in later years told of being entertained at the house of "the old Indian woman, Sarah Ainse," whom he described as a "good, simple hearted, earnest creature" who considered herself highly honored that the Gospel was preached in her house, and prepared a bed, a table, a chair and a candlestick for him in an upper room. The tenacity with which she fought for her rights marks her as a woman of character and ability.

Long years after, the "Sally Ainse" dispute puzzled historians: but the facts were simple enough. Sarah Ainse, living on the Susquehanna river, at 17 had married Andrew Montour, a crown interpreter, who, a few years later, sent her back with her youngest son, Nicholas, to her people, the Oneidas. Sarah became a trader on the Lakes, moving to Detroit in 1774. In 1780 she purchased from the Chippewas the entire north bank of the Thames from the mouth to the Forks, to a depth of 150 acres. In 1787 bringing her negro slaves to the Thames with her, Sarah began to cultivate two small farms, one for herself and the other for her son, Nicholas. Years later, Nicholas joined the Northwest Company, acquired a fortune and purchased the Lower Canada seignury of La Pointe du Lac.

Flooded with Loyalist applications for land grants on the Thames, many from squatters already located, the Detroit land board ruled that each settler be limited to 200 acres. Sarah Ainse fought determinedly to retain the lands she alleged had been deeded her by the Chippewas. Claiming ownership of the entire north bank below Chatham, she was willing to compromise for eight lots, Nos. 9 to 16, but asserted that she was an Indian, hers was an Indian deed made before the McKee Treaty, and the new rules did not affect her.

McNiff, surveying the Dover East river front in 1791, found that Sarah Ainse's log house was on the upper part of Lot 10, and her improvements, a fenced clearing and an apple orchard, reached part way across Lot 11. She likewise had a farm on Lot 15, partly cultivated by a negro slave. She had sold two farms, one to William Brown of Detroit, the other to Joseph Cissney, both at the time non-residents.

The Detroit Land Board ruled that Sarah Ainse could have only one grant of 200 acres comprising Lot 10 on which her cabin and

most of her improvements were. She argued that, being an Indian, she stood in a different position from the white speculators on the south bank whose deeds from the Chippewas were being disregarded. The Board referred her to Simcoe, but proceeded to dispose of the other lots.

The dispute went to the Attorney General, who asked a series of questions as to the original lines of the Sally Ainse property. Mrs. Ainse herself appeared at Navy Hall and pleaded her case. Under date of March 14, 1792, Simcoe writes:

"The decision of the Lieutenant-Governor and Council of Upper Canada upon the claims of Sally Ainse referred to them by special letter (I believe of May last) their decision has been favorable to the claims of Mrs. Ainse and of course she is legally entitled to the lands in dispute."

The decision is definitely and characteristically Simcoe's. Colonel Richard England, head of the Land Board, protested; and Simcoe agreed to give the Board a chance to work out some other arrangement satisfactory to the Indian woman or her assigns. Nothing being done, in the summer of 1793 she visited Newark a second time. Simcoe threatened process against the Land Board or anyone else who withheld her lands. The Board offered the same amount of land elsewhere, but Sally Ainse refused. Through the remaining years of Simcoe's regime, petitions from squatters and urgings from the board were countered by reiterated orders from the government in Sarah Ainse's favor. Eventually the board's stalling achieved its desired end. Simcoe left Upper Canada; and on May 24, 1798 the executive council ruled that Sally Ainse had no claim to the lands for which she had fought so determinedly.

The Sally Ainse dispute was only one item, though an important item, in the confusion which attended early land titles on the Thames. Sally Ainse's purchase from the Chippewas took place in 1780. A similar purchase of the south bank up to Jeannette's Creek was made the same year by Charles Gouin; and in 1781 Garret Teller and William Groesbeck of Detroit bought the remainder of the south bank up to the Forks.

Some of the early settlers on the Thames took deeds from these owners. Others were squatters who, on the principle that possession is nine points of the law, occupied and improved the land and counted on the Land Board to validate their ownership. Against these were ranged Loyalists who had been promised lands in Upper Canada and demanded that the Land Board provide them.

After futile attempts to checkerboard the river front with crown reserves—which would have necessitated ousting most of the squatters—the Land Board accepted the facts and ruled that McNiff, in his survey, should have regard to improvements; the intention being, that, where possible, the grantee should receive the lands he had improved. Further confusion arose when, a few years later, Abraham Iredell went over the original survey and carried it up river beyond the Forks. His lines varied quite markedly from those of McNiff: and it would seem that in many instances the settlers themselves had

shifted McNiff's stakes. To satisfy everybody was impossible; in the end nobody seems to have been satisfied; and the Thames front carried into the future years a plethora of law suits and a host of even more enduring feuds.

The descriptive phrase, "150 acres in depth" appearing and re-appearing in the Aïnse transactions is suggestive. So is the term "brouillon place" in the instructions to the early English surveyors on the Thames. The French "acre" as a linear measure is about 192 feet, and has no specific English equivalent. The adoption of these terms by English officials implies that they were already part of the custom of the country, and carries with it the suggestion that even before the cession of Canada to the British, there were probably cursory surveys of the River la Tranche authorized by the French authorities at Fort Detroit. There may even have been unrecorded French settlements on the river.

In any event, a dispute so long and intense regarding land ownership would not have arisen over an entirely unsettled area. It must have been rising land values which impelled the unlettered Indian woman to battle so long and so determinedly against Indian agent, land board and squatter claims.

The river which Simcoe and later generations called the Thames and which became civilization's first highway into Kent had been known to the Indians as Eskunisippi. The twists and convolutions of its winding course suggested a deer's antlers. Early French voyageurs were impressed by the lofty trees, rising high from the very water's edge, giving the river the similitude of a walled ditch. Hence "Riviere a la Tranche."

Patrick McNiff made the first recorded surveys in 1790 and 1791. He describes the conditions he encountered on entering the river from Lake St. Clair. On each side and for a distance upstream of six miles were extensive meadows and marshes, without any wood except a few scattered trees. To the Dover side, the marshes and meadows extended north-northeast as far as eye could see. To the south they were confined to much shorter limits. The six miles would bring the surveyor to what later became the site of St. Peter's church.

Eight miles up, settlement on the south bank commenced. Thence to the Forks (later Chatham) "the land is very good on each side, but on the south side, in general up to near the Forks the woodland does not extend back from the Thames more than thirty acres, in many places not so far; then commences a plain and marsh. On the north side the plain and marsh do not come so near the river.

"From the commencement of the first settlement on the river up to near the Forks, no second concession or line of lots can be made without placing the settlers in the plains or marsh.

"At the Forks, the south branch (later McGregor's Creek) has nine feet of water for nine hundred yards, then becomes shoal, this being a good place for a mill, being narrow with high banks. One hundred and twenty chains up, it divides into three branches, the one coming from the northeast, the other from the south and the third from the southwest."

McNiff states that the land "between the branches" was formerly cultivated by the Indians. This may refer to the land between the main creek and the river; or to the land between the various creek branches, where archaeologists later located the remains of an extensive Indian settlement. McNiff also notes that Thomas Clarke, a mill-wright, residing on La Tranche, had timbers ready for a mill to be erected on the creek.

From the Forks to the end of his survey, McNiff found the river banks from eighteen to twenty feet high, the lands of good quality and the timber black walnut, cherry, hard maple and hickory. There were, he states, no streams coming into the river to form a harbor for boats, and no possibility of hauling boats over the land.

McNiff's survey appears to have taken him about half way across Howard township, to a point opposite Thamesville. In April 1791, he encountered a spring freshet, finding eight feet of water and a current of eight knots an hour where he was told that in dry seasons, loaded canoes could scarcely pass. Above the Forks, on the north bank, at a small distance from the river the land appeared marshy, with small ponds, and from the uncommon attraction of the needle, he surmised there were large quantities of iron ore.

McNiff was greatly impressed with the Forks as a potential town site, emphasizing this view in both his notes and plans. His representations were probably largely responsible for Simcoe's later decision to set aside a town plot and military reserve at this point.

McNiff laid out the lots fronting the River Thames in Dover East, Chatham, Raleigh, Harwich, and parts of Howard and Camden. From the river mouth to the Tilbury East-Raleigh line was not surveyed into lots at the time, the land being regarded as too low and wet for occupation.

In 1792 instructions were issued for a second survey of the Thames from its mouth to the point where the stream should become so small as to be negligible. This supplementary survey was dictated by Simcoe's keen interest in the possibility of establishing navigation as far as his prospective new capital at London. McNiff's precarious health at the time rendered it doubtful whether he could handle this survey, but eventually he did so. It was his last important work.

Surveying, for McNiff as for his successors in this field, was ill-paid and arduous. All supplies had to be brought long distances by water or on the ice. By water from Detroit, the weather had to be fine to enable the small boats to cross Lake St. Clair in safety. For ice transport, except in steady cold, the ice was apt to become treacherous. For lengthy periods in spring and fall, it was impossible to bring in supplies.

The work itself was difficult and dangerous. On ice, the men were frequently imperilled; McNiff lost eight men through the ice in his 1793 survey. In summer, the marshy ground produced mosquitoes and black flies, fever and ague. The difficulties were enhanced by the necessity of respecting the claims of "squatters". McNiff was much worried by the problem of carrying out his instructions without interfering with the clearings and establishments of the pioneers along

the river. The Land Board at Detroit, with no first-hand knowledge of these problems, raised considerable difficulties regarding squatters' rights.

These squatters were numerous. Writing to Surveyor-General D. W. Smith in May, 1791, McNiff states that in the townships surveyed on the river he found twenty-eight families settled "in front", some with considerable improvements. Under pioneer conditions, clearing and improvement was a slow matter: so that the first white pioneers may have arrived as early as 1780, or even 1775.

McNiff and Deputy Surveyor Jones, who carried on work farther east, both noted the names and locations of the settlers they found. Ascending the river on the south side they found first an empty house; then two houses owned by one Charon, both empty; then Richard Surphlet; then an empty house; then Richard Merry; then John Peck, Jr.; then St. Carty; then Robert Peck; then Eliza Peck; then John Peck, Sr.; then an unnamed Canadian; then Daniel Fields; then Samuel Newkirk; then Thomas Williams; then Charles McCormick; then Isaac Dolsen, and beyond Dolsen's place two more empty houses—all these before coming to the Forks.

Locations on the north side were fewer. Ascending the surveyor notes an empty house; then Thomas Holmes; then Meldrum & Park, the traders; then Arthur McCormick; then Sarah Wilson (Ainse); then an unnamed Negro; then Matthew Dolsen; then another empty house; and finally, the millwright, Thomas Clarke.

Keen interest in the Thames country is indicated by requests for land submitted to the Detroit Land Board. No less than 19 petitions for allotments were submitted in 1789. In 1790 we find sixty-six applicants, and in 1791 some 36.

Many applications were made by men already settled who sought legal validation of their possession. In the first list, English names are predominant, indicating Loyalists; in the second and third, French names appear. Both elements shared in the settlement of the Lower Thames. In this sense it was typical of the later and greater Canada.

The record includes, for 1791, a list of Loyalists who had served in the King's Regiment and Col. Butler's Rangers, to whom monthly food allowances were made. Those along the Thames, from the famous Butler's Rangers, were Samuel Newkirk, farmer; Peter Shank, farmer; Nat Lewis, laborer; Thos. Williams, blacksmith; John Goon, laborer; Wm. Harper, laborer. The Loyalists were Hezekiah Wilcox, farmer; Josiah Wilcox, laborer; Hugh Holmes, farmer; John Pike, farmer; Robert Pike, farmer; Robert Simplex (Surphlit) farmer; Garr Brown, farmer; Thomas Clarke, farmer; Jno. Hazard, laborer; Jacob Hill, farmer; John Gordon, farmer.

Samuel Newkirk was the loyalist descendant of a family from Gelderland, in Holland, and in the Revolutionary War served with Butler's Rangers. His wife, as a girl, had been captured by Indians; the second of his two children was born just after he settled on the Thames.

Newkirk was killed by a falling tree. Times were hard on the Thames, especially for a widow with two small children; so Mrs.

Newkirk returned to the Mohawk Valley, travelling at night and sleeping in the daytime. She lived and died in the Mohawk Valley. But when the two children, Harriet and James, were grown, they returned to the Thames and either made good their claim to their father's property or secured new holdings.

Harriet married Ninian Holmes, the Methodist circuit rider, and became the mother of Kent's first novelist, Abraham Holmes. James' eldest son was named Ninian, for his uncle. His son, James, called himself Peter James, to distinguish himself from his grandfather. Two of Peter James' sons, James R. and Alfred Charles (Fred) Newkirk were aldermen of Chatham, as was his grandson, Garnet, who served in the R.C.A.F. in the second world war.

Thomas Clarke, listed among the Loyalists who drew government subsistence, was already settled in Dover when McNiff made his first survey. Clarke as early as 1792 had timbers assembled for the construction of a grist mill on one of the creek branches east of the Forks: a mill apparently completed when Simcoe made his trip, for one of his aides commented on its odd appearance.

Square in form, the mill was constructed of hewn logs, previously prepared, but left, as worked, in their original lengths. The erection was a community event, calling for the usual "bee" and copious libations of whiskey. The settlers, of whom Stoffel Arnold was one, commenced to trim off the ends of the logs, whereupon Clarke commented, "Never mind, boys, let them hang over at the rear corners."

This plan was followed for several courses; when, in a spirit of whiskey-inspired mischief, the "boys" commenced to hang the tail butts on all sides, Clarke, an easy-going Irishman, laughingly joining in the freak. The completed mill was little better than a shell comprising this log frame, a roof of poles thatched with bark, and a floor on which rested the stones and simple machinery. The grain and meal lay in dirty heaps, through which squirrels and other small animals were free to scamper.

Clarke was known along the Thames in more respects than as the miller. He was noted for his great size, his No. 12 twelve-pound iron-nobbed shoes and his five-foot cane. He frequently visited throughout the settlement, to the great annoyance of the women-folk whose meagre tea-caddies were sadly depleted after genial Tom "wet his whistle" with the customary five cups of tea. The visitations were perhaps less pronounced after one desperate housewife set Tom's long stick—at one time a long rifle barrel—outside the door, a hint which Tom took in good part—and also took. The story spread, and so did the practice of thus hurrying the miller on his way.

Tom, however, reacted differently to insults reflecting on his person, and particularly on his huge pedal extremities. Early one morning, waking at the hospitable home of a particularly esteemed friend, Mrs. Isaac Dolsen of Dover, he found her olive branches weighing his enormous shoes. He pulled on the shoes, stalked out, and never darkened her door again.

Clarke's mill was just east of the later Chatham townsite. Why, with the mill already in operation near the western edge of Lot 3, Har-

wich, it was not included when the townsite was surveyed is one of Kent's mysteries. It continued to operate, not too profitably, for nearly ten years. To tide him over, the improvident Clarke borrowed from John McGregor of Sandwich—of which more anon.

Clarke, however, even in the early days, had no monopoly of milling on the Thames. As early as 1792, Isaac Dolsen and Daniel Field sought permission to operate a mill on a creek on Lot 18, Harwich, on the John Flynn property, Clarke raised no objection, Simcoe approved, and the "Field mill" as it was usually known was in operation by 1795, or even before.

The Dolsens were prominent among the early settlers. A popularly accepted tradition names the head of the family as Jan Van Dolzen, a Loyalist from Pennsylvania, and that the name was speedily Anglicized to Dolsen. The latter is correct: but family records name the first Dolsen "Isaac".

Isaac was born in Holland, emigrated to Pennsylvania and after the American Revolution moved to Sandwich. He had seven children, of whom the eldest were full-grown when he moved to the Thames. Most of the sons, including the eldest, also named Isaac, located in Raleigh. At least one son, Matthew, established himself on the Dover side, about four miles below Chatham.

