

EARLY AMHERSTBURG.

The War of American Independence was brought to a close in 1783, but Oswego, Niagara, Detroit, and Michillmackinac remained as British posts until their evacuation in 1796. Oswego and Detroit were transferred in July of that year. The war in the west had been carried on to a considerable extent by Indians who were led and directed by white officers. With them were associated many rough and ready frontiersmen, hardy and crafty, skilled in woodlore and the methods of the redman. At the close of the war many of these British officers gradually drew back to Niagara and Detroit and now we first find mention of the country that is the subject of our study.

On June 7th, 1784, the Huron and Ottawa Indians who claimed ownership or proprietary rights in the country surrounding Detroit, gave by treaty a tract of land seven miles square at the mouth of the Detroit River to the following British officers or fighters, who had been associated with them in the recent war: Alexander McKee, William Caldwell, Charles McCormack, Robin Eurphleet, Anthony St. Martin, Matthew Elliott, Henry Bird, Thomas McKee, and Simon Girty. By arrangement among themselves, Henry Bird was given the northern section. This would be in the northern part of the Township of Malden, and would contain what is now the northern part of the Town of Amherstburg.

It should be noted here that the Governor and Council at Quebec, by formal proclamation shortly after, declared that no private grants made by the Indians would be recognized; that all grants must come through the Crown, and this part of Southwestern Quebec (it was then a part of Quebec) had not yet been ceded by the Indians to the Crown.

The settlement of these lands on the east side of the river appears to have been approved of by Governor Haldimand.

July 22nd, 1784, Jehu Hay, Lieutenant-Governor of Detroit, wrote to Governor Haldimand: "Several have built upon and improved lands who have no other pretensions than the Indians consent possession. Captains Bird and Caldwell are of the number, at a place they have called Fredericksburg." It