

succeeded in reducing their corn to a state better calculated to afford nourishment. The difficulties and privations of the early settlers can be understood in their full force only by those who actually experienced them. There is no part of Canada in which the immigrant of to-day suffers anything like them. Beyond what the soil, under a simple process of culture, yielded to them, the early settlers could command little. Wheat was of the value of Two dollars a bushel, and then it took eighteen bushels to pay for one barrel of salt; and one, to purchase a yard of grey cotton. The late James Hamilton of London, that for many years occupied with respect and honor the position of Sheriff of Middlesex, was the first to offer the County of Elgin the advantages of trade and commerce. In 1817 he landed at Port Stanley with a few goods; such no doubt as the exigency of the settlement required in those days, and with the assistance of Mr. John Warren carried on business at St. Thomas, under the style of "Hamilton and Warren." Bela Shaw and Biglow afterwards made their appearance to engage in the same pursuits.

These were, for several years, the only representatives of the Commercial community in the County of Elgin, and it must be said that their enterprise and their limited stock alike sufficed to supply the wants of the settlement with English manufactures, and the growth of foreign countries. Since the days of Hamilton and Bela Shaw, the County has, however, made remarkable progress, and the capital, skill and enterprise now required to carry on our trade and commerce is very extensive; and, as will be seen from the sequel, our mercantile men are not behind those of any other country, in all those qualities essential to upright and successful commercial transactions. An idea of the rapid growth of wealth in the county, as a consequence of the good moral character and hardy industry of the settlers may be gathered from the imports and exports made in successive years, at Port Stanley, the most important shipping port on Lake Erie, and the principal outlet, to foreign markets, of the County. The position of the harbor is one, indeed, of provincial importance, as being, as above stated, the outlet of a County, second to none in the province in fertility of soil, and rapidly increasing productiveness and settlement. It early attracted the attention of the Government, and large sums of public money have been spent in making the mouth of Kettle Creek a safe and commodious harbor. Up to