

shortly before his arrival in Canada, about the year 1830. Residing a short time at Fort Erie he removed to Colchester in the County of Essex in 1837, where he was instrumental in organizing a company of colored volunteers, which took part in the rising of that period. At the inception of the British and American Institution he was residing at Amherstburg, but immediately after took up his abode at Dresden, where he has since resided and where, at the ripe old age of 94 years, he still enjoys good health and full possession of all his faculties. It is he, whom Mrs. Stowe chose for the hero of her renowned work—the noble “Uncle Tom.”

Meanwhile the nucleus of the village proper was formed. In 1845, Mr. D. R. VanAllen, of Chatham, seeing the Lindsley farm at the head of navigation would be an advantageous position, made an offer for the purchase which, after some delay was accepted, and the farm reluctantly (for Lindsley subsequently regretted his bargain) turned over to VanAllen. The area purchased by the latter was 70 acres, twenty acres of which he had surveyed and laid off into 63 lots of 1st acre in size by Richard Parr, P. L. S., in November of the same year. Several of the lots were sold and others granted to mechanics and tradesmen who would settle thereon. This survey may be roughly described as covering nearly the triangular area between the river on one side, George Street on the other, and Main Street on the third. In the year following VanAllen erected on the south-east corner of Lindsley Street and Metcalfe Avenue—or as may be better described, immediately behind the three large willow trees on the river bank directly opposite the present house of Mr. Fretz, on Metcalfe Avenue—a log building in which he kept a small store in one part, and in the other a house of entertainment, at which double occupation it is said by a traveller who visited the locality in 1848, he was most attentive and obliging. This domicile was afterwards known as “Kirby’s Tavern,” an early hostelry of the period of considerable reputation. The following year Mr. VanAllen erected the large red warehouse which, subsequently forming “Blackwoods” famed store, now remains an interesting ruin of fallen greatness on the river bank between Smith’s woolen factory and McVean’s flour mill.

Almost concurrent with VanAllen’s survey—perhaps a little earlier—another nucleus of a prospective town was forming. This was at William Wright’s, on Lot 3, in the 5th Concession of Camden Gore, now the south-east portion of Dresden, where that gentleman had located sometime previous, and at the time of Josiah Henson’s advent, was in possession of a house something between an Indian wigwam and a log shanty, in which was dispensed common necessities and “sundries” to the natives and gangs of timber makers who made free—as lay and parson at that time made free—with Her Majesty’s magnificent standing timber in that neighborhood. Supplementing the primitive “Castle” by a more substantial hewn log and frame addition—Mr. Henson leasing the old concern for his family—he launched out into the full fledged corner grocery and house of entertainment of the period. The frame, the site of which was the north-east corner of Water and Sydenham streets now occupies another location in town under the tenancy of Mr. Bradden, and is probably the oldest house within the corporation. This corner stone, as it were, of an anticipated large city was named “Fairport,” a cognomen which, in contradistinction to Dresden, fairly held its own for some time.

Success, however, did not immediately attend the ventures of these enterprising village founders, and the period closing with the year 1850 saw little more of a village, in either case, than one in mere name. Bush was yet paramount, the principal clearings being Lindsley’s, north of Main Street, towards the present bridge; Wright’s wheat field south of same street, and

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