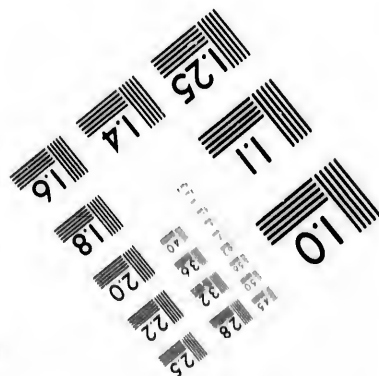
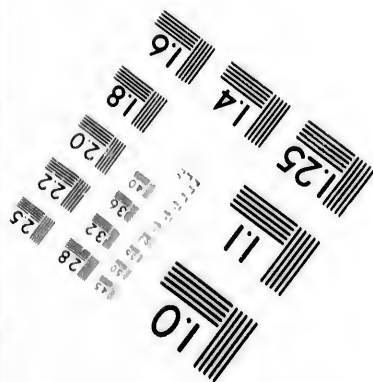
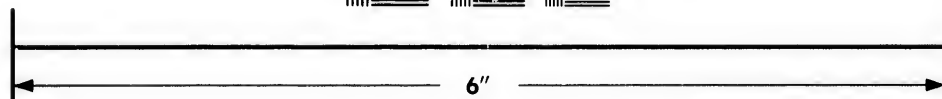
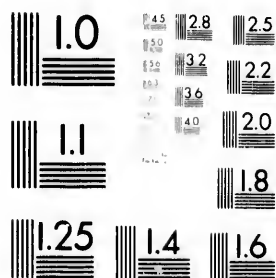


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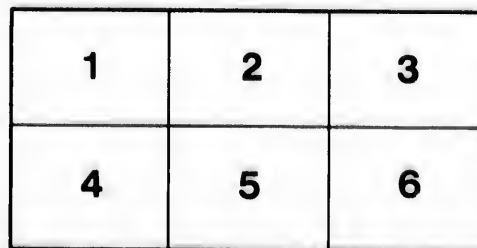
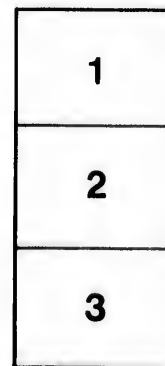
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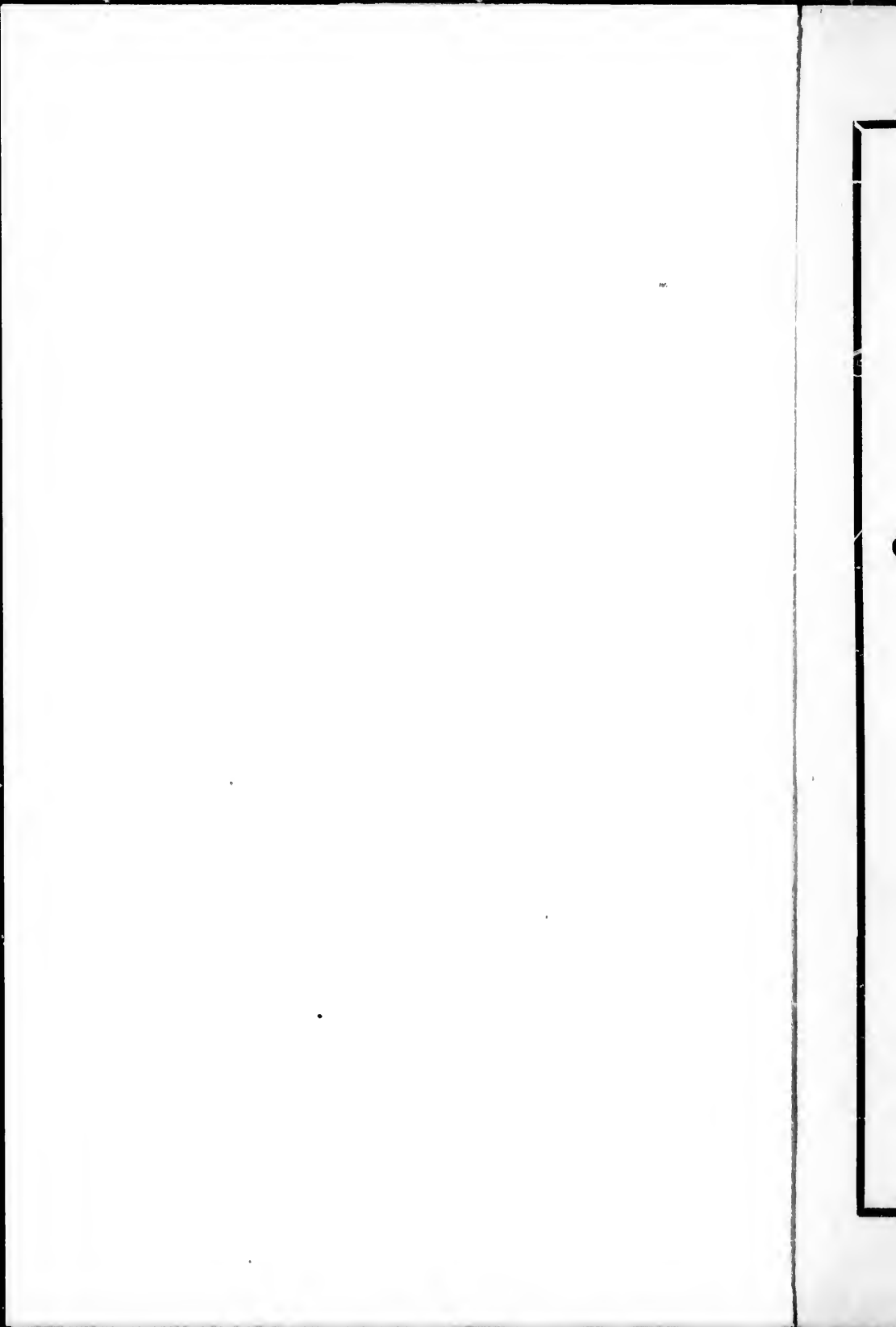
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# Point au Pelee Island.



A Historical Sketch  
of and an Account  
of the McCormick Family,  
who were the First White  
Owners of the Island.

THADDEUS SMITH.