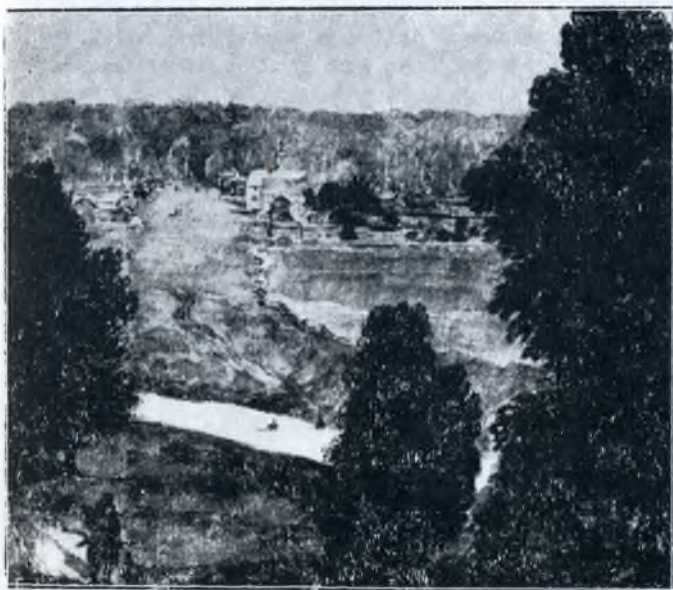
There, in course of time, Matthew became the tutelary genius of what was, in its day, the largest urban community in Kent. Dolsen's became the unofficial capital of the Thames settlement. On the land route between Sandwich and Burlington, a tavern was justified. This Matthew Dolsen operated. He set up a general trading mart, supplied with goods brought from Detroit and Buffalo in a sailing craft of his own construction—probably the first sailing vessel actually launched on the Thames. In later years he opened a combined distillery and grist mill, the former fitted with four "worms", and the two establishments requiring no less than eight horses to grind the grain. The immense quantities of whiskey thus produced were sold chiefly to the Northwest Company, but Dolsen's own tavern doubtless absorbed a considerable amount. A tannery, a blacksmith shop and a cooperage were other enterprises fathered by Matthew Dolsen. Largely by dint of his enterprise and genius, Dolsen's was a thriving community at a time when Chatham, with all Simcoe's ambitions for it, was merely a name upon a map.

Among the pioneers of Dover on the Thames river front were Thomas Smith and his wife Martha. The country was still dense forest with a few scattered clearings along the river. Early in the winter of 1798 the two daughters, Ann and Mary, went into the bush to bring home the cows. A terrific snowstorm blew up, and the girls lost their way. Searchers, twenty-four hours later, found the children locked in each other's arms behind a fallen tree where they had sought shelter. Mary, eleven was dead. Ann, thirteen, was alive, but both her legs were severely frozen.

The nearest doctor was at Sandwich, and the case was too urgent to wait for him. Hannah Dolsen, Matt's wife, was a sort of unofficial physician for the settlement, administering such simple specifics as

were known to the pharmacopoeia of the frontier. Hannah was called in. Amputation was, she realized, the only alternative to gangrene, and a horrible death. The operation was doubtless performed on the kitchen table. There was no chloroform in those days: perhaps a bullet to bite on; possibly whiskey, distilled by the redoubtable Matt himself, dulled the pain.

Ann Smith survived that terrific ordeal for 72 years. Dying on January 2, 1870, she bequeathed 300 acres, lot 12, River Road, Dover to build an Anglican Church and support a clergyman. So, in 1875, when Canada had become a Dominion and, as the corner stone records, Alexander Mackenzie was premier, St. Thomas Church was built—partly because that bitter winter day, so long before, grim Hannah Dolsen was able to rise to an emergency.



FAIRFIELD MISSION VILLAGE

(From painting by Lt. - Col. P. Brainbrigg in Public Archives of Canada)

CHAPTER 4

The Founding of Fairfield

WHILE white settlers were gradually carving out homes on the lower Thames, the upper river, from the Forks to the Indian settlements of Muncey and Delaware, remained unbroken wilderness. It was this very circumstance which attracted the Moravian missionaries.

The Moravian church, or *Unitas Fratrum*, sprang from the pre-Reformation teachings of the Bohemian, John Huss, who was burned at Constance on July 6, 1415. Persecution in time forced the United Brethren out of Poland and Bohemia, but in 1722 they found a protector in Count Zinzendorf, with whose strong support they were re-established in Saxony. In 1727 they began missionary work in the New World, disclosing a special interest in converting the Indians.

The Delaware Indians were the first to accept Christianity, and, under Moravian sponsorship, they established prosperous if primitive villages at Schoenbrunn, Gnadenhutten, Salem and Lichtenau, in Ohio.

The teachings of the Moravians, and the conduct of their converts, were essentially pacifist; and in the American Revolutionary War they held aloof from both sides. This did not save them in a bitter struggle where the watchword of both factions seems to have been, "He who is not with me is against me." The Ohio mission stations were in the path of the western Indians who travelled to attack the settlers on the borders of Pennsylvania and Virginia, and the peace-loving Delawares were blamed for the outrages committed by warlike Indians on both sides.

In the fall of 1781, the British forced them to move from their villages to the Upper Sandusky; the following March a hundred of the Delawares, returning to harvest the standing corn, were massacred by American frontiersmen at Gnadenhutten. The remainder fled to the Clinton River in Michigan, where they founded a settlement. Five years later the hostility of the Chippewas forced them to leave. They returned to Ohio, hopeful that, with peace restored, they might be permitted to re-establish themselves in their former homes. But in 1791 fresh warfare broke out, this time between the Americans and the western Indians. In order to save their charges, the Moravians sought the protection of the British flag.

The story of their journey to the promised land is told in the diary of David Zeisberger, the leader of the mission. The diary for May 4, 1791, reads:

"We made straight for the mouth of the Detroit river. In the strong wind our fleet was scattered, which stretched out several miles in length and breadth. Some held their course to the islands in the mouth of the river, which is six miles wide, and sought shelter; others made the first best firm land, but shipped much water in their canoes, each one striving to save himself as well as he could. The settlers and inhabitants looked at us, and doubted our all landing, for it seemed

frightful on account of the high sea, but all got fortunately to land without harm, to the wonder of all, for which we praised the Lord."

Landing, the party found Brother Gottlieb Senseman and his wife, Brother Michael Jung, and some Indian brethren, who had left Sandusky with a good wind on April 21, and had got into the river the same day. The McKee plantation and the adjacent Elliott plantation had both been vacated for the party, and there they established themselves, happy to be away from the war-stricken area where they had suffered so much.

Their cattle had been driven by land around the end of Lake Erie, and did not reach the west bank of the Detroit till May 13. En route, the drovers had encountered a war party of Pottawattomies, who wanted to shoot all the cattle, but "the brethren conceived the good idea of giving them the public bull, with which they were content. Thus none of the brethren has individually lost anything so that we can thank the Saviour for this too, that this labor has been so well and fortunately accomplished without loss."

The labor, though, was not fully accomplished. On May 14: "Most of the brethren went over the river to get the cattle over, but found trouble there, for rum had been brought there, wherewith many of our people got drunk, and today only a few head were brought over." The next day was Sunday, but the work had to go on. "As most were busy with the cattle, since many warriors were come and they were in danger, we had to postpone the sermon and to work to get the cattle out of the way as soon as might be. In the evening, Brother Senseman held the congregation meeting."

Even now the danger was not past, for some Wyandotte women persuaded a few of the Delawares to build on the west bank, urging the difficulty in getting their cattle across. The missionaries realized that, so placed, cattle and converts would be at the mercy of every marauding war party. We can picture the stern Zeisberger, the persuasive Senseman, and Brothers Jung and Edwards arguing with the recalcitrants. But, eventually, the last of the cattle were got across the river.

The mouth of the Detroit was, though, too exposed a position for such a settlement. Indian war parties constantly came and went; and the Christian Delawares were frequently urged to join these parties in their raids on the Long Knives. Nor was the influence of some of the whites at Amherstburgh much more helpful. Zeisberger did what he could:

June 15, 1791: "After the brethren had got timber for the meeting house, they went to work today to build it, 32 feet long and 24 feet wide." So rapidly did they work, on June 18, Trinity Sunday, the missionaries were able to have their first service at which there were present "whites and blacks from the neighborhood." This is the first record of a Protestant service in Upper Canada west of Brantford.

But if some of the whites attended the services, there were others not above selling rum to the Indian converts, and exploiting them ruthlessly. On August 26 Zeisberger wrote: "We see, however, already what the results are if we live among white people. They

hire our people to work for them and will not pay them. They drive their cattle into the Indian fields, which have utterly eaten some as bare as a tennis court, and if they wish to complain about this, they get no hearing and no justice."

So, on December 2, 1791, the missionaries opened negotiations with the British authorities for a new home far from any white settlement. At the end of the year, Zeisberger wrote: "And although at present we are still living always in uncertainty, and have no abode, yet we hold to the name of the Lord, trust in Him, look to Him, who led us here and will farther lead us."

The negotiations progressed. On February 12, Abiah Parke arrived from La Tranche to tell the missionaries that there was "a fine pleasant country, that the land was good." Other messengers brought similar encouraging reports. On April 11:

"Edwards held early service. . . All were very busy preparing for departure, and the assistants with making a division of the brethern, who should go by land with the cattle and who by water, and they saw that all were helped.' And, quite impersonally, the record adds: "We laborers had for Bro. Zeisberger's 72nd birthday a love feast."

At 72, most men are eager to rest. The indomitable Zeisberger, far from resting, was plunging into the unknown at the head of his flock. On April 12:

"We assembled early for the last time here in our chapel. The low rabble was sent away. Then the canoes were at once laden, and towards noon we went away, we whites making the start, and sailed with a good wind."

Nine canoes with Indians followed. The rest of the converts, driving the cattle, went overland with Michael Jung.

On April 15 the first canoes reached the mouth of the Thames. By April 25 the last straggling canoe, and the overland party, joined the leaders at Dolsen's. That day most of the party set out up-river. The folk on the Thames were most friendly, refusing to take money for bread or provisions which they gave the Indians.

The choice of a new home proved far from easy. Either the river bank was too low, which meant the settlement might be flooded in spring, or too high, which made access difficult from the water. On May 2 a likely spot was discovered, and the following day home-sites were allotted and several of the party prepared to build. Then some Munceys suggested a better site, farther upstream. The missionaries, anxious for isolation, decided to remain where they were.

But on May 6 some of the brethern, looking for fields, found "something farther down the creek, better and more suitable. Next day the missionaries inspected the new site for themselves; and, despite the work already done on their village, decided to move, which they did on May 8.

That same day one of the Indians, Thomas, died. Zeisberger writes: Thursday, 10. In the forenoon was Thomas' burial, for which purpose we had found and laid a beautiful graveyard upon a little height." That cemetery, begun only two days after the village itself,

in 1950 still looked down on the recently rediscovered site of historic Fairfield.

The land was covered with hardwood. In no great time the village site was dotted with lumber piles. There were, though, bottom lands which could be divided into fields. The soil was richer than any the missionaries had seen before. On May 11 some garden seeds were sown.

Zeisberger himself must have been busy with the clearing, building and planting, for his entries become exceedingly terse. As, on May 17: "The brethern cleared, each for himself, built huts in town, and all had enough to do."

On July 7, 1792, is recorded the commencement of the first church in Kent. "The brethern made preparations to build a meeting house for the time being, till we see farther and have time to build a proper one on the common lot in front." The work went on steadily till on July 13: "Our meeting house is quite ready, with doors and benches, and the bell was hung up." This is probably the earliest record of a church bell in the southwestern peninsula.

With their church finished, they started the first school. On December 20: "All the brethern went out to cut timber, to square it, and to split it into boards for a new school house, with which labor they were today nearly done, and brought some here on sledges. To the young people it was joyful news, they went to work gladly." On January 7: "The brethern went to work on the school house, already under roof, to complete it." On January 10, Zeisberger reported the school house quite finished. The following October it was covered with clapboard.

Meanwhile, on December 31, Zeisberger had summed up: "We came here in May and chose this place for settlement, and according to appearances and as far as the country on this river is known to us, it is the best and fittest for us in all respects, for we find everything here which is requisite. It was a perfect wilderness and the building site thickly grown with heavy timber, and now already nearly 30 good houses stand here, among them dressed block houses. More than a hundred acres of land have been cleared and planted and every one who comes here wonders how the labor they see with their eyes could have been performed." The village at that time had 151 inhabitants.

On February 10, 1793, Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe "arrived in the forenoon with some eight Mohawks and six English captains, but stayed only a couple of hours and then continued his journey to Detroit. He looked at everything"—including the meeting house and school house, where the brethern had fires in two chimneys.

On his return trip, Simcoe arrived on February 25 and spent the night. The missionaries told him of their corn crops the previous year being ruined by early frosts; and he agreed to instruct the commandant at Detroit to advance them 20 bushels from the king's store. He also attended the usual weekly early service and showed much interest in the singing.

Early March brought a new activity, the making of maple sugar. The sugaring was punctuated by Easter, with its services typical of the ritual of the United Brethren.

The Wednesday before Easter the communicants in two divisions "had the washing of feet" and on Thursday celebrated the Lord's Supper. They began Good Friday with reading and a consideration of the "passion story." Saturday they "kept quiet Sabbath and had a love-feast in the afternoon." On Easter Sunday they prayed, partly in the chapel and partly in the graveyard, doubtless pondering on the five of their number who had died the previous year. Brother Michael Jung preached, Brother Sensemann held a baptismal service, and Zeisberger held a service for the baptized. And on Monday, April 1:

"The brethren went all again to their sugar camp, after first having contributed sugar for the love-feasts, 170 pounds." The entire sugar crop, finished the following day, ran into many hundreds of pounds, enabling them to pay their debts and to buy corn.

This patriarchal and primitive existence was, however, not perfect. A Frenchman from time to time visited the village, with rum. When he stayed for the night, the brethren were able to lock up his supply. But not always. Zeisberger writes, on May 10, 1793: "A Frenchman who came up here with rum caused us great anguish and perplexity, for some bad people of ours drank and made an uproar in town."

The missionaries, seemingly, did not object to smoking for on May 28 Zeisberger reports the planting of vegetables and tobacco—probably the first record of the planting of tobacco by white men in what later became a noted tobacco-growing country. Thenceforth for weeks the diary is terse, betokening that the settlement was busy with planting and cultivating. On June 27, though: "The Indian Peter's hive of bees swarmed for the second time." Peter had brought the bees from Ohio.

Flee though they would from the outside world, the outside world insisted on coming to them. For years there had been undeclared but bloody warfare in "the Old Northwest"—Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois—between the Indians and the western-moving American frontiersmen. The Indians were encouraged by the humiliating defeat of General Harmer in 1790 and the yet more crushing defeat of General St. Clair in Ohio in 1791. They girded themselves for a tremendous effort to wipe out the hated Long Knives.

So, on May 4, 1794, "a couple of Chippewas brought two strings of wampum and three pieces of tobacco" to Fairfield. One piece of tobacco was a present for the Moravian converts; the wampum, interpreted, meant, "All the Indians should assemble at the Miami to go to war against the States or their troops."

Such messages disturbed the peace-loving converts, and their white leaders. On April 27 there were rumors of threats that if the Indians did not go to war, they would be shot along with their cattle. Zeisberger, grown philosophical, notes sadly: "It is the old story to which we are wonted."

The missionaries advised the Chippewas to take their message and their tobacco to Muncey town. The Munceys demanded the wam-

pum as well, which solved the problem for the moment. There was still the problem of Chippewa war parties coming down the Thames and camping on the river bank at Fairfield. On May 17 one of these parties demanded food and tobacco, and, after this was given, prepared to stage a "beggar dance", dancing from house to house till something was given them. The missionaries informed them that if they would forego the beggar dance, they could have what they wanted. They settled for a hog. The same evening, though, they staged a dance at their own camp outside Fairfield.

On May 19, a war party of 30 Munceys danced their beggar dance through the town, getting an ox from the villagers, and departed, amid war whoops and the firing of guns, on May 22. Six of the Moravian Indians, three baptized and three unbaptized, left with the Munceys.

This reign of terror came to an abrupt end the same summer. On August 20, General "Mad Anthony" Wayne signally defeated the Indian confederates at Fallen Timbers. The Indians, cocky till then, were completely crushed. No more messengers with wampum and tobacco sung their siren song in Fairfield. But, for months, destitute survivors of the war parties continued to drift homeward through the village.

