

Early Settlement

THE settlement of Biddulph dates back to the year 1830, when one Frederick Stover, a Quaker, from Norwich, Connecticut, U. S., started what was known as the Wilberforce or "colored settlement," situated where the Village of Lucan now stands and to the North-west of it. He bought from the Canada Company 800 acres of land at \$1.50 per acre and settled thereon a Colony of Colored People, composed largely of refugee slaves, who were bought or broke away from their cruel task masters in the United States, and crossed the lines and for the first time in their lives breathed the pure air of freedom and trod on a soil whereon the foot of slave never rested. So that from the very first, Biddulph became "The Home of the Free" and still remains such.

The last of the survivors of this colony,—a Mrs. Bell and a man named Johnson, who were contemporary with General Washington, died centenarians in 1878.

The friends from Connecticut established a school and supported the colony for a time—until they were able to support themselves.

Public Improvements

WHEN the first settler came into Biddulph he found it an unbroken forest,—composed largely of maple, beech, elm, basswood, birch, butternut, ironwood, hickory and such like, averaging from 80 to 100 feet high, and in many cases from 3 to 6 feet in diameter.

The forest was hewn down by the industrious and hardy axe-man, and at the present time the bush-land covers but a small area.

The first public roadway was only a blaze in the woods, which every Canadian fully understands, but for the information of the Old Country people let me say that it was the bark hewn from the side of the trees in straight lines.

Next, a road was chopped along the line of the blaze, and the timber rolled together with ox-teams in piles and burned.

The water-holes were bridged with logs and later by wood culverts and bridges.

The Western portion of the Township is traversed by the River Aux Sauble, which intersects a great number of high-ways, necessitating the building of numerous bridges, all of which are now permanent stone, cement and steel. There has been a wonderful transformation taken place in our roads and highways. They are now nearly all well constructed and covered on the road-bed by gravel or stone. The Biddulph roads and bridges fully measure up to the requirements of the Township.