1849

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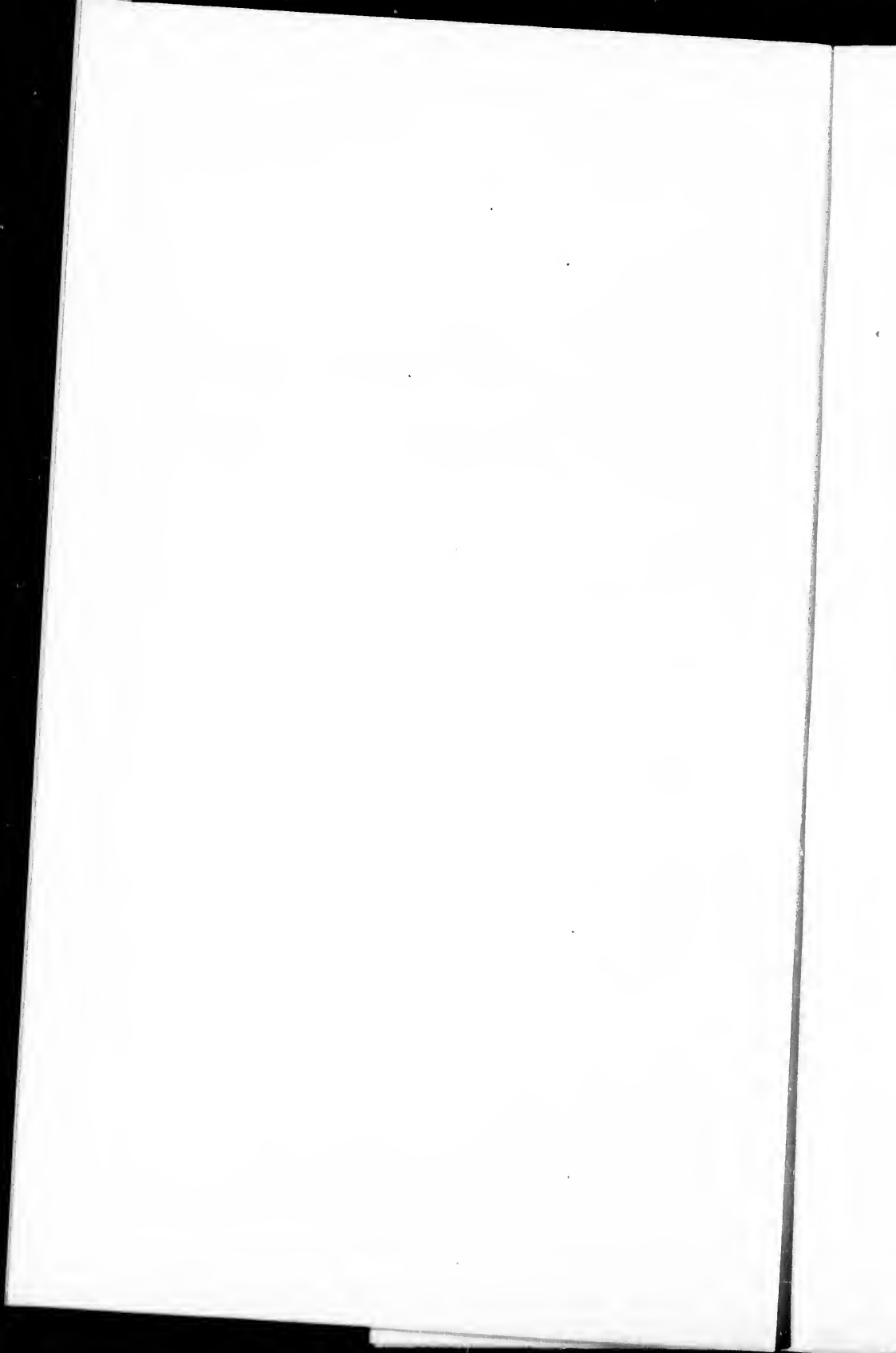


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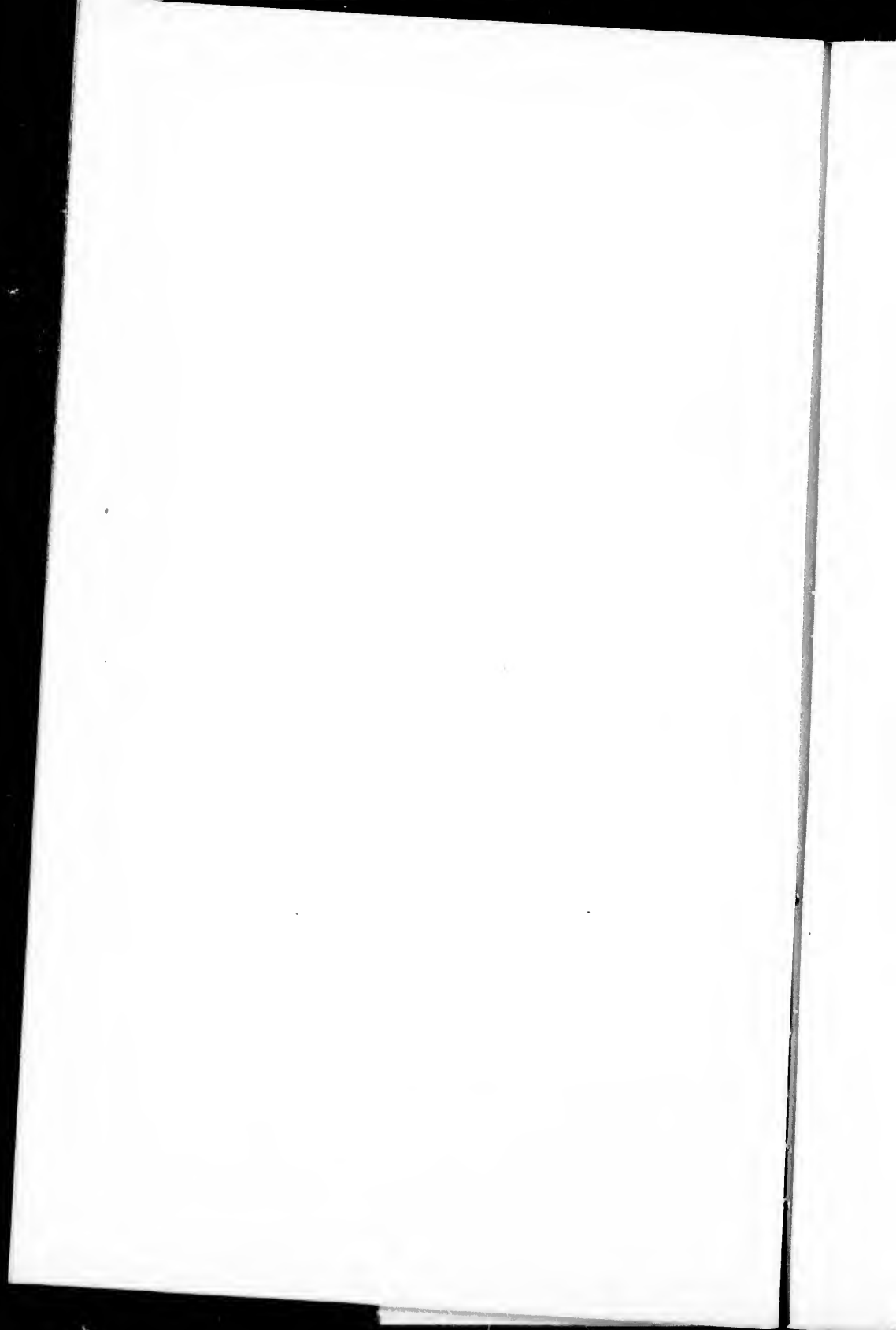