Meanwhile, more helpful things had been happening. Zeisberger records that at the beginning of March the thermometer stood at 19, but by March 15 it reached 70. Where Zeisberger secured the thermometer is uncertain: it is significant that there are no temperature recordings previously, but many afterwards. On March 3, Ebenezer Allen went through the village en route to Detroit, accompanied by a doctor. The coincidence is suggestive.

Allen, a famous or notorious figure farther east, made proposals to the missionaries. "He said he had it in mind to settle on the river, for he was entitled to have 2,000 acres of land. He had all sorts of projects, wanted to put his children in school with us, to settle them on our land, and to be helpful to us in all kinds of ways, for instance, to build school houses and meeting houses, mills; for which we gave him no hope that it would happen, but told him that in our mission it was a fixed rule to admit no white people."

Among so many firsts in the southwestern peninsula, Fairfield was, it would seem, entertaining the first promoter. At that, some of Allen's numerous progeny would have qualified for admission, their mother being the daughter of an Indian chief. Zeisberger judged the persuasive Allen shrewdly, as Allen's record elsewhere makes abundantly clear.

Earlier, fire had struck the village. On February 18: "Early before day, Abel's house took fire, which was not discovered till it was all in flames, and no longer to be extinguished, though there were men enough, but they could only look on and take care for the nearest homes on each side. The greatest loss this family has suffered is 20 bushels of corn." A log house was readily replaceable from the surrounding expanse of timber: but corn was necessary to the next year's planting, and to life itself. Zeisberger adds an explanation for

Abel's calamity: "We consider this no matter of chance, for he was disobedient, acting contrary to the rules of the church, and kept a bad house, where young people met in the evening, contrary to orders and did no good."

On March 31, 1794, Lieutenant-Governor Simcoe again visited the settlement, accompanied by a suite of officers and soldiers, and eight Mohawks. So cold was the weather, he asked if they might have the school house for a lodging, and was delighted when Brother Senseman invited him to spend the night in his house. The following morning the party left for Detroit in four canoes.

Less welcome, probably, was a return visit from Ebenezer Allen. On July 31: "Mr. Allen, who was here in the winter, came here by boat by way of Detroit to settle 40 miles up the river. He stayed over night and went on the next day." And on August 4: "White people went through here from Detroit with cattle, who have begun a settlement 40 or 50 strong, having come over from Europe. The land will be very thickly settled and grows perceptibly."

Again, on August 20, Allen came and spent the night. In the morning he attended Zeisberger's early service—so that, at least once in his life, this graceless adventurer must have gone to church.

With the wilderness becoming crowded, and strangers coming and going, the problems of government increased. There were neighbors—at a distance, perhaps, but still close enough to recruit help for the traditional "bee". On December 17: "A dozen brothers helped our neighbor Tiefsler block out a house, whom we earnestly advised to keep our Indians sober, since on such occasions there is much drinking, and he kept them sober."

On December 23 the record of a general meeting, held to take stock of the welfare of the community, indicates that in the minds of the missionaries all was not well. When labor was done in common, some withdrew from it and did not lift up their hands, thereby showing how their hearts were. Some of the brethren did not take kindly to admonitions from those who had been appointed as assistants in the church, and gave unseemly answers and words.

And, coming to more worldly matters, the brethren were exhorted to keep their chimneys clean, for during the previous winter there had been an instance of a house burning down.

The missionaries, too, deprecated a custom that had crept in, of young people at Christmas and New Year's running about and begging, evidently an early form of "shell out". Such days, the missionaries urged, were to be employed in much better service.

Meanwhile, the great enterprise of replacing the first humble meeting house with a church had been progressing. On December 19, 1793, Zeisberger recorded that the brethren had commenced to cut timber. A month later they were still cutting. By July 1, 1794, preparations were so well advanced that the old meeting house was moved to another place, a service was held and the ground prepared. Planks were split from wild cherry timber. On September 15 some of the brethren went out hunting to get meat for those working on the building and brought back three deer and several turkeys.

On October 1 the roof was finished and a little tower in which the bell was hung. Six days later the lower floor was laid. The brethren determined to finish the church in October, and on October 13 the sisters reinforced them. On Saturday, October 18, it was completed.

Sunday, October 19, 1794, the new church was dedicated. It must have been quite large for the time and place, for it took many months to build. Zeisberger notes that several "strangers"—perhaps white settlers from down river—attended the opening ceremonies. Its completion fairly rounded out the scheme of community life.

The village was laid out as a double row of houses along a single street parallel to the Thames, its eastern end terminating at a ravine. A plan of the village, dated August, 1794, shows 38 houses. The church occupies the fifth lot from the ravine on the side farthest from the river. Just west of this is Zeisberger's house. Directly opposite is the house occupied jointly by Edwards and Jung; next to this down river or west is Senseman's house, and then the school house. The remaining houses are occupied by converts, whose names are recorded on the plan.

The graveyard, on Hat Hill, is almost directly opposite the western end of the village. Behind the church the plan shows a small field which Zeisberger used for pasture and turnip growing. An Indian, Ignatius, had a large wheat field east of the ravine, extending across the later No. 2 highway.

The community was fortunate in possessing three valuable springs—a bounteous spring of clear water at the head of the ravine, feeding a little creek running to the Thames; a salt spring on the river bank less than half a mile distant; and not far away a petroleum spring. Its product was used by the Indians for medicine; but a notation on McNiff's 1794 village plan states that the Moravians burned the oil in their lamps. A murky light, doubtless, but probably equal to tallow candles.

A land grant, issued by Order-in-Council under date July 19, 1793, gave the Moravians 50,000 acres "on a width of $6\frac{3}{4}$ miles about their village, extending twelve miles back on the south side and northward to the purchase line." So that their village might be the centre of the reserve, the width of the "third townships" (Camden north of the river and Howard to the south) was reduced by six lots, which were added to the twelve that Surveyor McNiff now laid out through their lands. Thus their township, as well as the third township, was made 18 lots wide instead of the regulation 24 lots.

CHAPTER 5

Simcoe, The Great Pro-Consul

UNDER the new set-up established by the Canada Act, Sir Guy Carleton, Lord Dorchester, continued at Quebec as Governor-General of the two Canadas. Lieutenant-Colonel John Graves Simcoe was, in 1791, named His Excellency and Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada, and straightway began most diligently to concern himself with his new responsibilities and opportunities. While his wife, the 26-year-old Elizabeth, diminutive but alert, planned assiduously for domestic life in this strange, wild land, His Excellency pored over such maps and reports as scant knowledge of Upper Canada then made available.

Simcoe found hint of a newly-discovered salt spring on the River Trent. To inflocking Loyalists, with mighty axe-strokes carving new homes out of this timbered wilderness, salt was of vast importance.

"Get facts about this salt spring," His Excellency commanded. "Facts, too, about mill sites and the agricultural possibilities of the soil. Not forgetting, either, to avoid alarming the Indians."

In due time, serious, energetic Simcoe and vivacious, observant, diaristic Elizabeth made their headquarters at old Niagara, which his British-minded Excellency preferred to style Newark. Navy Hall, erstwhile the domicile of naval stores, now became the domicile of something even more vastly important in this new Upper Canada—a seething, energetic human brain that, contemplating the wilderness, saw visions and dreamed dreams.

Only a few years before, Simcoe had commanded a force of Loyalists, the Queen's Rangers, in the American Revolution. He had been surrendered, with unlucky Cornwallis, at Yorktown. These circumstances colored all his visions, dreams and actions in Upper Canada.

The peace that set the revolted colonists free to go their own way was less than ten years distant. Since the 1783 treaty, friction had been plentiful. Treatment of the Loyalists had not been according to pact; wherefore His Majesty still maintained red-coated garrisons at Fort Niagara and Fort Detroit, on supposedly American soil.

But British-minded Simcoe saw larger possibilities than mere renewal of a fratricidal warfare. The French Revolution was at the moment plunging all the world into a maelstrom. A Red Republican faction in the United States was furiously villifying General Washington. One suspects that Simcoe, viewing the situation from his eminently British angle, saw a possibility that the more sober-minded elements in the United States, fearful of red rebellion according to the French pattern on their own soil, might return to their allegiance to the Motherland. The more so, if here in Upper Canada, a duly-established model of British government were demonstrating its worth, and a strong British outpost stood ready to lend efficient aid

to the constituted authorities in the United States should rebellion menace them.

His Excellency, with what slight military pomp the colony had to offer, duly opened the first parliament of Upper Canada at Newark on September 17, 1792. Parliament enacted laws and adjourned; whereupon His Excellency turned his eager mind to establishing His Gracious Majesty's rule more firmly.

Population in Upper Canada was strung sparsely along the north shore from the Ottawa to the Niagara river; ten thousand people, not counting Indians; though Indians could not be disregarded either as problems or as allies. Captain Brant's Mohawk village on the Grand river—which Simcoe rechristened the Ouse—was an outpost of semi-civilization. From this to Detroit stretched uncharted, almost unknown wilderness, skirted by the great lakes, traversed by mysterious rivers—a land of much timber, rich soil and amazing possibilities.

Eager-minded Simcoe found this unknown western empire singularly alluring. He pored over maps; he studied surveys, notably those made in 1790 and 1791 by dependable Deputy Surveyor Patrick McNiff. To men who had visited this wilderness he was a human question mark. Lake harbors? Navigable streams? Soil? Salt springs? Timber? Mill-sites? Simcoe, drawing information as a sponge draws water, mulled it over swiftly, and with even more prodigious swiftness evolved vast schemes.

On maps of Sir Guy Carleton's time, the District of Hesse extended from Long Point to Detroit; its eastern boundary impinging on the District of Nassau. Sir Guy Carleton, now Lord Dorchester and once more governor-general—and unfortunately, though Simcoe was reluctant to admit it, his superior—had a penchant for German names. But Simcoe's loyalty was to a British, not a Hanoverian, king. By act of his parliament at Newark, Hesse and Nassau promptly became Western and Midland districts.

Simcoe used even more British terminology for the counties he created—eighteen of them fronting on Lakes Ontario and Erie and the Niagara River, of which Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex were the most westerly.

He provided for a nineteenth county. This was Kent. D. W. Smith, Surveyor-General of Canada, in a letter to John Askin of Detroit on July 26, 1792, thus describes it:

"It is said to contain all the country (not being territories of the Indians) and not already included in Essex, and the several other counties described, extending northward to the boundary line of Hudson's Bay, including all the territory to the westward and southward of the said line to the utmost extent of the country called or known by the name Canada."

This vast territory, probably the largest county in all history, did not at first extend south of the Thames. That river had been known to the Indians as Eskunissippi and to the French voyageurs as La Tranche. "Call it Thames," said British-minded Simcoe.

His Excellency issued instructions to D. W. Smith, surveyor-general. Into this western wilderness went deputy surveyors—not-

ably experienced Patrick McNiff. To him were assigned six ordinary or axe men at 1s 6d per day; two chain-bearers at 2s each and two horses at 3s each—with one quarter dollar allowed for one ration per man per day, which the surveyor was to deliver to his party. The ration consisted of 1½ lb. of flour; 12 oz. of pork; ½ pint pease.

McNiff departed on his mid-winter survey. Simcoe did not await his report. He planned to traverse the wilderness personally in March, seeing things for himself, Elizabeth's keen Welsh eyes also seeing things and her deft pencil sketching and recording them. But, setting out earlier, on Monday, February 4, 1793, Simcoe perforce left Elizabeth at Navy Hall. As a result, posterity lost a deal of acute detail her diary and sketch-book might have preserved.

His excellency and party travelled overland in sleighs. On February 7 a *feu de joie* from eager Indians welcomed them to Captain Brant's Mohawk village. After due festivities, Brant and a dozen Indians accompanied the party to the village of the Delawares, where on February 15 they first reached the rechristened Thames. On February 18, as they rounded a bend in the sinuous river, they were met by a dozen carioles, and a cannon mounted on a block-house at the Forks (later Chatham) saluted His Excellency. The cariole party escorted them to Dolsen's, a few miles farther down river. Thence they proceeded, on the Thames and St. Clair ice, to Detroit, where, on American soil, Simcoe received a royal salute and reviewed the red-coats of His Majesty's 24th Regiment.

The return journey, began on February 25, retraced much the same route. His Excellency conducted divine service in the wilderness. He had eyes for all things. On the upper Thames, he noted a spring of natural petroleum—prognostication of that strange phenomenon of 70 years later, the Bothwell oil boom.

On March 2, Simcoe's party regained the Thames at one end of a low, flat island enveloped with shrubs and trees. They walked over a rich meadow and at its extremity came to the falls of the river. Simcoe spent a day here, on the site of what was later London, dreaming new dreams.

Newark, on the Niagara river, temporary capital of Upper Canada, was, he reasoned, vulnerable to American attack. This inland site would be immune to attack unless the entire colony crumbled. The Thames would be navigable by boats to this point, by small sailing craft probably as far as the Moravian settlement, and would furnish an inland water route to Lakes St. Clair, Erie, Huron and Superior. To the north, a short portage would reach the rivers flowing into Lake Huron; to the southeast a similar portage would give access to Lake Ontario. The site, Simcoe decided, was singularly strategic.

Returning to Navy Hall from his five weeks' trip, His Excellency wrote Secretary Dundas in Old London regarding this New London on the Canadian Thames which he planned to make his permanent capital. Also, he impatiently awaited dependable McNiff's more detailed report. Huge schemes seethed in his busy brain. He visualized great military and colonization roads; Yonge street linking Lake Ontario and a future great city of Penetanguishene; Dundas street

spanning the wilderness from Burlington to Sandwich. He would appoint trained soldiers as lieutenants of counties and establish military colonies on the Roman plan, ex-soldiers hewing out homes in time of peace but rallying to the colors the moment war threatened.

All this, though, was subject to Dorchester's approval. Till Dorchester approved, what could be done to put this wild land into better posture for defence—or for attack?

On May 20, 1793, McNiff's laborious report was before His Excellency. At the cost of prodigious toil and the lives of eight men lost through the ice, McNiff had determined that navigation of the Thames as far as the new capital was practicable, "with the erection of one or two locks." Wherewith McNiff vanished from the picture, and McNiff's laborious report had to be laid by till obdurate Dorchester could be persuaded that Thames navigation was essential to the commercial life and military defence of Upper Canada.

Meanwhile, Simcoe visualized cities on this great river—a Canadian Chatham, with dockyards at the Lower Forks; farther east, the permanent capital, London (or perhaps Georgiana, in honor of His Majesty); and still farther east, a site named Oxford which "would in time become a considerable town" Simcoe predicted.

On the Thames, navigation already existed as far as Chatham: and Dundas street, to be run from Burlington to Sandwich (when and if indifferent Dorchester consented) would touch the Thames at Chatham. Chatham thus became a strategic point in Simcoe's scheme of defence, colonization and empire-building.

Dependable McNiff was heard of no more. In his place, Deputy Surveyor Abraham Iredell was directed by Surveyor-General D. W. Smith to survey a lateral road from Chatham "as straight as possible to Pointe aux Pins, on Lake Erie, to be hereafter called the Land Guard, where a position for a town is to be reserved."

Simcoe meditated the ultimate establishment of a dry-dock at Chatham. Even before his western trip, the Military Reserve at The Forks had been partially shorn of timber and a stockaded block-house built on high ground. On the flats below, one William Baker, erstwhile head of the Brooklyn Navy Yard, commenced the building of gunboats. Simcoe pictured these craft, their white sails bellying in the breeze, transferred swiftly from lake to lake—perhaps by a canal cut from the Thames to Lake Erie, perhaps by a roundabout route through Georgian Bay and Lake Simcoe to Lake Ontario, the route made continuous by artificial waterways—waterways which, like many other things, awaited the approval of obdurate Dorchester, who seemed less inclined than ever to approve any of Simcoe's projects.

Baker's shipbuilding did go ahead, however. Saw pits were set up on the Thames flats to facilitate the skidding of the ship timbers—all hand-sawn—from the level. The work ran into a deal of money. For the quarter from December 25, 1794, to March 24, 1795, some 23 employees received a total of £379 6s 9d currency from Richard Barn Tickell, deputy paymaster general for "sundry works carried on at Chatham on the River Thames." The payroll covering that period

was attested by William Baker, builder, and approved by Richard England, colonel commanding, with John Goudie, foreman, witness to the payment.

