

For several succeeding years he remained "sole monarch of all he surveyed," an occasional native being his only visitor, and his nearest neighbor being Lechlan McDougall, at the Forks, and Hall, Boyle and Bolton, at points on the upper reaches of the river towards what is now Florence. Between Bear Creek and the River Thames was an unbroken forest without road or barely even a known trail. He was completely isolated. In time, however, his solitary life was broken by the advent into the neighborhood of Mr. Willoughby, also from the Thames settlement, who located on Lot 3, on the 3rd Concession of what is now Camden Gore, followed closely after by Weldon Harris, who settled on part of same lot, adjoining the Institution lands; and Joe Long, who settled near the Base Line—I believe on Lot 21, on the 9th Concession of Chatham. But for some time little addition was made to the population of the settlement, which remained almost unchanged until the year 1840, when there occurred an event which materially affected the character of the neighborhood, even to the present time. That event was the establishing there of the British and American Institute, an institution organized under the auspices of some philanthropic gentlemen—principally British—for the purpose of providing escaped slaves and colored people with an education.

This Institution owed its origin to the efforts of Mr. Thomas Fuller, a Quaker gentleman who, having to traverse the country lying between London and Amherstburg, along the Tecumseh road, observed that the colored people whom he met with in the course of his journey—principally runaway slaves, who at that day were fleeing to a land of freedom in large numbers—were destitute not only of the ordinary necessities of life but of educational privileges of any kind. Mentioning this fact to some friends in England, which he visited shortly after, a small sum (\$1300) was subscribed by them—the list headed by a young girl—which he was to apply as he thought best. On his return to Canada, a meeting was called at Toronto to decide in what way the money should be applied, at which were present, amongst others, the Rev. Mr. Rolfe, and Mr. Jas. C. Brown, of Chatham. Beyond a good deal of wrangling nothing was done; but at a second meeting it was agreed that the amount should be expended in the purchase of lands and the erection of a school house in which to provide education for colored people. The Rev. Josiah Henson was deputed to select the necessary lands, and after a tour through the western country he located at Dresden, taking Lot No. 3, on the 4th Concession, Gore of Camden, he himself securing the adjoining lot on same concession, part of which he subsequently sold to the Institution. These lands may be roughly defined as now forming the south-west portion of Dresden, bounded by George street on the east, Queen street, approximately, on the north (for this street is south of the Division line), and extending back to the Third concession.

It would be beside our purpose to go minutely into the history of the Institution—which under its first organization received the name of the "British and American Institute." It will suffice to say that under a Board of Trustees, and with Mr. Henson as agent or manager, operations commenced in due course of time, and a low long story and a half building of hewn logs arose in a small confined clearing near the river bank, about the neighborhood of McVean's factory, or to be more exact, at a point now occupied by the residence of Mr. Peter Henson, and in which for some years refugee slaves and others were boarded, and at same time taught their A B C's under pedagogue Hiram Wilson, and his successor in yielding the rod, Eli Birkland, the site of the School master's house being now located by the red barn. Contrabands, as they were often termed, continued to arrive, and for their board and clothing were set at work in the woods cutting logs,

cordwood, a portion of which was sold, at the order of the acter. The solicitation arrived in the trepots—Cl being the w steamboat Henson's e raised in ea in 1846 by "to hum" ness was be of the latte large scow, and his par anticipated the great b

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