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DEDICATED  
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GRANDSON OF THE  
FIRST OWNER  
OF  
POINT AU PELEE ISLAND.



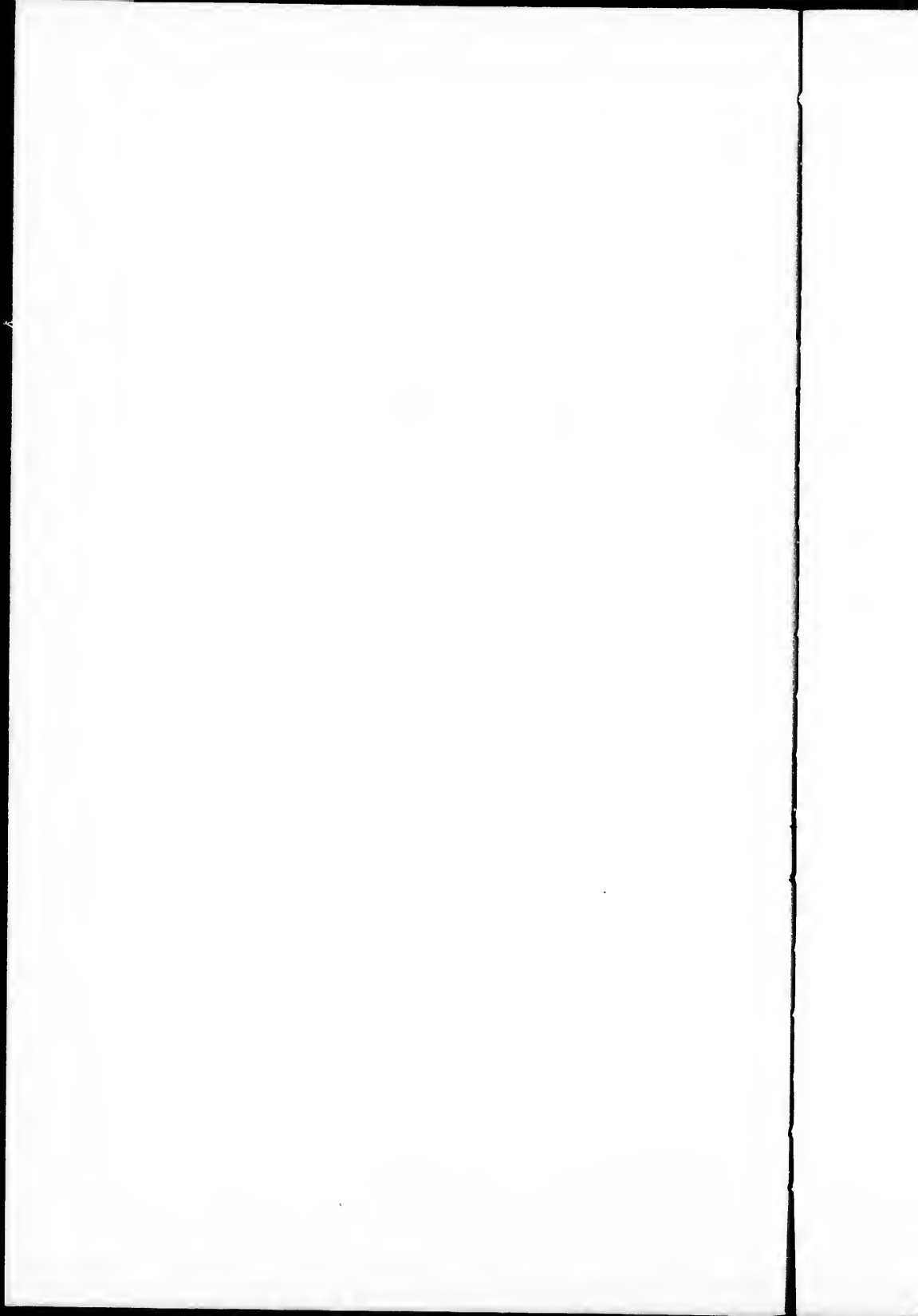
## P R E F A C E.

The following "Sketches" have been put in the present form simply to put on record the facts relating to the matter treated, for any who may feel an interest in them, and for future reference.

The material for them has been gathered under many difficulties ; as there are no public archives from which to obtain records on the subject, and but little printed as manuscript matter in private hands obtainable, the work is necessarily imperfect in regard to the earlier history. Such facts as have been handed down by tradition and obtained by the writer, from some of the earlier actors on the scene, over a quarter of a century ago, are used. Believing that such a work is needed, and that the longer it is put off the more difficult it will be to get at the facts, these "Sketches" are presented to all who feel an interest in the past history and present and future welfare of Point Au Pelee Island.

With the Compliments of

THE WRITER.