Baker is paid for 90 days at 5s 6½d a day, a total of £24 18s 9d. Foreman Goudie at 4s a day receives £15 8s for 77 days. The time of other employees varies from 77 days down to 16½. The payroll shows 11 carpenters and seven blacksmiths, each at 5s a day and two laborers at 2s 6d. Nearly half the workers, judging by their names, are French-Canadians. Most of the workers would seem to have been recruited from among the squatters or settlers on the lower Thames, with others from Detroit. An even dozen signed with a cross.

In 1795, there was set apart by the Governor-in-Council as a town plot and military Reserve at Chatham some 600 acres, comprising river front lots 1 and 2 in Harwich and 24 in Raleigh. Abraham Iredell, the same year, surveyed and mapped 113 one-acre park lots. The survey covered the double tier of lots, commencing at the eastern boundary, between Water and Gaol streets to William; thence the double tier between Murray and Colborne to the eastern boundary; then, crossing the creek a further double tier between King and Wellington to Lacroix, then the west limit of the town site. The map covering this survey, bearing date November 1, 1795, shows the Gaol and Market blocks reserved as such; also the block bounded by King, Third, Wellington and Forsyth streets for Church purposes. Baker's block house is shown on the Military Reserve, later Tecumseh Park; and a small hut on Lot 50, at the eastern boundary, built by Meldrum & Park, merchants, of Sandwich for trade with the Indians who camped nearby on the creek. No other buildings are shown. There is, however, marked at the upper end of King street, just outside the east boundary of the townsite, either a bridge or a mill-dam, crossing the creek. The width of the river is indicated as 2½ to 3 chains and the creek rather more than a half chain. The river depth was 2½ to 3 fathoms, with 3½ at the Forks; the creek depth 2½ fathoms at its mouth, dwindling to one fathom at the mill dam.

Iredell apparently received lot 17, at the southeast corner of William and Water streets, in part payment for his services; and thought so well of this community he had mapped that, about the year 1800, he built there a log house, with an excellent view of the river, and planted an apple orchard.

Things were also being done, under Simcoe's orders, at the natural harbor of Rondeau Bay, on Lake Erie. Iredell, indeed, did not get his Communication road under way till 1797, by which time Simcoe had left Canada, and was battling courageously but rather hopelessly for His Majesty in San Domingo. Along the northern section of this road, Iredell surveyed 200-acre lots for Loyalist settlers who did not settle.

On the north side of Rondeau Bay, 600 acres were reserved for the future lake port and city of Shrewsbury, planned originally as the capital of Suffolk county, which stretched from Lake Erie to the Thames. Some 400 acres of the Shrewsbury site, then or later, were actually plotted. The map shows 20 streets; a large square marked

"Gaol and Court House"; another "Market" and yet another "Church Reserve."

Across the Bay, the Eau Point was marked "Ordnance Lands". Here were to be erected fortifications bristling with cannon and manned by red-coats to protect Rondeau Harbor and the city of Shrewsbury should the white-winged gun-boats now building on the Thames fail to do so.

One other dream Simcoe seems to have nursed. As far west as London the terrain was high and hilly; but about Chatham and farther west was swamp and marsh, similar to the Low Countries of Europe, where, doubtless, Simcoe had seen canals, wide and deep, draining just such lands and providing water-borne transport for their products. Some such waterway Simcoe may have visioned, linking the Thames at or near Chatham with Rondeau Bay.

But that, like everything else, waited on Dorchester. And Dorchester, confronted with roseate dreams of empire, continued painfully obdurate.

Dorchester, in fact, would approve nothing, or next to nothing. Lieutenants of counties—no. Military colonies—no. Dundas street pushed through like a Roman military road to Chatham and Sandwich—no. The Thames made navigable to London by one or perhaps two locks—no.

In fact, nothing Simcoe dreamed met Dorchester's approval. Nor did Simcoe himself. Dorchester was a great man—had he not, twenty years before (by dint of sheer luck, said critics) saved Quebec from Arnold and Montgomery? He was indeed a great man; but not great enough to recognize a still greater man.

Dorchester could prevent Simcoe doing deeds; but he could not prevent Simcoe dreaming dreams. What little Simcoe could do, he did. It was a mere nibbling at the fringe of things; a slight, infinitesimal promise of what, given a free hand, he might have contributed to building a new nation.

As it was, he mostly achieved friction. As a result, the Gazette of September 11, 1796, announced that "His Most Gracious Majesty had been pleased to grant his royal leave of absence to His Excellency Major General Simcoe."

Kind words, as though kind words could satisfy a restless soul which left behind it in this wonderful new land glorious dreams dreamed and mighty deeds not done.

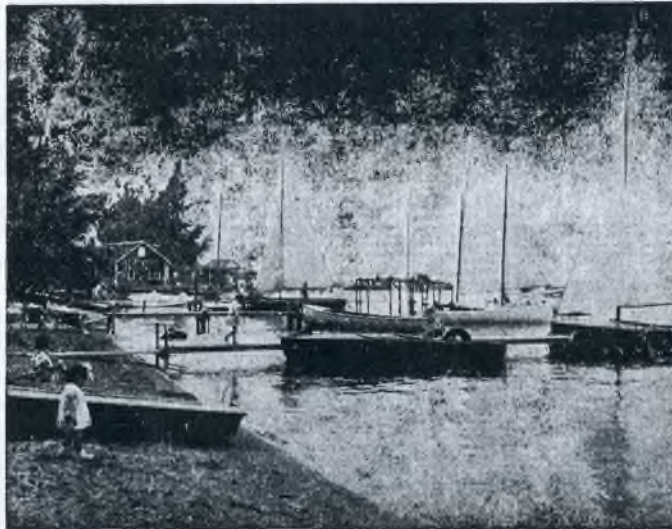
Simcoe went to command His Majesty's forces in San Domingo, where he acquitted himself as creditably as any British soldier could. In 1806, on a mission to the Tagus, he took suddenly ill, and returned to Devonshire to die. Alert, diminutive Elizabeth, growing into a little, dignified, rather masterful and arbitrary old lady of 84, survived till 1850. She never revisited Canada.

Simcoe's gunboats, unfinished in the stocks at Chatham, were burned by the settlers to recover the iron, a scarce commodity. McNiff's elaborate report on Thames navigation gathered dust in some forgotten pigeon-hole. Despite plans and tradition, no war-craft were

built on the Eau Point. Shrewsbury never became either a port or city, but, long years after, furnished a ready-made townsite for escaped slaves. So much of Simcoe's dreaming and striving came to such futile ends! Yet for many decades, men in Kent vaguely talked of a canal linking the Thames with Lake Erie— which was one of Simcoe's unrealized dreams.

Forests felled, marshes drained, Simcoe's wilderness yielded rich harvests. His London grew into a metropolis; his Oxford became Ingersoll; his British Ouse once more the Grand River; his Canadian Thames remained the Thames. The great roads he planned to help keep out American invaders, were built by later rulers to bring them in. The frontier he so assiduously sought to guard took pride in being unguarded for a century and a quarter. In one respect only the world remained unchanged from his day; in needing men who, seeing visions and dreaming dreams, battled the obdurate Dorchesters of life to realize their visions and make their dreams come true.

150 YEARS AFTER SIMCOE



Sailboats on Rondeau Bay

(Blenheim News Tribune)

Lord Selkirk's Baldoon Settlement

PRIOR to 1803, settlement in Kent clung to the line of the Thames, and consisted of Loyalists, French-Canadians or Indians — folk born in America, and familiar with pioneer conditions. In 1803, however, was set in motion the first attempt at mass emigration direct from the old land.

The famous Baldoon settlement was the outcome of the Highland Clearances. The Scottish landholders summarily evicted their tenants in order to convert their small holdings into extensive sheep ranges which commanded much higher rentals from a few proprietors. That the crofters whose ancestors had dwelt on these holdings for centuries were left homeless and starving seemed not to matter.

It did matter, however, to one nobleman. Born at St. Mary's Isle in Kircudbrightshire in 1771 and educated at the University of Edinburgh, Thomas Douglas in 1799 succeeded his father as fifth Earl of Selkirk. The hapless plight of the crofters appealed to his sympathetic nature, and he determined to help them find overseas new homes, their own homes, of which they could not be dispossessed.

In 1803 he brought to Canada his first Scottish emigrants, whom he settled on a coastal strip of Prince Edward Island. He then visited Montreal, and later, it would seem, Toronto. He was intrigued by the greater promise of the southwestern peninsula and procured land in Kent—the 950 acres of the Baldoon farm, and, it would seem, other lots south of the Lower Sydenham, as well as 578 acres north of the Thames, being lot 24, Concession 1, Dover, and lots 1 and 2, Concession 1, Chatham. There is no certainty that all these properties were bought at the one time—the patents, in fact, were not issued till years later.

Selkirk returned to Scotland, and in the latter part of 1803 gathered together his second group of immigrants, with Tobermory, on the island of Mull, as rendezvous. The company numbered 111, men, women and children.

A list of the heads of families survives. They were Angus McDonald, printer, Glasgow; Donald McDonald, tailor, Teree; Allen McLean, Teree; Angus McDonald, farmer; The Piper McDonald; Peter McDonald, school teacher; Donald McCallum, farmer; Charles Morrison, drover; McPherson, farmer; John Buchanan, farmer; and John McDonald, Albert McDonald, John McDougall, Angus McDougall and John McKenzie, all of Argyle.

The McCallums seem, through the years, to have preserved meticulously their family history and traditions. In addition to Donald, the father, there was his wife, whose maiden name was Morrison; his son, Hugh, then 17; and five daughters, Isabella, 15; Flora, 13; Emily, 10; Margaret, 7 and Annie, 5.

It is hard in a swift-moving era to picture the partings which marked their sailing from Tobermory; the feelings with which they faced the great adventure. Their courage may have been stiffened by the realization that Scotland had nothing left for them; by the hope that they would fare better in this new land of which "the Laird" spoke so highly.

Arriving at Kirkcaldy after an uneventful trip they learned that the war between France and England had been renewed, and French privateers were busy on the high seas. Lord Selkirk thought it unsafe to proceed, and advised remaining at Kirkcaldy till the following year.

Early in May, 1804, they set sail for Canada on the ship *Oughton*, of Greenock. Tragedy struck when, three tedious weeks at sea, a young brother of John Buchanan was taken ill, and died. The boy was buried at sea; the solemn ceremony cast a dark depression over the party, ominous of what was to come.

In five weeks from the time of sailing the banks of Newfoundland were sighted, and passing the grimly majestic scenery at the mouth of the St. Lawrence, the *Oughton* a week later reached Montreal. The Highlanders doubtless were happy that the worst of the journey, the tedious ocean trip, was over, and that in no great time they would be building new homes in the forest and tilling the rich soil.

At Montreal arrangements were made for transportation of the settlers and their effects to a point above the Lachine Rapids. A long procession of French carts carried them and their goods. At Lachine, they were transferred to batteaux. Up to this time there had been little to do; but for the ascent of the St. Lawrence, the hardy Highlanders were called on to ply the oars.

A halt was made at Kingston. Here a new figure, destined to play a conspicuous part in the subsequent story of the settlement, entered the picture.

Lionel Johnson and his family had emigrated from the Fenton farm at Woller, Northumberland, England, in 1803. He settled at Albany, in New York state. There Lord Selkirk, travelling via New York to join his Highlanders on the final stages of their journey to Baldoon, engaged the Northumbrian to take charge of a large flock of merino sheep then on the way to Canada for the use of the settlers.

The Johnson family, consisting of the father, mother, one daughter, and two sons, James, 8, and Lionel, 4, accompanied the Earl across country to Kingston where they joined the Highlanders. A small sailing vessel carried the entire party across Lake Ontario to Queenston, a four days' trip.

At Queenston there was a few days' delay, while the party and their effects were taken over the portage to the Upper Landing at Chippewa. Here, again, they boarded batteaux, and the lusty Highlanders once more bent to the oars. Skirting the north shore of Lake Erie, they reached Amherstburg, whence, after a short rest, they continued in open boats to the Baldoon farm on the Chenal Ecarté. They arrived in September, 1804.

At the moment, with the still warm September sunshine playing on the scene, the prospect was most inviting. After the hardships of their four months and more of journeying, it seemed as though they entered the Promised Land.

The Chenal Ecarté, familiarly known to later generations as "the Snye", breaks away from the River St. Clair at the head of Walpole Island, and trends southeasterly, dividing the mainland from Walpole, to a point known as Johnson's Bend. There it divides into two channels. One, called Johnson's Channel, goes south from the Bend, and empties into Lake St. Clair. The main channel continues southeast, separating St. Anne's Island from the mainland, and, carrying on its bosom the blue crystal waters of the St. Clair, passes the Baldoon farm and at the lower point of the farm receives the waters of the Sydenham. At few miles farther down it is joined by Little Bear Creek, and, continuing south, discharges its contents into Lake St. Clair.

The farm itself was an irregular piece of land, approximating 950 acres, which Selkirk had named Baldoon—the familiar name of a Scottish parish. Bordering the water it was lush green prairie for the greater part, with, to the north, some wooded land, indented to the south and west with prairie. The virgin soil, high and dry above the encircling waters, was ready to be broken for planting without the tedious preliminary of clearing: veritably, it seemed an ideal spot to found a colony. To the newcomers, its attractiveness was enhanced by its division into lots fronting on the water, so that each settler was assured a lot he could call his own.

Such was the picture which presented itself that first hopeful day. Disillusion came swiftly.

No shelter had been provided for the newcomers. Though the Earl had sent ship carpenters and other workmen to build cabins, the men had decamped. Later they claimed they were afraid of the Indians. In any event, they had returned to Sandwich. The Highlanders, weary and worn from a long and tedious journey, were left on the prairie banks of the Chenal Ecarté with nothing more adequate than tents to shelter them.

Their isolation was complete. The nearest white inhabitants were at Dolsen's on the Thames, seventeen miles distant, accessible only by a devious trail, known to few and rarely attempted, by way of Big Point. To north and east stretched unbroken forest. South and west was the far-reaching St. Clair and the vast Grand Marais.

In the Highlands, malarial fevers were almost if not altogether unknown. Here, exposed to the heat of the early September sun, to myriad swarms of mosquitoes and poisonous insects, to the miasmatic vapors of decaying vegetation and the neighboring bogs, the Highlanders, not yet acclimatized, sickened with malaria, ague and dysentery, which spread as the wet and rainy autumn advanced.

The first to fall victims to the disease were Donald McCallum, his wife and their 10-year-old daughter Emily, who died within five days of each other and within a month of their arrival. During the early months, the mortality was terrific. In the first year, 42 of the

original settlers died. To the hardships of pioneering in a strange land was added the tragedy of sickness and death snatching away their loved ones. Their cup was full to overflowing.

Under the terms of his agreement with the government, Selkirk was to receive 150 acres for each settler he brought out during a five-year period; and each of these settlers was to receive 50 acres for himself. Selkirk also was granted, outright, 1,200 acres in Dover, the site being selected by William Burn, his manager, who visited the area as early as 1802.

Selkirk had, seemingly, visualized the recreation on Canadian soil of the conditions to which his settlers had been accustomed in their native Highlands. He was the laird, operating an estate, and they were his crofters; but with the added advantage that, at the end of the term of service, each settler would receive a land grant of his own, sufficiently to make him independent. Baldoon was to be, primarily, a sheep farm; to which end Selkirk's agent, Richard Savage, had brought 1,000 ewes in New York state, which were supplemented by a number of merino rams and ewes brought from Scotland and Denmark. Wool was, in those Napoleonic war years, a profitable commodity.

The disasters which befel the settlement in its early years were at least partly due to mismanagement. Selkirk's agent and manager was a Scots-Canadian, Alexander McDonell, sheriff of the Home district and a member of the assembly; and these duties took him away for months at a time. The capable overseer, William Burn, died shortly after the settlers arrived. McDonell went to York, leaving Peter McDonald in charge. Peter died before McDonell could reach York, and he named John McDonald as successor.