## ERRATA.

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- Page 2, Chap. II, 13th line—"As implements", should be—"as no implements," &c.
- Page 3, 3rd line from bottom—"Monetta" should be "Marietta, Ohio", "Majorsville"—"Maysville," &c.
- Page 9, 22nd line—"Would not seem" should be "does not". &c.
- Page 10, 13th line—After "each other" should be a "period".
- Page 11, 9th line—"A bush" should be "ambush".
- Page 17, 25th line—"To look him" should be, "to look upon him".
- Page 21, 17th line—"Aquatic grapes" should be "aquatic grass".
- Page 23, 20th line—"Three rebels" should be "these rebels".
- Page 25, Chap. XV, 1st line—"1854" should be "1864".
- Page 26, next to last line—"Have now" should be "had now".
- Page 29, 3rd paragraph, 2nd line—"One" before Thos. S. Williams should not be there.
- Page 33, Chap. XVI, 4th line—"Wild rice, grapes," &c., should be "grass," &c.
- Page 34, 9th line—"Ballart Island" should be "Ballast Island".
- Page 35, 7th line—"Dieting flies" should be "biting flies".
- Page 38, 4th paragraph, 2nd and 3rd line—"In that" and "is" are superfluous.
- Page 40, 5th paragraph—Where "Island" occurs should be "Islands".
- Page 41, 5th line—"Deeper worn" should be "deep worn".
- Seventh line in Preface—"But little printed as manuscript" should be "or manuscript".

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# A Historical Sketch of Point au Pelee Island and its Early Inhabitants.

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## CHAPTER I.

### Location and Formation.

Point au Pelee Island, now generally known simply as "Pelee Island," and also as the Township of Pelee, in the County of Essex, Ontario, is one of that group of Islands in the Western end of Lake Erie, composed of Pelee Island, Kelleys Island, Put-in-Bay Island, the Bass Islands and other smaller ones. Pelee is the most northern island and the largest one of the group. It lies just across the international boundary line between Canada and the United States and consequently belongs, nationally, to the Dominion of Canada. It is in latitude 41 degrees 36 minutes, and is the most southern land in Canada, with the exception of a small island just south of it, known as Middle Island. It is separated from the main shore of Ontario by a channel of the Lake from 10 to 15 miles wide; and is about the same distance from Kelleys Island, Put-in-Bay and the Bass Islands that are on the United States side of the international boundary line, and is about 25 miles from the main land of the United States, and the northern border of the state of Ohio.

When, and whether or not, these islands were ever connected together, or whether Point au Pelee Island was ever attached to the main land, must ever remain a subject of conjecture. But it seems probable that when the main out-let of the waters of the north west was through the Mississippi Valley, as some scientists tell us that it once was, that these islands now in western Lake Erie were connected together and with the main land to the south: and possibly Point au Pelee Island may have been connected with the main shore to the north, or more probably, only separated from the main shore by a narrow stream or river. The prehistoric conditions and inhabitants of the Island can only be surmised or read in its geological formation and the numerous ancient burial mounds found upon it. Evidences of the great glacial period, when the face of this part of the earth's surface was covered with moving masses of ice hundreds of feet



thick, are to be found in the marks upon the rock of the Island. The rock formation is a soft limestone, and when the soil is removed from the surface of the rock, grooves can be plainly seen that were cut by the ice as it pushed its way over the surface. These grooves are so evident and distinct that they are said by geologists to be a remarkable evidence of the glacial period. The solid limestone strata crop out upon the surface on some of the few ridges of land and on the lake shore, but the rock is usually covered by a soil of rich loam and disintegrated limestone from six inches to a foot or more in depth. The lower land is formed of a rich calcareous clay from four to forty feet deep, covered with a vegetable mould. All the land is very fertile.

## CHAPTER II.

### Early Inhabitants of The Island.

There are indisputable evidences that the Island was inhabited long before it was known to the white man. There are to be found upon the Island numerous burial mounds of prehistoric origin, containing human bones, and human skeletons, in good preservation, have been found where burial had been made in the clefts of the rock. These numerous graves would indicate that the Island was once thickly populated, or that these ancient inhabitants had made their home here for a long time. Upon some of these burial mounds large trees have been found growing, that had evidently taken root and grown up years after the mounds were made, and some of these trees indicate a growth of hundreds of years. Some suppose that these burial places were made by a people known as the ancient mound builders, or Aztecs, before their migration south to Mexico and Central America. But there is but little evidence to substantiate this theory, as implements of war or of domestic use have been found in the graves. A few pieces of broken pottery, broken stone pipes and flint arrow heads are all that is known to have been found with the bones in the mounds, but many flint arrow heads and stone hatchets or hammers have been found in the fields and roadways. These stone hatchets, made of the hardest flint stones have a remarkably smooth surface and sharp edge, but for what use they were intended is uncertain. They may have been used as instruments of war or for killing game; but it is supposed by some that the sharp smooth ones were more probably used for dressing skins for clothing.

We have no record or tradition of the time the first white man ever put his foot upon the Island. There can be but little doubt that the first white men to visit it, were some of these hardy French Canadian adventurers, who paddled their canoes from Montreal through the lakes to the extreme western French settlement of L'Assumption on the Detroit river. They certainly gave the Island its name of "Point au Pelee" which is of French origin. When paddling their canoes through the lake they had to follow the shores, and stop on land during the night and in case of storms. When they arrived at the long point of land jutting out from the north

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shore into the north western end of Lake Erie, they no doubt pulled their canoes out upon the sand beach to camp for the night or wait until a passing storm was over. The long dreary sand point was anything but inviting or cheering and they called it Point au Pelee, which means either a rocky, or barren point. From this desolate point they could see an island some 8 or 10 miles off, and to this they gave the same name. It is quite probable that some of these French discoverers of the Island, or some of their adventurous successors, visited the place and stopped to hunt or trade with the Indians, who then lived here, for furs. But as to whether any of them ever made a settlement here or lived here with the Indians, or not, both tradition and history are silent. Undoubtedly at the time when the first white man saw the Island and as far back before this as there is any traditional or other evidence, the Island was inhabited by the native American Red Indian, in considerable numbers. There were bands of the Chippawa and Ottawa Indian Nations and probably of the Ojibwas and some other tribes, who were the undisturbed owners and occupants of the Island up to within a few years of the closing of the last century.

These Indians led their usual roving life, going from the Island to the main land, hunting and fishing. They were in bands ruled by their Chiefs and Sachems and were peaceably inclined and at peace with the white settlers both French and English. In the wars of the American revolution they were the friends and allies of the British. About the year 1780 the Indians upon the Island had greatly decreased in numbers, the scarcity of game, their isolation from their tribes on the main land, and the difficulty of communicating with their friends across the water in their light canoes, caused a great many to permanently leave the Island. On the main land, especially in the white settlements on the Detroit river, many of the Indians and half breeds fraternized with the white people, and were becoming somewhat civilized.

It is not known that any white squatters lived and fraternized with the Indians on the Island up to this time. But there is a legend, handed down through the traditions of the Indians, that prior to this time a young Englishman, of good birth and education, came to the Island and lived with the Indians for some years, an account of which will be given in another chapter.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### **The Island Becomes the Property of Thomas McKee, Indian Half-Breed and Chief.**

The first official record we have of Point au Pelee Island was made in May, 1788, and is a record of a deed or lease made by the Indian Chiefs and Sachems of the Island conveying all their right to the Island to one Thomas McKee.

Thomas McKee was an Indian half-breed and a Chief in some of the tribes. He was popular both with the whites and Indians, and had great influence with the latter. He built himself a mansion on the property adjoining where the Sandwich Fish Hatchery now stands. Here he lived in state, keeping his hounds after the manner of an English gentleman and was one of the greatest entertainers of his day. McKee was well educated and was appointed by the Canadian Government a Deputy-Agent for Indian affairs in the West. He was an ally of the British in the war of 1812 and led his Indian braves at the battle of the River Thames against the army of the United States, but suffered defeat with the rest of the British force. He died soon after, in the year 1815.

In consideration of the high esteem in which McKee was held by the Sachems and Chiefs, both of the main land and the whole Island they offered to give him the entire Island for his sole individual benefit and control. That the gift, or bargain, might be legal and binding, a lease was drawn up in due form, conveying the Island, for a nominal sum, to McKee for a term of 999 years; which lease was duly recorded in a registry book.

As this lease forms an important, as well as a curious document in the history of the Island. A copy of it is here given.—

COPY OF INDIAN LEASE.

“This Indenture made and made between the Chiefs and Sachems of the Chippewa and Ottawa Nations of Indians, on the one part; and Thomas McKee, of Detroit, of the other part, witnessed, that the said chiefs and Sachems of the Chippewa and Ottawa Nations, for and in consideration of the rent and covenant hereinafter mentioned and contained, which on the part and behalf of said Thomas McKee, his heirs, executors, administrators, are and ought to be paid and performed, hath demised, and to form letters granted, and by these presents do demise, grant, and to form let unto the said Thomas McKee his heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, all that Island known by the name of Point Pelee Island, near Point Pelee in Lake Erie: To have and to hold the said Island unto the said Thomas McKee, his executors, administrators, or assigns, for and during the term of 999 years and fully to be complete and ended. To parcel out the said Island into such lots and parcels as he may think proper, and tenant the same with whatsoever and whomsoever they please to put thereon. Yielding and paying therefor, yearly and every year during the said term, unto the said Chiefs and Sachems of the Chippewa and Ottawa Nations their heirs and assigns, three bushels of Indian corn or the value thereof, if demanded, annually, to and for the use of said Chiefs and Sachems, their nations, heirs and assigns for and in full satisfaction and payment of all manner of rents whatsoever: And the Chiefs, for themselves their nations, heirs and assigns do hereby covenant that the said Thomas McKee's heirs executors, administrators or assigns may demise, grant or sell any part or parcel of the said Island for the term herein specified.

In witness whereof etc at Detroit the first day of May, in the year etc 1788 executed by seven Chiefs and Sachems who attach their Totems.

Signed sealed and delivered in the presence of

[Signed] { JAMES ALLAN,  
F. BABY.

We have no knowledge or information what disposition, or of what use McKee made of the Island for fifteen years after he became the owner of it. In 1804—sixteen years after he bought it, he leased it to John Askins, of Amherstburg, who was also a Sub Agent for Indian Affairs in the West under the Canadian Government. Askins sent some settlers and employees to the Island among whom was Justus Allen and Robert Little and Butler, the first white settlers known to have lived upon the Island. He sent over with them horses, cattle and hogs, but whether these were the first domestic animals introduced to the Island is not known—they were the first we have any record of. It is not known how long Mr. Askins occupied the Island. Thomas McKee died in 1815 and his only son and heir, Alexander McKee, came to be the owner of the Island. In the same year 1815, William McCormick, of Colchester, leased the Island from Alexander McKee and is said to have taken possession of it. In 1823 Wm. McCormick bought in fee simple all the right and title to the Island held by Alexander McKee for the sum of five hundred dollars, and the transfer was duly made by deed and recorded. In 1834 McCormick moved his large family on to the Island. As the McCormick family is so intimately connected with the Point Pelee Island, as owners and occupants for many years, it is proposed to trace their family history as far back as we have any date. In the history of the first known members of the family many romantic incidents and scenes in their lives will be found, where "truth is stranger than fiction," that would be interesting without regard to their connection with the Island, but the association of their history with that of the Island makes it of still more importance to be given.

Before entering upon this family history it is proposed to give some account of the Indian Legend heretofore mentioned.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### Indian Legends.

There is a legend of romance connected with Point Pelee Island handed down by Indian tradition through several generations, that has been gathered up and enlarged, and published, both in prose and in verse. At the north west corner of the Island facing towards the main land, is a large rock, that is known to sailors and settlers as "Hulda's Rock", but which bore a more euphonious French or Indian name in earlier times. The position of this rock shows that it evidently was once connected with the land, from

which it is now separated by a few yards, it shows also that the top of it was smooth, and projected over the water's edge. From this rock, it is said, an Indian maid on account of unrequited love cast herself into the lake and was drowned.