Selkirk had returned to England. The news of the disaster to the settlement took long weeks to reach him. He advised McDonell to move to higher land, at the Forks of Big Bear Creek or to the River St. Clair. McDonell, returning to the settlement in the spring, found the surviving settlers recovered, and, disregarding the Earl's advice, let them stay at Baldoon. Later the same year, when fever struck once more, he moved the survivors temporarily to Sandwich and in his turn urged that Baldoon be abandoned. "A rapacious, discontented, indolent, filthy set," was his bitter characterization of the settlers.

The settlers who recovered were moved back to Baldoon; though Selkirk, after vain efforts to secure a land grant in Shawanese—later Sombra—township, advised McDonell to buy two or three farms on the Thames, to be worked on shares. Returning in April, 1806 McDonell instead gave Baldoon another trial, and himself rejoined his family in York. The malaria seemed to have run its course, and with the Highlanders acclimatized, and Dr. Sims sent by Selkirk from Scotland as colony physician, McDonell left the settlers at Baldoon, though he commented to Selkirk on "their inordinate love of whiskey and their incorrigible propensity to filthiness."

By early 1808, the colony was disintegrating. McDonell, hopeful of being appointed Receiver-General of Upper Canada, asked his

release; and Selkirk, welcoming the idea, proceeded to wind up his affairs in Upper Canada and instructed McDonell to let the farm on shares. But McDonell, balked in his ambitions to be Receiver-General, became anxious to stay on; and, instead of carrying out Selkirk's instructions, himself settled his family in permanent residence at Baldoon, and got to work on a new project of opening a road to the Thames. This was the Baldoon Road, running west of the Chatham-Dover town line from Big Bear Creek to the second concession on the Thames, and thence east to the town line and south to Chatham. The survey of the road and its tiers of 100-acre lots was made by Thomas Smith in April, 1810.

Selkirk's dissatisfaction with McDonell had reached a peak at the end of 1809, though Thomas Clark of Queenston did not arrive with the letter of dismissal till May, 1810. Clark's investigation of McDonell's accounts revealed no dishonesty but some inaccuracy. Clark, accustomed to the established conditions on the Niagara, was likewise critical of the settlers, and particularly of their lack of initiative; and of the waste and mismanagement which had followed the deaths of Wililam Burn and Peter McDonald. Unable to get a trustworthy man as share tenant of Baldoon farm, Clark reluctantly left McDonell in charge, with Angus McDonald in care of the sheep; and he strongly advised Selkirk to cut his disastrous losses by getting rid of the entire venture, sheep included. Yet it is significant that, of the settlers remaining, at that time, only John McKenzie wished to move to a farm on the Baldoon Road.

With the widening years one questions the rights and wrongs of McDonell's accusations. Many of his letters survived; the settlers themselves left little written testimony. Their own traditions give a picture of sturdy Scots rising determinedly above disaster and making good their foothold on the land for which they had paid so huge a price. Even McDonell conceded that three or four heads of families were worthy: one surmises the proportion was much larger. This is borne out by the success of these same Scots when the lavish but ill-directed paternalism of Selkirk was withdrawn and they were left to clear their own lands unaided. The smiling and prosperous North Kent and South Lambton countryside was the creation of their descendants; and their blood flowed strongly in the veins of the later generation whose sturdy determination made Wallaceburg the second industrial community in Kent.

Descriptions survive of the Baldoon farm, where Selkirk had, doubtless, dreamed of creating a flourishing overseas estate with himself as resident laird. On a knoll, facing and about a hundred yards distant from the Snye where it cut into the farm, and at a point long marked by a solitary willow, stood Baldoon House or "the Castle." This story-and-a-half frame structure, lined with brick, was a longish building, steep roofed, with a large veranda in front, at the ends of which and incorporated with it were two small enclosed store-rooms or "pantries". From the Castle northeasterly extended, later the cabins of the settlers, who were to occupy lands on the northwest side of Baldoon Farm. The eastern portion on Bear Creek was reserved for the Earl's sheep.

These sheep were meant to be the backbone of the enterprise. Dr. George Mitchell of Wallaceburg, who spent much time assembling from the lips of survivors the traditions of the settlers themselves, recalled a talk, shortly after he came to Wallaceburg in 1867, with James Johnson, son of the Earl's shepherd. In 1804 James, a boy of eight, helped his father drive the thousand sheep overland from Queenston to the Baldoon Farm. The route, seemingly, followed the rough roads and Indian trails north of Lake Erie, for there was a halt near the mouth of the Thames till the plains froze over, permitting them to proceed. Some of the flock were herded by Alex Brown, who, following a different route, wintered them at the Grand River, losing some through the depredations of wolves. Rattlesnakes and the scab afflicted the flocks in transit. Considering the distance traversed, that the country was a wilderness—yes, and the inherent obstinacy of sheep — we have some concept of the difficulties the sturdy Northumbrian and his young son overcame, the hardships they endured, and their marvelous skill in herding so vast a flock through so many perils; even if, as some say, a few of the Highlanders were detached to help in the task.

A large pen or sheepfold of logs was built on high ground on the southeasterly part of the farm fronting on Bear Creek. Into this the sheep were herded every evening, to safeguard them from wolf packs prowling in the darkness.

A little south and east of the Castle stood a community storehouse; and in log-built pens attached to this were housed the horned cattle, barnyard animals and poultry. North and slightly east, on another slight elevation, was the little "God's acre" of the colony where, in that first cruel winter, so many were laid to rest. At a little distance, and toward the point, Laughlin McDougall, about the close of the War of 1812, erected the "old windmill" whose sail arms for many years made it a familiar and grateful guidepost for weary travelers and early navigators of the Chenal Ecarté and Bear Creek.

Viewing the Baldoon farm a century and more afterward, with the surrounding waters lapping or overlapping it, one questions why this site was selected; especially with the alternative of the high ground on the Thames which later became Chatham North. But, in 1804, the water level of the rivers and lakes was five or six feet lower than at any time subsequent to 1834; so that the broad acres of virgin prairie, ready for the plow without the toil of clearing, veritably invited the eager settlers.

Nature, malaria and the slowly encroaching waters were not the only enemies of the settlement. Selkirk had expected to return early and often. The equipment included a marquee tent, intended for the Laird's use on his visits. But, within a year, he was planning his Red River venture; and Baldoon resolved itself into a tale of mismanagement. In 1809 Lionel Johnson complained to the Earl; who, under date of December 21, wrote: "It is my intention to let the farm of Baldoon, with the sheep and other stock, on shares, according to a plan which I have explained to Mr. Clark of Queenston. I shall be well satisfied to have you for one of my tenants, and the terms

proposed are such that you will find more to your advantage than to take up a lot of land for yourself." But Johnson, unwilling to work under Dr. Sims, whom McDonell had left in charge, sought a new location on the Thames, though later he settled at the Forks on Bear Creek.

Despite its disasters, the settlement was achieving a measure of prosperity when the War of 1812 broke. The war prevented Selkirk's agent, Thomas Clark, from selling Baldoon Farm, as Selkirk had wished. Selkirk made no attempt to recruit additional settlers for his expensive and luckless colony. Instead, he turned his attention to the Red River, bringing out in 1811-12 several shiploads of emigrants, mostly from Scotland, by way of Hudson's Bay and York Factory. To assist his project, he purchased control of the Hudson's Bay Company. Selkirk's governor and aides were massacred at Seven Oaks by emissaries of the rival Northwest Company.

In 1814 the American General McArthur visited the Baldoon settlement, though, contrary to popular tradition, his visit was almost friendly. Accommodated at the castle, he was entertained by the heads of the settlement, possibly with some of Dolsen's famous peach brandy: while his troopers bivouacked along Bear Creek and the Snye. Later the same year Captain Forsyth and his undisciplined rabble plundered Baldoon of its sheep and cattle and the settlers of their provisions. Forsyth and his uncouth followers even stole and strutted in Selkirk's clothing. Part of the spoil was returned by the American authorities, or, some say, recaptured from the looters.

The end of the war left Selkirk free to untangle the threads of his ventures in colonization. In 1815-16, after visiting the Grand River settlement, he continued to Baldoon, where, it is recorded, "he made arrangements for the comfort of the settlers." Then, returning to Montreal, he enlisted a hundred or more discharged veterans of De Meuron's Regiment, and, after a toilsome journey, captured the Northwest Company's stronghold at Fort William, arrested the chief agent and other officers of the rival company and sent them to York under escort. There, the joint influence of the Northwest Company and the Family Compact balked Selkirk's efforts to secure the conviction and punishment of the men responsible for the Seven Oaks massacre.

To end the constant drain of the Baldoon Farm on his resources, Selkirk leased it to William Jones. In 1818 he sold it, subject to the Jones lease, to Dr. John McNab of Sandwich, a Hudson's Bay trader, for £2,225 4s 6d currency. After his departure, as a result of the Fort William episode, Selkirk was sued for false imprisonment, and judgments recorded against him—amongst others, £1,500 by Daniel McKenzie and £500 by William Smith, sheriff of the Western District, both of which Selkirk's executors paid.

Depressed in spirits and weak in body, Selkirk with his wife and family, returned to his loved Highlands, later seeking health in the south of France. He died at Pau on April 8, 1820, and was buried in the Protestant cemetery at Orthes. It was ironic that the empire builder whose life thus touched Kent should find his last resting place in an alien land.

Gourlay, who visited Kent in 1817-18, records of the Baldoon settlement that "from an original roll of 111 souls who had settled in 1804, through death, desertion and war causes it has dwindled down to about 10 families and 50 souls." But the Dover parish census of 1817 credits the Baldoon settlement and nearby lands with 21 heads of families and a total population of 114. As late as 1882, three of the original emigrants still survived.

For two years Dr. John McNab and his squaw spouse 'kept hall' at the Castle, watched their flocks and supervised their tenants. McNab died about 1820-21; and in 1822 the Baldoon Farm was sold at sheriff's sale to William Jones and James Woods of Sandwich for £1,281. For many years the ownership remained in Jones and his descendants. Thomas Clark of Queenston purchased much of Selkirk's remaining holdings in Dover.



BUSH HOME NEAR CHATHAM (Circa 1838)

(From Painting by Lt. - Col. P. Brainbrigge)

The Calm Before the Storm

EVEN before Selkirk's Highlanders assembled at Tobermory, Colonel Thomas Talbot had commenced his Canadian career, which was to profoundly stimulate the development of South Kent.

It was on May 21, 1803, that the eccentric Talbot established himself in Dunwich, and built his first Castle Malahide. With this as his government building, and capital, he rapidly colonized the surrounding territory. To serve his colonists, and to help sell his lots, he undertook, quite early, the building of the Talbot Road, which, following a course a little north of the Erie shore, was to link Niagara with Detroit.

In 1804 Surveyor John Bostwick blazed the Talbot Road westward through Orford and Howard. Settlement, however, appears to have antedated the road; though dates are difficult to determine, because the land was sold on time and patents were not issued till the last penny was paid.

Most of the patents on the Talbot Road appear to have been granted subsequent to the War of 1812, as Talbot's colonists gradually worked westward. But on April 24, 1804, is recorded a patent to one William Hands, covering 1,200 acres, including the present lot 100, South Talbot Road. In this the land is described, not in reference to the Talbot Road, not yet surveyed, but as lots one and two in the first, second and third concessions on Lake Erie. So large a grant implies that Hands was a land speculator; and as Talbot was bitterly opposed to all land speculators except himself, the grant was doubtless authorized before Talbot appeared on the scene.

In the ensuing decade, however, there must have been other settlers, even though their patents were not recorded till later. We can picture the South Kent of that day—a trail blazed through the forests, dodging the stumps which still dotted the right of way; a few isolated log cabins and clearings at long intervals; a few stalwart but occasionally discontented men toiling to establish themselves.

Harwich was a wilderness. On the north shore of Rondeau Bay, Simcoe's county town and lake port of Shrewsbury had been surveyed; but no one seems to have settled on the townsite. There may have been brief shipbuilding activities on the sands at the entrance to Rondeau Bay; and on the lake front, to the east, nomadic Indians camped now and then, near what had been the site of an Attawandaron village. The lofty bluffs of the Erie shore, the swampy terrain in the vicinity of Rondeau, repelled rather than invited settlement.

After the British captured Detroit in 1760, canoes and small craft both east and west-bound had followed the north shore of Lake Erie. As early as 1761 Sir William Johnson, landing east of Pointe aux Pins at the mouth of Patterson's Creek, observed vast numbers of pigeons, and discovered a portage which cut off the long trip

around the point, but pronounced it "hardly passable without more trouble than profit."

The year 1763 witnessed the capture and destruction of the lesser western posts in Pontiac's uprising, and the determined siege of Detroit. On November 7, a storm forced a fleet of 50 batteaux under Major John Wilkins ashore at Patterson's Creek, while en route to relieve the fortress. Several boats foundered and others were dashed to pieces; a number of officers and 63 privates lost their lives, and the expedition had to be abandoned. Doubtless this wreck is the basis for an otherwise unverified but very persistent tradition that \$100,000 in gold and bullion, intended for Procter's troops at Detroit, was lost in the lake off Terrace Beach in the War of 1812, and is still buried in the sands.

Through the years before 1812, white settlers continued to gravitate to the lower Thames. The busy activities of enterprising Matthew Dolsen on the Dover side were expanding. Dolsen's was, actually, the commercial centre of the county and, in all but name, its capital. Though settlement was strung along the river, and at no point reached far inland, it was to Dolsen's that the settlers came to barter their products for the things they needed. Matt Dolsen's store, tavern, distillery, mill and blacksmith shop were at times exceedingly busy. And it was at Dolsen's that the increasing overland traffic between Burlington and Sandwich planned to halt overnight.

In contrast with Dolsen's, its population slowly increased by the influx of new settlers, the patriarchial Indian settlement at Fairfield, farther up the Thames, was almost entirely dependent for its growth on natural increase. At the end of each year the meticulous Zeisberger took stock. On December 31, 1792 he wrote:

"At the end of the year we came together, about midnight, to a love feast. Baptized this year five adults and five children. Admitted to the holy communion, five. One couple married. Three have died, among them one child. There are in all 151 inhabitants here, among them two unbaptized adults."

This, at the end of its first year, was a sizeable community. Zeisberger's notation at the end of 1793, "There live here now 150 Indian souls, eight more than last year," does not, apparently, take count of the missionaries and their families.

On December 31, 1794, the entire population was 165, "six more than last year." December 31, 1795, "In Fairfield there now live 150 Indian souls great and small, seven less than last year." But at the end of 1796 the population had increased to 169 (Indians) and a year later it was 172.

The activities of the Indians were largely confined to agriculture and maple sugar making. Corn was the chief crop, though wheat was also grown. Pumpkins were planted among the corn; and their fields produced tobacco, turnips, beans, potatoes and squash. Apple trees had been planted, but until these were ready to bear, the Indians made frequent visits to the lower Thames, and even to Detroit, for the prized fruit. On November 2, 1793, Zeisberger writes: "A number of sisters went down to the settlement for apples this week." And, on

September 27, 1796, "Yesterday and today most of the sisters went to Detroit to sell baskets in exchange for apples."

There was little time for hunting, though deer, bears, turkeys and other game were shot at various times to supplement the food supply. In the spring, fish were caught in great quantities by the children and older people by means of a "bound" or fish-dam in the river. In the summer the women picked and dried berries, and in the fall they gathered great quantities of chestnuts and walnuts. Thanks to the repeated swarmings of Peter's bees, the settlement had plenty of honey.

The Thames had become a heavily travelled route from Burlington and Niagara to Detroit, used alike by whites and Indians; and Fairfield was a customary stopping place for all comers. The missionaries experienced their worst difficulties with Indians from the Muncey and Delaware reserves on the upper Thames. These troublesome wayfarers camped on the river bank, sometimes for weeks at a time, drumming, dancing and drinking, and leading the young Indians astray. The Chippewas were the worst, for they stole what they could, and danced their beggar dances through the streets, begging from door to door.

The illustrious Simcoe and his party were not the only white visitors in the early days: and as settlement in Upper Canada increased, white wayfarers came more and more frequently. "White people arrive almost daily," Zeisberger notes in his diary as early as 1795. Of these people, some were travelers to Niagara or Detroit; some were intending settlers seeking new lands, or driving cattle to the homesteads they had already chosen. Fairfield observed the tradition of frontier hospitality, though it must have put a strain on the village and its resources; most of the travellers stopped for a meal, many remained for the night.