It was customary in the early days of the French occupancy of Canada for Indian chiefs or prominent men of the tribes living in the great Western District to make voyages to Montreal for trade or pleasure. It was quite common for the Indians to take whites captive and carry them off into their secluded fastnesses, both male and female, as will be seen from facts narrated further on in this history. It is related that a chief and his band from the far west thus visited Montreal and while there captured a young French woman who was of good birth and education and great beauty and brought her away with him. To be more secure of his prize he brought her to Point Pelee Island as one of the most secluded spots in the country. The young captive was treated kindly and adopted by the tribe as a daughter. Time deadens or sears over sorrows, and this prisoner could only submit to her fate with as much patience as possible. On the Island was a young Chief who pleaded with the Captive to become his wife and make the best of her imprisonment. This Chief won the respect and admiration of the captive maid by his gallant bearing, his bravery and his manly beauty of person and after years of waiting and seeing no hope of escaping from her prison, she consented to become his wife. To them was borne a daughter in whom the mother found great consolation. As she grew up she taught her to speak French and to read and write. About the time that she was 17 or 18 years old a young Englishman unexpectedly made his appearance on the Island. This Englishman had come to Montreal and being fond of adventure and hunting he joined an Indian band and came west, and the same adventurous spirit brought him to Point Pelee Island. He was greatly surprised to find there a French woman of intelligence and her beautiful half breed daughter, and he lingered on the Island much longer than he had intended. \* \* \* \* \* But the rest of his conduct has been told in verse in a more condensed form and will be given here instead of the more lengthy prose narrative. The lines were written by a young girl of the Island while she was away attending a boarding school as a contribution to a school paper published by pupils of the school.

Once there lived on Point au Pelee  
An Indian Maiden blythe and gay  
Who often from her birch canoe  
Would spear the spotted salmon through.

Pride of her Chieftain father's heart  
She oft would through the wild wood dart,  
And with her bow and arrow raised  
Would pierce the deer that calmly grazed.

Joy of her mother's loving eyes  
This dusky maid was a household prize  
Whose beauty, grace and gentle arts  
Won her a place in manly hearts.

A pale face to the Island came  
To catch the fish and kill the game,  
And when this lovely maid he knew,  
She won his heart—She loved him too.

“Be mine dear maiden” then he cried,  
“Let me but win thee for my bride,  
And on this Isle I’ll gladly stay”—  
The maiden did not say him nay.

Happy they lived from year to year.  
Then tidings came of a mother dear,  
Who dying, lay on a distant shore  
And longed to see her son once more.

Then with the pledge to come again  
Before another moon should wane,  
The pale face parted from his bride  
And o’er the waves his oars he plied.

But many moons did wax and wane,  
The young wife’s heart grew sick with pain,  
And all her life grew dark and chill—  
Her recreant husband tarried still.

At length a boat approached the shore,  
Her heart beat high with hope once more—  
But ‘ah! for her that small white yawl  
Bore a letter brief—that was all.

A letter that brought a withering blight  
And broke a faithfu’ heart that night:  
That told a tale of broken trust  
And hurled bright hopes down to the dust.

Hark! Hark! a wail of dark despair  
Floats out upon the midnight air:  
A splash is heard, and Pelee’s pride  
Floats out upon blue Erie’s tide.

Upon the north of Pelee Isle,  
There stranger linger but a while;  
View “Hulda’s Rock”—the mariners guide,  
That marks the fate of the Indian bride.

It marks that death-leap into the sea,  
And marks a white man’s perfidy.  
The waves that gainst it foam and surge  
Seem chanting e’er a funeral dirge.

## CHAPTER V.

### Alexander McCormick of Ireland.—He Comes to America to Live.—A Sketch of his Life and Times.

In the closing years of the 17th century in the reign of James II. of Scotland, about the year 1688, the Duke of Scoburg was sent on a military expedition to Ireland. With his army were many Scotchmen who remained and settled in the north of Ireland—the progenitors of that sturdy, active and intelligent people known as the Scotch Irish. With the Duke of Scoburg came one McCormick, who settled in the county of Down in Ireland and there reared a family of six children—four sons and two daughters. The youngest son was named Alexander. Young Alexander McCormick had such a primary education as the times and country afforded, but which was mostly of a commercial character. He had a restless, speculative disposition and before he reached his majority had determined to leave the land of his birth, and an older brother agreeing with him, they made their arrangements to come to the new English Colony in America. They probably reached America about the year 1761. After their arrival in the English Colonies, they separated—the elder brother going south to the Carolinas and was not heard of afterwards by any of the family, and has no further part in this narrative.

Alexander McCormick secured a position in business with a merchant in Philadelphia and remained in the eastern states for several years. But following the bent of his restless and roving disposition and his desire for adventure he joined a company of traders to go into the western wilderness across the Alleghany Mountains to trade with the Indians for pelts and furs. This was probably between the years 1768 and 1770. The whole of the western country was then an almost unexplored wilderness, inhabited only by tribes of savage, roaming Indians. There were few white settlements west of the Alleghanies. One of the oldest of these was at the junction of the Alleghany and Monongahela rivers where they unite to form the Ohio river—"LaBelle Riviere" of the early French settlers. Here, probably as early as the close of the 17th century, was established a fort by French Canadian settlers, which they called Fort Duquesne, and a trading station. In the war between England and France, 1755-1763, the British were victorious, and in 1763, France ceded to England her Canadian and all her other American possessions. In this war old Fort Duquesne was captured and demolished in 1758. But afterwards under the British a new fort was built called Fort Pitt, and around it was established a small but important trading station about the year 1769, called Pittsburg. The site is now occupied by the great manufacturing City of Pittsburg and its twin city, Alleghany City. There was another settlement still further west that was older, larger and of more importance, made by the Canadian French at Detroit and along the Detroit River on both sides. There were some smaller settlements further down the Ohio river—at Monetta, Ohio and Limestone or Majorville, Ky., and in central Kentucky at and near Lexington there was a more extensive settlement of Virginians and Marylanders who had followed the footsteps of the pioneer huntsman and

noted Indian fighter, Daniel Boone. But to reach any of these settlements from the Eastern States hundreds of miles of wilderness had to be passed through that were inhabited by tribes of hostile Indians, who also hung closely around the outskirts of the settlements watching for their prey.

Undaunted by the prospect Alexander McCormick set out on his perilous trip to the west about the year 1771 with a few companions, provided with such goods as were suitable for trade with the Indians for skins and furs that were then in great demand in Europe. We are not informed of the number of the party, or the number of horses used to transport their goods and chattels; but they must have made their way slowly and laboriously, wading streams and climbing mountains, and no doubt met with many adventures and perils to life and limb from the many dangers they encountered. It is probable that the first white settlement he reached was Pittsburg; but of this there is no definite certainty or any evidence that he stopped there any length of time.

Beyond Pittsburg, westward, across the Ohio river, and north to the great lakes and to the Detroit river, was that vast unexplored region known as the Western District or the North West Territory. It was inhabited by tribes of the Wyandotte, Shawnee, Cherokee, Delaware and other Indians. We find that McCormick had passed over the Ohio river into this district and was living with a band of Wyandottes. But whether he was captured by them and made a prisoner, or whether he voluntarily went among them to trade, it does not appear. But there is no doubt that they prevented him from making his escape and held him as a captive. It would not seem that McCormick was very much dissatisfied with the situation. In fact he seems to have been well pleased with his roving life and Indian companionship, as he could probably have made his escape sometime during his long sojourn with the Indians if he had wished to do so. The Indians were also pleased with him and he became a favorite and "big injun" among them, being formally adopted him into the tribe as a "brother" with appropriate ceremony. To make their relations still closer, the Chief offered him his sister, a comely young squaw, for a wife, and McCormick readily accepted the offer, and they were duly married according to the Indian ceremony for such occasions. The Indians were sagacious enough to make McCormick useful. They told him that he was "no good" to hunt or for war; but by making signs indicating writing and making figures they said he was good for that, and they found him of much service to them in making bargains with white traders whom they now occasionally met in their wanderings and through him they carried on their trading with the whites at Detroit. They trusted him to collect cargoes of skins and to take them from the Maumee river in boats to the lake and on to Detroit and to dispose of them there and bring back such supplies as they needed, without any fears of his leaving them, so completely was he identified with them. McCormick thus made frequent trips to Detroit during the 8 or 10 years of his identification with the Indians and on these trips he made the acquaintance of prominent white men in Detroit, both French and English, some of whom were very useful to him in after life. But he always returned to his Indian companions. In due time a son was born to him by his Indian wife. It is said that she died a few years afterward; but McCormick took good care of his Indian offspring; and brought him to Canada with him many years after, when he settled down to civilized life.



In McCormick's wanderings and trading among the different tribes, he often met white men, traders and trappers, or captives and others adopting the Indian life. In a band of the Chippawa tribe visiting the Maumee country he discovered a white squaw, and from his intimate knowledge of the Indians he knew that she was some white girl who had been captured and adopted by the tribe. The girl from all appearances had no doubt been with the Indians a long time, and had become completely identified with them. McCormick soon became very much interested in the white squaw, and when he found an opportunity to speak to her and learn her history, he ascertained that she had been with the Indians about three years, that she was taken captive at Pittsburg, and that her name was Elizabeth Turner.

It was but natural that these two exiles from civilization should find some interest in each other; since the captive maid in time became intimately connected with the subject of this history we shall now look back to her early life and to the times in which she lived.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### Indian Depredations, Captives and Hardships.

It is hard for us at this date to realize the hardships and dangers that beset the pioneers of 100 years ago in settling up this country. Coming into a wilderness of vast forest filled with wild and vicious animals and wild Indians still more vicious and savage, they had ever to be upon the alert. It was through hard work and great self denial that they built a log cabin, cleared up a little ground, and procured the necessaries of life. Besides the natural and physical difficulties incident to their situation, they were ever in danger of their lives from the savage and treacherous Indians, who would lay in wait ready to shoot them down from behind some tree or rock. When these pioneers went into their fields to plant or cultivate their scanty crops, they would carry their trusty rifles with them for protection. Many lost their lives; others were captured and taken away as prisoners to suffer great hardships, while some were cruelly tortured and burned at the stake.

In the case of Alexander McCormick's captivity and life among the Indians heretofore given, there is no evidence of cruelty practiced by his captors. But from many other sources we learn of much cruelty practiced by the Indians about this time, and even many years later. A prominent historical case was the burning of Col. Crawford of the United States army, near Sandusky, Ohio, in the year 1782 or 1783. A notice has recently been given in a leading magazine, of an old book published in 1827, written by one Charles Johnson, of Virginia, in which he gives an account of his capture by Indians and their treatment of himself and his companions in captivity. Johnson's capture was in 1790, some ten years after the time that we found Alex. McCormick and Elizabeth Turner in the hands of the Indians. As it illustrates the dangers of the period and the condition of the country at that time, a condensed account of Mr. Johnson's narrative of his experience may appropriately be given here.

In May, 1790 Chas. Johnson in company with John May and Jacob Skyles left Eastern Virginia for Kentucky, going by the way of the Kanawa and Ohio rivers. When they reached the Ohio river, they were joined by a Mr. Flinn and two girls, Peggy and Dolly Fleming, from Pittsburg. All started down the river together in a flat boat. They knew the dangers from the Indians and were on the lookout and kept well to the middle of the river. On the way down the river they were hailed by two white men on the shore, who made signals that they wished to be taken on board the boat. But these white men were only decoys of the Indians and as soon as the boat neared the shore, the latter, who were in a bush, appeared and began shooting at those on the boat. John May and Dolly Fleming were killed and Skyles was wounded in the shoulder and taken prisoner with Johnson, Flinn and Peggy Fleming. Another boat with six men in it soon followed Johnson's party who were less cautious and kept near the shore and were all killed. Johnson found that the Indians were of several tribes and they divided the captured goods and prisoners among the different tribes. Johnson and Skyles were allotted to the Shawnees Peggy Fleming to the Cherokees, and Flinn fell to the more savage Wyandottes. When Johnson and Skyles were taken to the Indian camps they were horrified to see the scalps of John May and Dolly Fleming stretched before the fire to dry. The Indians of the Shawnee tribe with whom Johnson was, broke up camp and started on a long tramp north, to the Sandusky and Maumee country, now in Northern Ohio. Johnson and Skyles were tied together and closely guarded every night. They suffered terribly, especially Skyles, who was wounded. Johnson finally became separated from Skyles and after many months of suffering, eventually made his escape with some traders to Detroit. But it fared worse with poor Flinn with the cruel Wyandottes. He was tortured with all the ingenuity the savages could employ and burned at the stake.