Traders came frequently, usually remaining several days while they bartered their wares for corn, sugar, cattle, pelts and basketry. Abiah Parke, Matthew Dolsen and a clerk of the famous John Askin are mentioned in the early years. "The hat-maker, Chotes, (Choate), came here to sell hats," Zeisberger notes on May 25, 1796. On two successive visits that month he did a thriving business. French traders came frequently, but were frowned on by the missionaries, because they sold rum to the Indians. On June 29, 1796, the missionary notes: "A tailor, whom we had sent for to make us needful clothing, came yesterday, took our measure and went home again." Such itinerant craftsmen were a feature of pioneer life.

Even a doctor is mentioned as passing through, and on one occasion as having been sent for: but there was no doctor resident nearer than Detroit. In emergency, the people had to rely on their own crude remedies. On June 7, 1796, "Sabina took her daughter, Mary, to the settlement to have her cured at a woman's house there." Such helpfulness was reciprocal: On June 11, 1796, "A woman in the settlement, who had cancer, sent word to our Indians and asked them to take her for treatment, which one of the Indians undertook to do." Earlier, December 15, 1795, a 14-year-old girl was "much reduced and

very weak from bleeding at the nose." None of the remedies tried could stop the flow so eventually "We tried letting a little blood from a vein, and this had the result wished for."

Education was an important part of the mission work. In 1796, a new school was found necessary. It was erected near the chapel, a house being moved to make room for it. Zeisberger writes, February 22, 1796:

"Our young people who go to school are so set upon it that they make it their chief business, and prefer it to everything, got together and went out and cut wood for Brother Senseman at his sugar hut, so that he might not be hindered by work from keeping school. Many of them can write a good English hand, better than many clerks with the merchants in Detroit."

The comparison suggests fairly frequent business contacts with the Detroit merchants. Fairfield was not isolated to the same extent as the later Baldoon settlement.

With the down river white settlers, relations were close and mutually helpful. Zeisberger writes on April 17, 1792, "Came to Sally Hand, a colony composed of French, English and German settlers." That was before the Indians were established at Fairfield. On June 20, 1792, "Coming here we bought 100 bushels of corn at Sally Hand, and now we have bought some more at Munceytown. Corn is \$1 a bushel at Munceytown."

"Sally Hand" is, of course, the missionaries' rendering of "Sally Ainse," that determined squaw having, temporarily, written her name on the map of Kent. During their first winter at Fairfield the missionaries again resorted to the lower settlement for corn but were able to get little because "the settlers are new beginners and have little."

Later, Indians from Fairfield worked among the down-river whites to earn corn and flour. They traded at Dolsen's, and later took their grist to Cornwall's mill, which was much nearer.

Though generally helpful, the relations with the down-river folk were not uniformly satisfactory to the ascetic Zeisberger. "This is a godless people on this river," he writes, "and if they can lead our Indians astray, they do so gladly." There were elements of antagonism and suspicion on both sides. The white settlers blamed the Fairfield Indians for the thefts for which the wandering Chippewas were probably responsible; the missionaries suspected the whites wanted to force them out and gain possession of their now prosperous lands.

Yet for years, the Fairfield mission was the centre of religious influence, even after Father Marchand of Sandwich established his first modest chapel on the Lower Thames. Nearly every Sunday, white folk came all the way from the down-river settlement to join in worship at Fairfield church. In time the missionaries extended their work beyond Fairfield. Gottlieb Senseman was much occupied with marrying couples and baptizing children. Frequently he went down river to preach or to visit the sick, and rarely left without conducting several baptisms.

Senseman was exceedingly popular in the down-river community. In 1796 the settlers there wanted him to be their representative in the Legislative Assembly. Willing to serve in many other ways, at this he drew the line.

Michael Jung was also active outside Fairfield village. For years, beginning in February, 1796, he preached every alternate Sunday at the house of Francis Cornwall, seven miles downstream. Zeisberger's concluding records refer to these activities. On February 19, 1796: "A Couple from the settlement came here to get Brother Senseman to attend a wedding, whence he came back the day after." Two days later, Sunday, February 21, "Michael (Jung) returned from the settlement where he had preached, seven miles from here, having a fine audience." This would be at Cornwall's, and indicates the eagerness of the pioneers for religious services.

On August 14, 1796, Zeisberger writes: "After the thanksgiving liturgy, Brother Senseman preached, at which were present two of our neighbors from the nearest township, one of whom was Francis Cornwall, from Connecticut government, in which house Brother Michael Jung has preached every other week; a man who loves the good and arouses his neighbors to hear the preaching of the gospel. If there is no sermon, he reads something to them. He came here to visit us and to get acquainted with us."

Like Senseman, Jung frequently baptized children and conducted funerals. Indeed, so great were the demands on the missionaries that they had to decline an invitation from a new settlement up the river that they should preach there.

But changes in the ministry were approaching. In the summer of 1798, Edwards and Zeisberger left for the Tuscarawas valley in Ohio, accompanied by some 40 or 50 Indians, to found a colony. At this time Fairfield had 300 acres of land under cultivation, and each year produced and sold 2,000 bushels of corn and 5,000 pounds of maple sugar.

On March 4, 1800, Gottlieb Senseman died, and was buried at Fairfield. Michael Jung remained. Till 1804 he was assisted by Haven and Oppelt, who in the summer of that year set out to found the colony of New Salem. John Schnall came soon after Zeisberger's departure. In the spring of 1800, Christian Frederick Denke came for the purpose of founding a mission among the Chippewas. Two attempts, one on Harsen's Island and the other on Bear Creek below Florence failed; and in December, 1806, Denke returned to Fairfield. Both Jung and Denke, with Schnall, remained till the ultimate tragedy of 1813.

Meanwhile, white settlement, which in 1792 had extended only a short distance above the Forks at Chatham, had gradually bridged the gap between that point and Fairfield. The transfer of Detroit to the Americans in 1796, following the Jay treaty, resulted in many Loyalist residents of that community seeking new homes on the Thames.

A traveller, ascending the Thames in his canoe in the spring of 1812, perhaps bringing from Detroit tidings of the increasing tension

between Britain and the United States, and the truculent attitude of Henry Clay, the young leader of the "War Hawks" in Congress, would have passed scenes little different from those which met the eyes of the first pioneers a quarter century before. Here and there on the river banks, civilization had gained a slight toe-hold, but little more.

To the south, the river front in Tilbury East was still a wide expanse of marshland and shallow, where bulrushes nodded their brown heads, muskrats built their domes and water birds swooped or soared to an accompaniment of shrill cries. A few French pioneers, fishermen and trappers, were the sole human denizens of this waste. To the north, Dover West "the first township north of the Thames" was smaller but even more empty.

Ascending farther, however, Raleigh, on the south, showed along the river front a succession of log cabins standing in their small clearings, token that three successive waves of immigration—before 1790, between 1792 and 1794 and following the Detroit exodus of 1796—had struck their roots firmly into the rich soil. The numerous Dolsen clan had spanned the river, occupying also the Dover side where the hamlet bearing their name was filled with busy activity. On the Raleigh bank, the second Isaac Dolsen's seven sons and three daughters, with their descendants, were in themselves a substantial population, though it might be ominously whispered that "Ike's Matt" was "talking Yankee". Edward Parsons, son of the pioneer Thomas and first white child born in Kent, was now entering his young manhood.

Energetic Philip Toll, who as a youth had come from Detroit in 1796, had made substantial progress in establishing himself. Next to the Dolsens, probably the most substantial family on the Raleigh bank were the McCraes—Thomas, the father, and a number of sons, of whom Thomas, Alexander and William were the most likely to be mentioned. The elder Thomas was already a man of substance: as witness the substantial brick house shortly to be built for him by a man named Lenover, a skilled mason who, hitherto, had found no opportunity in all Kent to exercise his trade. McCrae the Elder operated a store of sorts, and was so highly regarded that he had been in 1800 elected M.P. for Kent. Another Raleigh pioneer who had taken up storekeeping and whose trading post was close to the river bank was George Jacobs. John Williams, John Peck, Andrew Hamilton and his son John, Roderick Drake and his son Francis, who was keenly interested in military matters, were all located on the Raleigh front.

The Thomas Clarke and Wilmore homesteads, on the Dover side nearest the Forks, abandoned by their owners, were reverting to forest. The once ambitious Chatham townsite, on the south bank, was equally empty, though Iredell's apple orchard, surrounding his vacant log cabin, just east of the creek, was once more a mass of pink and white blossoms.

Above the townsite, on the north bank, was the Baker farm. Originally, according to the current story, the allotment was drawn by Jacob and Valentine Iler, who were coaxed, possibly high-pressured,

into surrendering it to William Baker as part of the inducement to the latter to take charge of the government shipbuilding operations in the wilderness. Baker's daughter, Anne, had quite recently married a son of the noted Count and Doctor Hermann Melchior von Eberts, former sheriff of Wayne county, and was living at Windsor.

Farther upstream on the north side was the cabin of George Sichelstele, once a member of the Hessian contingent in the Revolutionary War, and whose son, David, was the first white child born in Chatham township.

On the south bank, the wayfarer might have seen, through a break in the trees, the gaunt gray framework of McGregor's Mill, on the creek bank. Since 1796 the Harwich bank, upstream from Chatham, had been gradually populated — John Shepley, the Traxlers, Adam Everitt, some of the Arnolds and Hugh Holmes being among the first.

Holmes, settled on Lot 23, River Front, was a prodigy of learning. Of Irish birth, he came to America as a boy, lived for a while in Montreal and attended college at Dartmouth, New Hampshire. Later he taught school, and married, in Detroit; but in 1796 settled on the Thames where his son, Abraham, was born in 1797, the first white child born in Harwich. Liberally educated, the services of Hugh Holmes were widely sought by his less-favorably endowed fellow settlers, and for many years he acted as notary in the preparation of legal documents and was a sort of amanuensis for the entire Thames River settlement. In later years he moved to Sandwich where he taught in the "old stone school" his family, however, remaining on the Kent farm.

A mile or more beyond the Holmes place the wayfarer would glimpse Arnold's Mill and the surrounding homestead and farm buildings. Just below or above this point the Thames was fordable, at least on horseback. As early as 1794, Isaac French had located on Lot 3, River Front, in Howard, but shortly after he moved to Chatham township, selling his Howard property to Frederick Arnold.

A native of Berlin, Germany, Arnold had emigrated to Pennsylvania. He and his sons had espoused the British cause in the Revolutionary War, and afterward had come west to Detroit, residing there a short time and then crossing the river to Petite Cote, below Sandwich. In 1796 he moved to the Thames and took over the Isaac French homestead.

Four grown sons, Louis, John, Christopher and Frederick came with the elder Arnold to the Thames. Louis and John settled on the Chatham township side; while Christopher and Frederick remained with the father.

The Arnold property was traversed by a small creek, emptying into the Thames. On the bank of this creek, the elder Arnold erected a small saw mill. To this, Christopher Arnold, some time prior to 1800, added a grist mill, also operated by water power, though at some seasons of the year, despite damming, the water flow became a bit uncertain. The roads in those days, antedating any government survey, were given roads, and the Arnold mill-road later crossed the

Thames from the north side about the middle of Lot 3, River Range, Camden, on a rudely constructed bridge, and, passing the mill, trended southward through the wilderness. Other given roads trending east and west were in time opened on both sides of the river. When, in 1809, the government surveyed the townships, the north and south township line was run some distance west of Arnold's.

A small community grew up about the mill. Indeed, J. G. Ribley had settled on Lots 1 and 2 before the Arnolds came, while lot 4, to the east, was occupied by William Miller, later drowned while fishing in Lake St. Clair. Still trending east were William Howard, Lot 5, and William McCall, Lot 6, the latter shortly giving place to John Carpenter. John Gordon lived on Lot 8, Nicholas and Elihu Cornwall on Lot 9, and Jacob Quant, who had "borne the chain" for Patrick McNiff in his Thames surveys, occupied Lot 12. One McDonald, on Lot 13, represented, for the time being, the easterly limit of settlement.

On the Chatham township side, between the later Louisville and Kent Bridge, the Arnold, Everett, Blackburn and French families



SIXTH STREET, CHATHAM, (Circa 1838)

(From Water Color by Lt. - Col. P. Brainbrigge)

were the earliest settlers, though the French and Blackburn families later moved farther into the township.

Still farther upstream was the Cornwall settlement. The Camden river front was a wilderness when, about 1796, Joshua Cornwall, a Connecticut Loyalist, located there. His son, Nathan, in 1800, was the first white child born in Camden. Both father and son later represented Kent in parliament. On their homestead, Lot 14, they erected a grist mill. Absalom Shaw was another early settler on the Camden river front.

Some time prior to 1804, another Connecticut Loyalist, Lemuel Sherman, settled just upstream from Cornwall in Lot 15. In that same year Sherman's son, David, was born on his new homestead. The elder Sherman, who had lost the sight of one eye, built a large frame house with an oak-stake palisade, and a huge barn, which remained one of the landmarks of the Longwoods Road till well into the twentieth century.

The Sherman homestead was the nearest white location to the Fairfield Indian settlement. There were Indian lands on both sides of the Thames, in Zone and Orford, and extending pretty well to the eastern boundary of the county.

In contrast with these thriving settlements and busy activities both up and down stream, the Chatham townsite at the Forks was in 1812 desolate and empty. With Simcoe's departure from Canada in 1796, his farsighted plans were pigeon-holed and forgotten. On a berrying expedition, about the year 1811, young Johnny Toll, with some boy companions from Harwich, blundered on rotting, ghostly timbers overgrown with brush and rank weeds on the river flats, and was told by his better-informed comrades that these were "Baker's boats." According to one tradition, two, possibly three, were actually launched and, each armed with a gun from the blockhouse behind the shipyard, actually sailed down river. But two certainly remained, and it is doubtful if any of the five warcraft ever left the stocks. Years later, Daniel Fields of Harwich, veteran of the War of 1812, stated that the settlers gradually burned the vessels to secure the iron used in their construction—iron being a scarce and costly commodity.

The log blockhouse on the bluff behind the flats still stood, empty except perhaps on the King's birthday, each June, when the militia men assembled on the Military Reserve where officers slightly better versed in soldiering put them through their paces. Timber from the reserve had been used in the shipbuilding, but the uneven terrain was dotted with shrubbery and second-growth timber. A bridge of sorts, consisting of two huge logs, with planks crosswise spanned the Creek at its mouth: it carried the "mill road" which, following the south bank of the Thames to this point from the down river settlement, continued east, through the Reserve and along Colborne street to McGregor's Mill.

Irish Thomas Clarke, to finance his venture, had borrowed from Scottish John McGregor of Sandwich, with the result that ultimately he was committed to Sandwich jail as a debtor. There he languished

till he satisfied the debt by turning over his mill property and his Dover and Harwich land grants to McGregor.

The latter had other irons in the fire, and was content to let the unfortunate Clarke carry on. While Clarke was in jail, a flood had carried away his original mill, which was located at the mouth of "Little Creek" emptying from the north a short distance east of the Chatham townsite. Clarke rebuilt his mill on a scale even less pretentious than the original structure; but in no great time fire wiped it out. Then, it seems, McGregor took over personally.

About 1808, McGregor built a new mill a little farther upstream which was run under his management, or that of a hired miller. Then, or later, a sizeable settlement sprang up in the vicinity of McGregor's Mills. Farther east, Abraham Iredell, about 1797, had surveyed, south from the Thames, the northerly portion of the Communication Road, designed to link the Thames with Rondeau, and had carried out the "River Thames" survey.

As early as 1804, Philip Toll had moved from the lower Thames to Lot 6, Concession 6 Harwich, pioneering that area under curious circumstances. A disbanded Irish soldier whose name has not been preserved was awarded 200 acres in Harwich for his services. He and Philip entered into an agreement under which the Irishman was to get his keep for life and a jug of whiskey each St. Patrick's Day, and the lot was to be Philip's.

Toll was himself the orphaned son of a British soldier who had been a member of the Detroit garrison. His wife, Catherine, was Scottish. After living on and improving Lot 6, Concession 6 for twelve diligent years, it was found that a mistake had been made and they were on the wrong lot, Philip moved to a new location on Lot 150 on the Lake Front in Raleigh. This time the Toll family were definitely settled.

The year 1804 Patrick McGarvin drew allotment of Lot 5, Concession 4, Harwich, but did not move from Chatham townsite till 1808. Nearer Chatham, on the opposite side of the creek, Solomon Messmore and Peter Smith located. McGarvin was drowned in the Thames in 1811; Messmore, shortly after, was killed by a falling tree; Smith moved away—all this before Toll sought his new location.

McGregor's however, was a scene of busy activity. Thomas Scott contractor for McGregor's new mill, operated a store farther north, on the river; and the mill road carried heavy traffic.

Despite his reputed hard dealings with unlucky Tom Clarke, McGregor mixed kindness verging on joviality with his shrewdness. In spite of the social and drinking habits which he shared in his day with many men of repute, he retained throughout the eminently Scottish characteristic of looking after Number One. His interests were widely scattered and varied, but he made frequent and extended visits to his Chatham mills. He loved nothing better, while the grist was grinding, than to sit over a jug of whiskey—his own product—sharing it with his customers while he told them stories; and his eyes brightened whenever he succeeded in "drinking them down."

McGregor enjoyed the marrying of couples who came from far and near to secure his services, in the years when the nearest ministers were those at Fairfield. Such visitors were always sure of a welcome. He cared little for the outward forms of religion, and himself, according to tradition, had been a trifle negligent in the matter of the marriage ceremony. After a sickness, however, he was induced to have his marriage solemnized by a minister of the gospel; immediately following which, his children were baptized. Such happenings were not uncommon in pioneer days; and a community which liked McGregor for his liberality and jovial good nature condoned this trifling bit of carelessness in matters that really could not be helped.

While Dolsen's was the commercial capital of Kent and McGregor's Mills in the way to becoming a thriving community, Chatham continued merely a name on the map. It was in 1795 that Iredell completed the "Old Survey".

Immediately following the survey, some thirty of his 113 lots were sold or granted by the Crown, though the patents were not issued till years later. Lot 17 was patented in 1798, Lots 87 and 88 in 1801, and the others in 1802, except lot 106, patented in 1806. The list of Chatham's original landowners, with their holdings, may be of interest:

Lot 5, John Martin; 6, Gregor McGregor; 7, James McGregor; 10 and 11, John Laughton; 13, Alexander Harrow; 14, Alexander M. Murray; 17, Abraham Iredell; 19, John Parkman; 23, John Little; 24, William Forsyth; 25, Alexander Duff; 28, Matt Donovan; 29, John Donovan; 33, J. Wilson and J. Fraser; 36, Richard Donovan; 40, William Fleming; 41, James Fleet; 66, William Harper; 67, George Ward; 75, Antoine Pelletier; 81 and 84, Jacques Pelletier; 87, Alexander Askin; 88, Charles Askin; 89, John Askin; 99, Matt Dolsen; 106, John Sharp; 109, William Shepard; 110, George Leith.

But, with one exception, these grants involved no building and no settlement. Deputy Surveyor Abraham Iredell vindicated his faith in the townsite by purchasing, or taking as part payment for his services, Lot 17, the acre at the southeast corner of William and Water streets. On a slight bluff overlooking the river, beyond reach of even record floods, it commanded a view of the lazy, sunlit Thames, crawling between its wooded banks to its meeting with McGregor's Creek.

Here, some time before 1800, Iredell built a log cabin and planted an apple orchard, one of the first in Kent. Soutar records that as late as 1885 that ancient orchard was still represented by two or three hoary apple trees, with trunks some ten feet in circumference, "which may be seen in all their aged grandeur, silent witnesses of many stirring events." As a small boy, in 1888, curiously exploring the vicinity of his home "over the creek" the writer probably saw those trees, but did not realize their historic significance.

Here, Iredell lived for some years, carrying out vaguely defined duties in relation to government land grants, and acting in other official capacities. It was on this historic spot that, in 1800, with Iredell officiating as Returning Officer, Thomas McCrae, Sr., was returned "The Knight of Kent with sword, etc." or, in other words,

member of parliament for Kent. In an unofficial sense, that humble but comfortable log cabin was Kent's first county building.

Traditions differ as to Iredell's last years. One story has it that Iredell eventually moved away. Frederick Coyne Hamil, a very careful investigator, states that he died in 1806, but his wife for some years continued to occupy the log cabin. James Soutar, Chatham historian of the 80s, who had personally known old men who remembered Iredell in the flesh, had another version:

"It was here that the famous and popular surveyor spent his latter days and breathed his last, and where during the sickness preceding his death he was attended (accidentally, it is to be presumed) by a whip-poor-will, which nightly sang its plaintive refrain in the bushes under the window. It was here where was located and lived its shadowy existence the first Chatham ghost—by the way, a colored one—the ghost of a colored boy who was supposed to have been foully murdered and secreted in a roothouse or cellar built into the upper bank of the river near-by, and which at times appeared at some particular spot, then made its way to the roothouse, where it vanished, probably off to a warmer climate. Moonstruck lovers when visiting this particular part of the river bank are requested to tread lightly."

Soutar adds a footnote: "Mr. Iredell died immediately before the War of 1812, and was buried up the river in the Field burying ground."

For lack of records, it is a little difficult to disentangle the history of this period, or the geography. Simcoe's Suffolk county, entirely south of the Thames, extended from the western boundary of Norfolk to the Communication Road in Harwich. From the Communication Road to the Detroit River was Essex, with the Thames and a line four miles south of Lake St. Clair, as its northern boundary. This line extended east from Maisonville's Mill, then a well-known landmark on the Detroit River.

North of this line, and north of the Thames, Kent extended to Hudson's Bay. It took in all the disputed territory still held by the British beyond the Detroit River. In the immediate Detroit area, the British jurisdiction was effective. There the government of the western district had its seat, there the courts were held and the Detroit Land Board issued titles. In a technical sense, Detroit was the first county town of Kent.

In Simcoe's first parliament, Suffolk and Essex, the former still empty of people, elected a single member. But Kent, including within its limits the population of the rising village of Detroit, elected two. These, Kent's first representatives in the Legislative Assembly, were William Macomb and David William Smith, both of Detroit. Hon. J. B. Baby appears to have been the first member of the Legislative Council for the western district.

In 1794, the Jay Treaty ironed out the differences between the British and American governments. In July, 1796, Detroit, with the disputed territory, was surrendered to the United States. Macomb changed his allegiance; Smith changed his residence, and later, as Sir David Smith, rendered distinguished service to Upper Canada in its first formative years.

So, in the 1796 Assembly, Kent re-elected Smith, but the other seat went begging. After the down-river settlers had vainly pleaded with Brother Gottlieb Senseman to represent them, Captain Thomas McKee was eventually elected. The journals of the House for 1798 disclose that Captain McKee "returned as one of the Knights for the county of Kent at the last general election" did not sit nor subscribe the oath until 1798. He had previously been reprimanded and threatened with a fine, and had written the Assembly that "his business required all his attention, his father having recently died."

Though in Tiffany's Almanac of 1802 Suffolk county is still listed, it actually passed out of existence two years earlier. An Act "for the better division of the province," proclaimed January 1, 1800, listed Kent as being composed of the townships of Dover, Chatham, Camden West, and the Moravian tract of land called Orford (distinguished as Orford North and South), Howard, Harwich, Raleigh, Romney and Tilbury East and West, "with the townships on the River St. Clair occupied by the Shawney Indians, together with the islands opposite in Lakes Erie and St. Clair." West of this was thereafter Essex. The combined areas formed the Western District. The eastern part of Suffolk was included in the London District.

McKee, the 1796 member, was from Detroit; but with the 1800 election the membership came to the Lower Thames, Thomas McCrae, Sr. of Raleigh being returned. In 1804 John McGregor, the miller was elected to the fourth parliament, re-elected in 1808, and again, for a third term, on the eve of the War of 1812.



MILITARY RESERVE AT CHATHAM (Circa 1838)

(From watercolor by Lt. - Col. P. Brainbrigge)

Tecumseh and Brock

IT was only after two world wars that Canadians began to think and speak of a citizenship their very own. Typical of the makings of Canada was the coming together in pioneer Kent of varied racial strains. With the French who had first explored the land and the English and Irish and Scottish Highlanders, were mingled such diverse elements at the Moravian missionaries and their Delaware converts, the Van Dolzens from Holland, the Prussian Arnolds, and folk who had been American for generations.

Their dominant purpose was to establish new homes where, far from a war-torn world, they could live in peace. But happenings hundreds and thousands of miles away were working to defeat this purpose. The contagion of democratic ideas had spread from the revolting colonists to their French allies; and the new-born French republic, at the outset fighting the European monarchs for its very life, was swiftly transformed into a Napoleonic despotism that trampled Europe.

American opinion, divided at the outset between England and France, more and more veered to the latter; and by 1811 the War Hawks in Congress were openly demanding the swift conquest of Canada. Meanwhile, events on the ever-advancing western frontier of the United States were bringing to the forefront one of Kent's greatest heroes.

Tecumseh was born in 1768 on the banks of the Mad River, a petty tributary of the Ohio. In his childhood days, Pontiac's conspiracy of 1763 was still a new story. As a boy, he saw his tribe, the Shawnees fighting the American colonists; he was six years old when his father, Puckeshinwau, fell in battle. He fled with terrified women and children when, in 1780, the burning of his native village, Piqua, by the Americans forced the Shawnees to seek refuge north of the Ohio. Thus, in his most plastic years, the story of Pontiac's great dream was fresh; the victory of the confederated Americans over the British made a deep impression; and the death of his father and the sufferings of his people nerving him to vengeance, he dreamed dreams and beheld visions which in later years slowly crystalized into realities.

In the Indian country beyond the Ohio dwelt many tribes—Shawnees, Iowas, Mingoos, Miamis, Ottawas, Wyandottes—all, save the last, of Algonquin stock. Roving bands must, from time to time, have visited Tecumseh's village, their varying dialects and habiliments arousing the curiosity of the thoughtful youth. He had heard that still farther away dwelt powerful Indian nations.

In his nineteenth year with his elder brother, Cheeseekau, and a party of Shawnee braves, he set out on the "long trail". With the hospitable Mandans they hunted the buffalo of the plains; they lent their aid to the intelligent Cherokees in their warfare against the

whites; and, mingling with the Chicasaws, Seminoles and Creeks of Florida, like true soldiers of fortune helped fight the Americans and the Spaniards. The years thus spent developed the stripling into a hardy warrior; the death of Cheeseekau in battle gave him the command; on his return to the Ohio in 1790 his preparation for his life work was measurably complete.

The fires of undying hatred glowed along the always advancing borders of white settlement. The earliest days of English settlement had sown seeds of enmity; long years of border warfare had watered the soil with blood. A harvest of bitter hatred ripened. Crude, daring, adventurous, unsentimental, the Ohio or Tennessee backwoodsman was trained in a hard school. He learned to fight the Indian as the Indian fought; and in peaceful dealings evinced a lack of scruple that had not even the Indian's just excuse that it was part of a racial inheritance.

With relentless certainty the tide of white settlement encroached on the hunting grounds. In the years immediately following the Revolution, numerous councils framed treaties. In 1778, the first solemn treaty, with the Delawares, in return for the cession of lands, conceded Indian sovereignty beyond the Ohio and the right to punish according to Indian customs any whites daring to trespass on Indian territory. Through the half dozen or more treaties which followed, each marked by another cession of land, runs the same guarantee of Indian sovereignty in the lands still left, the same relinquishment of all white claims, the same declaration that should any white trespass, "the Indians may punish him or not as they please." Yet each Indian attempt to assert this solemnly pledged supremacy was the signal for a cry for vengeance, another defeat, another cession, another pledge made only to be broken.

These swift recurring wrongs were the everyday talk of the councils in which the young Tecumseh sat, hearkening to the wisdom of his elders. In his bosom they must have rankled; just as pride must have glowed when, returning from the long trail, he heard of the destruction of Harmer's expedition, or when, later, runners brought word of the defeat of General Arthur St. Clair. He must, too, have seethed with impatience at the lack of Indian unity, and the yielding of individual chiefs to the blandishment of American land grabbers.

In 1794 came the crowning wrong. Along the rivers Au Glaize, Lake and Miami the Indians dwelt in highly prosperous settlements—"like a continuous village" writes "Mad Anthony" Wayne—with highly cultivated fields and gardens and the luxuriant corn crops for which the Indiana soil was famed. These things hint that the Shawnees, taught the folly of war and relying on solemn treaties, were content with peace.

Wayne's Americans ruthlessly burned the villages and ravaged the fields; the inevitable treaty in 1795, ceded to the land-hungry Americans still more territory. Pathetically the chiefs handed back the treaty money. "Your settlers come because they are poor," pleaded the spokesman of eleven tribes. "Give them this money, make them rich, and let them stay away, and leave us our lands." Wayne insisted;

the lands were ceded; the Indians, fearful yet vengeful, were in the mood to receive Tecumseh's message.

Tecumseh found a mouthpiece in his ambitious brother Laulewasikaw. Laulewasikaw, his sinister aspect heightened by the loss of an eye, was reputed a sorcerer. He now retired to the forest solitudes, to spend a time in meditation, prayer and fasting. Returning, he proclaimed himself the Tenskawatawa—the "Open Door" through which would come deliverance to the Shawnees, a messenger sent by the Great Spirit to proclaim His will to the Indian race.

So lofty a conception, new to Indian traditions, finds a parallel only in the Messiah of the Hebrew scriptures. Tecumseh, keen to analyze all things, might well have fancied in the white man's doctrine the secret of the white man's triumph, and have sought to graft that bold concept on the religion of his own race. The prophet's preliminary retirement is distinctly Messianic.

Nor were the principles the Prophet enunciated at the Great Council at Wapakoneta unworthy his high pretensions. The Indians must beware of drunkenness—a vision had shown him the torments of drunkards hereafter—they must eschew the white man's ways, and live as did their forefathers, must gather in one village, hold all things in common, and dwell in peace and industry, regarding all Indians as brothers. "His advice has always been good" an Indian said. "He tells us we must pray to the Great Spirit who made the world and everything in it; not to lie, drink whiskey or go to war, but to live soberly and peaceably with all men, to work and to grow corn."

This religious veil half hid political aspirations wherein Tecumseh planned the salvation of his race. Their territorial rights had been bartered away by individuals. To conserve the rights still left, he enunciated a principle to which he asked the adhesion of all the Indians of the Ohio—that the land was the property, not of individuals or even chiefs, but of all the Indians, and could be ceded only by a council representative of all.

Indian confederacies were not new. The semi-civilized tribes of Mexico and Peru had attained a highly organized national life. The Cherokees possessed an advanced form of tribal government. The Six Nations of the Iroquois formed a tremendous fighting force. Pontiac, chief of the Ottawas, near kinsmen of the Shawnees, had temporarily united the scattered tribes; the leaven of Pontiac's idea was still working.

Into that old idea, though, Tecumseh infused the concept of a common nationality, while the Tenskawatawa threw about it a religious glamor. The conjurings and incantations of The Prophet, his belt of sacred beans, his exorcisms, mark the lesser and more superstitious mind; but the ethical principles of the new religion, sobriety, industry, peace, union and national brotherhood bear the impress of the sane logician and far-sighted statesman upon whom the lesson of American union had not been lost.

Grudgingly accepted at first by a few isolated Shawnee clans, the new religion was acclaimed by the Great Council. Delawares, Wyandottes, Miamis, Ottawas, Pottawattomies and other Ohio valley tribes

united to establish a village on the Maumee. The American settlers were quick to take alarm. At a conference with the governor of Ohio at Chillicothe, Tecumseh, supported by Blue Jacket, Roundhead and Panther, urged that the only aim of the confederacy was peace. The governor, reassured, dismissed the militia.

This early collision drove home to Tecumseh the weakness of his scheme. He had framed a confederacy of the Ohio tribes; now he saw that with the steady influx of whites, his people must become a red island in a white sea. Quickly his bold mind overleapt the barrier. East of the Mississippi and south of the Ohio the whites dwelt; French, English and Americans had always conceded the prairie and forest beyond these rivers to be Indian ground. North, south and west of these natural boundaries, a vast confederacy of all the Indians would bar the westward progress of the whites. A powerful Indian empire would find a home between the Mississippi and the Rockies.

For Tecumseh, the years that followed were filled with ceaseless activity. The Prophet, vain, headstrong and tyrannical, proved a drag upon the cause. Tecumseh, relegating him to a minor role, stood forth himself as head of the crusade. From the Gulf of Mexico to the Red River of the north he preached to the scattered tribes his new gospel of Indian nationality.

The Americans watched with suspicious eyes. Through contemporary American documents glimmer hints of Indian restraint and American injustice. "The patience of the Indians is astonishing," writes William Henry Harrison, governor of Indiana. Tecumseh steadfastly counselled peace—counsels a people historically unscrupulous in their dealings with the Indians regarded merely as evidence of a like lack of scruple.

Rather than provoke a conflict, Tecumseh in 1808 moved his village from the Maumee to the junction of the Wabash and the Tippecanoe. The settlers were not placated. In Indian organization they saw the threat of war; in Indian protestations of peace they saw only trickery. Washington was bombarded with petitions for troops.

Harrison summoned Tecumseh to a conference at Vincennes on August 2, 1810. Attending with a retinue of 400 braves, the chief bore himself with the haughtiness befitting the spokesman of the Indian peoples. Refusing to speak other than the Shawnee tongue, as was his custom, he declared that the Indians declined to recognize cessions of lands by individuals, and that, though the confederacy stood for peace, it stood also for determined resistance to further encroachments. Harrison was equally obstinate. The parties reached an impasse; and the governor, predicting an immediate uprising, demanded aid from Washington.

Throughout the ensuing winter, affairs swept on to a crisis. The settlers, fearful of attack, determined to crush the growing confederacy. The Washington government refused to sanction attack or send troops. The settlers made incursions; a number of Indians were killed; still the tribes held firm to peace. At a second conference Harrison demanded, in disregard of the treaties, the surrender of two Pottawattomies accused of killing whites on Indian lands, and haugh-

tily refused to discuss the unauthorized cession of the Wabash territory. Tecumseh, while steadfastly urging the rights of his people, argued that a confederacy, able to enforce law among the Indians, must make for peace. Harrison appeared satisfied.

In August, 1811, Tecumseh with thirty braves set out for the south. Following the Mississippi, he penetrated the Texas country, Alabama and Florida. Choctaws, Cherokees, Creeks and Seminoles, tribes which in after years proved their fighting prowess, avowed willingness to throw in their lot with their northern brethren. Harrison bears witness to Tecumseh's work. "If it were not for the vicinity of the United States, Tecumseh would perhaps be the founder of an empire that would rival in glory Mexico and Peru. No difficulties deter him. For four years he has been in constant motion. You see him today on the Wabash, and in a short time hear of him on the shores of Lake Erie or Michigan, or on the banks of the Mississippi, and wherever he goes he makes an impression favorable to his purpose. He is now upon the last round to put a finishing stroke upon his work."

The finishing stroke was put, and Tecumseh, his most ardent hopes realized, turned northward.

While still distant from Ohio, ominous rumors reached him, speedily confirmed by terrified fugitives. The Prophet's town was in ashes, the Ohio confederacy broken. Harrison, seizing the opportunity of Tecumseh's absence, had pressed forward with 1,200 men. Met by a deputation from the Prophet, he promised a council the ensuing day; then, yielding to the clamors of his men, in flagrant disregard of his promise, continued his advance, halting only on the threshold of the Indian town.

Whether Indians or whites began the ensuing night engagement is immaterial. Harrison's invasion of Indian territory was in direct defiance of orders from Washington. It also violated the treaty of 1785, which literally authorized the Indians, without fear of reprisals from the central government, to destroy Harrison's entire force. Technically at least, Washington itself was obligated to aid in driving Harrison from the Indian territory.

But the technical and strictly legal aspects of the situation had no chance when opposed to its stern realism. An unruly but virile young republic was marching on the pathway to expansion.

Tecumseh wasted no time in mourning. Energetically he set to work to rebuild his confederacy, to establish a new town. To a council at Mathethie, questioned by Roundhead, head chief of the Wyandottes, he determinedly proclaimed his purpose. "If we hear of any more of our people being killed, we will immediately send to all the nations on or toward the Mississippi, and all this island will rise as one man."

The soul spoke bravely, but the body was shattered. Tecumseh's own tribe, the Shawnees, never ardent supporters, rejected his proposals. The Delawares were hostile; the other tribes were friendly but fearful. His personal following dwindled to thirty braves, Tecumseh set out for the British post at Amherstburg.

To Colonel Matthew Elliott, deputy superintendent of Indian affairs, Tecumseh proffered his services. "Not for love of King George," writes a contemporary British observer, more acute than posterity, "but because they hoped to receive from his hands the justice they had sought in vain from the Americans." To Isadore, chief of the Wyandottes, sent by the American general, Hull, to urge neutrality, Tecumseh made clear his aims. If the Long Knives prevailed in the war that was imminent, the Indians must still suffer; if the British won, the peace treaty would forever secure their rights to the Indians.

Tecumseh, assigned to help garrison Bois Blanc, summoned his tribesmen to the impending conflict. He had come to his rendezvous with destiny.

When the United States declared war on June 19, 1812, Sir George Prevost, a British soldier of Swiss descent, was Governor-General of Canada; and his subordinate, the "president" of Upper Canada, was Major General Isaac Brock, of Jersey descent.

Dr. Eustis, the United States Secretary of War, made the operations on the vulnerable Detroit frontier his special project, a prelude to himself running for the presidency. To command this expedition he selected General William Hull, who had won distinction in the Revolutionary War. Months before the declaration, preparations for invasion were under way. The army, comprising the 4th United States Regiment and a strong contingent of Ohio militia assembled at Dayton; where on May 25, Hull took command.

The sole fortified position on the Canadian side was Fort Malden, at Amherstburg, a small work with four bastions, a dry moat grown up with weeds, and an interior defence of pickets with loopholes for muskets. The buildings, of wood roofed with shingles, were tinder dry, and a few shells could have destroyed them. Brock, with war imminent, had despatched 100 men of the 41st regiment to garrison the fort, which was defended by only a few guns. The potential defenders also included about 300 Essex militia, and 150 Indians.

War Secretary Eustis had planned to invade Canada before news of the declaration of war could reach Prevost or Brock. But Prevost received word on June 24, by an express from New York to the Northwest Fur Company; and another express reached Brock at Niagara on June 27. Hull, toiling with his army through the Ohio and Michigan wilderness, when he reached navigable water at the Maumee, sent forward by the schooner *Cuyahoga* to Detroit his baggage, hospital stores, trenching tools, muster rolls of his army and his general orders, with the wives of several officers as well as 30 soldiers. It was not till July 2, several days later, that word of the declaration of war reached him.

It had reached Colonel St. George, at Malden, on June 30. When the unsuspecting *Cuyahoga* sailed past, a shot from the British craft *Hunter*, halted her. Complete information as to Hull's army, plus a wealth of much needed military stores, fell into the hands of the British.

Colonel St. George had, meanwhile, done what he could to strengthen the fort, and had posted two guns at Sandwich, opposite

Fort Detroit. "I am much mortified at the confused state in which I find myself with the men of the militia now we have collected them together," he writes. "Their wants are many . . . Those we get into the fort we can control, but not others."

Hull invaded Canada on July 7, and established his headquarters at the Baby house near Sandwich. Despite the obloquy later showered on him by his own countrymen, this first move was tactically sound: it cut off Colonel St. George at Fort Malden from the settlers further up the Detroit and on the Thames and opened the way for him to strike inland. A scouting party under Colonel Duncan McArthur, Hull's most competent subordinate, traversed the Thames as far as Moraviantown, requisitioning supplies, including 200 barrels of flour.

McArthur also, probably, distributed copies of Hull's famous proclamation, at once conciliatory and threatening. The Indian agent, Matthew Elliott, writes under date of July 15: "Their proclamations have operated very powerfully on our militia (who had come forward with as much promptitude as could have been expected). Since their issuing, our militia have left their posts and returned to their homes, so that since Sunday the number is reduced to about one half, and I expect that in two or three days more we shall have very few of them at the post."

One Kent militia man, posted at Fort Malden, was already widely known on the Thames for his pro-American views. This was Isaac Dolsen's son, "Young Matt". He snatched the opportunity to desert to Hull.

Tradition has it also that Lieutenant John McGregor, the miller, attempting with some militia from the Thames to capture a party of American raiders, was himself taken by the famous American frontiersman, James Knaggs, and incarcerated in Fort Detroit.

With Hull's landing, the British guns and detachment at Sandwich were drawn back to the River Canard, four miles north of Malden. Brock writes to Prevost, July 20:

"The militia from every account behaved very ill. The officers appear most at fault." Brock, anxious to hurry to the Detroit frontier, had to go to York for the meeting of the Legislature on July 27. "Colonel Procter will probably reach Amherstburg in the course of tomorrow," he writes. "I have great dependence on that officer's decision, but fear he will arrive too late to be of much service.

"I have never," he adds, "been very sanguine in my hopes of assistance from the militia, and I am now given to understand that General Hull's insidious proclamation, herewith enclosed, has already been productive of considerable effect on the minds of the people. In fact a general sentiment prevails that, with the present force, resistance is unavailing."

Brock on July 26, wrote that, receiving information of enemy raids up the River Thames, he had detached Captain Chambers with about fifty of the 41st regiment to Moraviantown, where he had directed 200 militia to join him with a view to a diversion westward which might force Hull to retreat across the river. News that the Mohawks on the Grand River had determined to remain neutral balk-

ed this project. "The militia which I destined for this service will now be alarmed, and unwilling to leave their families to the mercy of 400 Indians, whose conduct affords such wide room for suspicion—and really to expect that this fickle race would remain in the midst of war in a state of neutrality is truly absurd. The Indians have probably been led to this change of sentiment by emissaries from General Hull."

Procter, Brock's strong hope for saving Malden, had been delayed by unfavorable winds. For yet more days, in that era of slow communications, the anxious Brock was destined to fret over Procter's non-arrival. But that same day, July 26, Procter was able to write from Amherstburg, "After much vexatious delay from very windy weather, &c.. I arrived here at day-break this morning." Procter records skirmishing at the Canard, particularly an attack on July 16 in which a picquet of two men of the 41st, posted north of the river, had been cut off, "both refusing to surrender." Regarding the militia, he expresses the hope that "many of them will return when they have gotten in the harvest," but urges reinforcements, to bolster their loyalty, and that of the Indians. "Five hundred of the 41st would, I am confident, soon decide matters."

Tecumseh had been able to assemble only 230 Indians, "among them several boys", and some of these, overawed by the seeming certainty of American victory, had since deserted.

There was one gleam of light. The American commander had sent Major Denny, with 120 Ohio militia, to attack Malden. Tecumseh and 25 Menominee Indians ambushed and routed them.

But on July 28 Brock, writing from York, sounded an unwontedly despondent note. The Long Point militia "the most likely to show the best disposition of any" had refused to march with Captain Chambers to the Thames. "My situation is getting each day more critical. I still mean to try and send a force to the relief of Amherstburg, but almost despair of succeeding—the population, though I had no great confidence in the majority, is worse than I expected to find it." He was having difficulty, too, with a recalcitrant Legislature, which balked at suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act.

Into this desperate situation, like the sudden emergence of the sun on a day of cloud and rain, came unexpected tidings which changed the whole picture. Captain Charles Roberts, commander at Fort St. Joseph on the Upper Lakes, received word of the declaration of war on July 8. Realizing his position was indefensible, he moved against and captured the strong American post of Michillimackinac.

Tecumseh's eager runners spread the glad tidings far and near. The Indians, till now teetering indecisively between British and Americans, eagerly flocked to Bois Blanc to share in the predicted downfall of Detroit.

Procter's arrival, too, infused new life into the British defence, which, till then dubious and uncertain, henceforth showed the effects of his keen military insight. The new British commander made shrewd use of his limited assets. The British warcraft controlled

Lake Erie. Hull's communications were restricted to the overland route through the wilderness from the Ohio to Fort Detroit. Tecumseh's braves, ranging the forest, intercepted Hull's supplies and captured his despatches. Early in August, Tecumseh himself ambushed Major Van Horne, sent from Detroit to relieve a beef convoy, and captured Hull's despatches, which revealed utter panic in Fort Detroit. At Maguaga an attempt by the British and Indians to ambush a second relief expedition under Colonel James Miller was not so successful; but, in Hull's own words, "the blood of 75 gallant men could only open the communications as far as their own bayonets extended." He now withdrew his last outpost from Canada.

All this was unknown to Brock, on August 4 still fretting at York. "I cannot hear what is going on at Amherstburg. I begin to be uneasy for Procter; should any accident befall him I shall begin to despond for the fate of Amherstburg—I am collecting a force at Long Point with a view to afford him relief."

With forty of the 41st Regiment and 260 Norfolk militia Brock embarked on August 8. The boats following the north shore of Lake Erie, experienced a rough passage. One of Brock's night camps was made in Kent, near Erie Beach.

At midnight on August 13 a *feu de joie* from the Indians on Bois Blanc announced to Procter the arrival of Brock's reinforcements. Late as the hour was, Brock held a council of war, where he first met Tecumseh. "This is a man!" Tecumseh told his fellow chiefs.

Overruling his officers, Brock determined to attack Detroit. "We are committed to a war in which the enemy must always surpass us in numbers, equipment and resources," he declared: and turned to study a roll of birch-bark on which Tecumseh with a knife had traced a crude map of the environs of Detroit.

The day that Major Denny evacuated Sandwich, the British had commenced the erection of batteries under the direction of Captain Dixon of the Royal Engineers. By August 15, five guns were in position. At noon that day Brock's aides, Macdonell and Gleig, were sent under a flag of truce to demand the immediate surrender of Detroit. Hull refused. The same afternoon the battery opened fire, and almost immediately got the range of the fortress. That night Tecumseh with Colonel Elliott, Captain McKee and six hundred Indians landed on the American shore five miles below Detroit, where they remained in concealment till, next morning, Brock and his white troops made an unopposed landing at Springwells.

Men from Kent were among the 400 militia who, with 30 of the Royal Artillery, 250 veterans of the 41st and 50 men of the Newfoundland Regiment, flanked on the left by Tecumseh's Indians, made that foolhardy advance in the face of Detroit's cannon. Brock's first intent had been to take up a strong position and compel the Americans to meet his force in the field. The discovery that Colonel McArthur, with some of Hull's best troops, had been despatched to relieve the still beleaguered beef convoy, decided him to assault the fort.

The guns on the fort, black with menace, remained inexplicably silent. Brock was within a few hundred yards when a white flag was

displayed on the walls, and an American officer emerged with a flag of truce, proposing negotiations for immediate capitulation. At noon of a beautiful August Sunday the Stars and Stripes were lowered and the British flag raised over Fort Detroit. Hull's entire force, 2,500 men, with 33 pieces of cannon, arms and munitions and military stores and the armed brig *Adams* were included in the surrender, as was Fort Detroit, and the entire territory of Michigan. The colors of the Fourth United States Regiment, "the heroes of Tippecanoe" were sent to hang in Chelsea Royal Hospital. They were trophies of a victory which could hardly have been won without Tecumseh's aid; yet of the men who had devastated his village, not a hair was harmed.

"A more sagacious or more gallant warrior does not exist," Brock wrote, enthusiastically. Brock wrote to Sir George Prevost that same day:

"I hasten to apprise Your Excellency of the capture of this very important post—2,500 troops have this day surrendered prisoners of war, and about 25 pieces of Ordnance have been taken without the sacrifice of a drop of British blood. I had not more than 700 troops, including militia, and about 400 Indians to accomplish this service. When I detail my good fortune, Your Excellency will be astonished. I have been admirably supported by Colonel Procter, the whole of my staff and I may justly say every individual under my command."

Brock spent but one day at Detroit and Amherstburg after the surrender. The western frontier was safe; the centre at Niagara demanded his attention. That day must have been spent largely with Procter in discussing the dispositions necessary to hold the advantage so surprisingly won.

Shortly after dawn on August 18, the white sails of the *Caledonia*, bearing Brock eastward, merged into the blue of Lake Erie.