Johnson while at an Indian village upon the upper Sandusky, visited the place where Col. Crawford had been burned to death, and a tree was pointed out to him, said to be the one to which Col. Crawford was bound. While there he heard of his former companion Peggy Fleming, that she had suffered greatly and at one time was tied to a tree to be burned but was rescued by a friendly band, and from the information that Johnson obtained he believed that she at last reached her home at Pittsburg.

Such was the condition of the Indian country and of the temper of the savages in 1790 some 8 or 10 years after the incidents to be related here concerning the capture of Elizabeth Turner at Fort Pitt or Pittsburg.

## CHAPTER VII.

### Elizabeth Turner.—Her Capture by the Indians.

Pittsburg about the year 1780 was a straggling village and trading post that had already gone through many changes, as has been noted heretofore. It was still an isolated settlement surrounded by a wilderness, with the Indians lurking around its outskirts. Fort Pitt and a few block-houses and stockades, answered as a kind of protection and place of refuge in case of an attack from the hostile Indians. At this time there lived in Pittsburg a family by name of Turner who were from Maryland. They had a neighbor named McKevar. In order to add to their scanty provisions many of these early settlers were in the habit of making maple sugar in the spring, to do which they would open a camp in a near by sugar bush, using common open kettles to boil the sap down. The Turners and McKevars joined together and made a sugar camp, on the slope of a hill not far from their dwellings. It consisted of a rude shed made by putting forked posts in the ground with poles in the forks to hold the cover of rough boards, or boughs. Kettles and pots were hung on a pole which was also supported by stakes driven in the ground, and under these was kept up a blazing fire of dry limbs and faggots. To gather the sap or "sugar water" and keep the kettles boiling and full, and at the same time to prevent them from 'boiling over' required the constant attention of some one all day, and sometimes all night. This work was intrusted their sons, two lads nearly grown. In early March 1780 young Turner and McKevar were at work in the sugar camp, and the parents sent their two daughters and a smaller lad out to the "sugar bush" to take the boys some needed provision and to assist them somewhat in their work. It was the breaking up of winter and the sun shone brightly; the robins were twittering and hopping about in the dry leaves to secure a meal of a grub or worm, and the blue birds, those bright harbingers of spring-time, were whistling from an old dead tree full of holes made by the woodpeckers, in which they were seeking to make their nest. The girls were enjoying their outing and lingered on through the afternoon, assisting their brothers, drinking warm maple syrup, and in fun and frolic around the camp fire, without a thought of danger; but the declining sun warned them that it was time to return home. Just then the dog was heard to bark, which indicated the approach of strangers and boded evil. The bark of the dog was quickly followed by the crack of rifles, and the two young men fell pierced by the fatal bullet from the unerring aim of the savage Indians. The girls found themselves in the presence of hideously painted savages with uplifted tomahawks and before they could collect their thoughts, were seized and carried away into the thick, dark woods, as was also the younger lad. As the girls did not return to their homes at night the parents went to the camp in search, there to find their sons dead and the girls carried off. An alarm was given in the settlement of the attack upon the sugar camp, but it was impossible to attempt a rescue. Should the few men who could be spared from the settlement pursue the Indians into the woods in the darkness they would be liable to be shot from ambush, or tomahawked by the wily foe. When morning came it was evident that the Indians would be too far away to be overtaken easily, and there were not men enough to be spared from the settlement for an expedition. The

friends of the young girls were exceedingly anxious as to their fate, knowing the character of the Indians and their manner of treating prisoners. Sometimes they might be treated kindly enough, though roughly, and adopted as members of the tribe or band they were with; but should they become sick or faint and unable to travel, they would ruthlessly rid themselves of them by the use of the deadly hatchet. One of these captured girls, Elizabeth Turner, lived to be rescued from the Indians after being with them over three years, and to tell the story of her capture, of her wanderings, sufferings and adventures among them. She lived to a good old age to tell these true stories—the truth of which is “stranger than fiction”—to her children, and to a large circle of grandchildren.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### Elizabeth Turner's Life Among the Indians,

Soon after the capture Elizabeth was separated from her companion, Miss McKeever, as she fell to the lot of a band of Wyandottes and Miss McKeever to some other tribe. They never met again. The young lad who was captured along with them soon became sick and unable to travel and was slain by the way. The Wyandottes, with Elizabeth Turner, immediately left the vicinity of Pittsburg and slowly made their way to the Indian villages on the lower and upper Sandusky rivers, and on the borders of Lake Erie, dwelling during the summer at some one of these places. Elizabeth appears to have been blessed with good health; she was not only physically well equipped to stand the hard life she was compelled to endure, though but a small woman, but she had great moral courage and an indomitable spirit. She used to say the Indians would often praise her for acts which they called brave; “but,” said she, “It was not bravery; it was simply desperation.” Her heroic conduct, or as probably she would have put it, her stoic behaviour, and general good conduct caused her to find favor with her captors, and they formally adopted her into their band as a sister, and treated her kindly, after the Indian fashion. She had to take part in most of the work and drudgery that usually falls to the lot of the squaws—the “white squaw” had to do her part. On one occasion while working the corn patch, her squaw companions quit work and retired to the shade, but told her she must work on—that she was their slave—but Elizabeth also promptly left the corn patch for the shade. The squaws remonstrated and threatened to force her to work, but with her uplifted she let them know that she would use it upon them and threatened with so much show of determination that the squaws fled to the camp and reported her to the Chief. Their story however only amused the Chief and his companions, who praised Elizabeth for her show of bravery. At another time she had a quarrel and fight with a squaw from whom she tore the clothes and put her to flight. This also amused the braves, who applauded her for the act. Her spirited disposition, her readiness to resent any indignities and to take care of herself and stand up for her rights, showed itself in many other incidents; and on account of these qualities she was given an Indian name that meant a Chesnut Burr. She would sting them said like a burr whenever molested. With all of Elizabeth Turner's spirit and fortitude, she

was not exempt from feeling the horror of her terrible situation, or from pining for home and kindred, and the hope against hope for her delivery. Nor was she exempt from fatigue and sickness. At one time she was sent to watch the corn field to keep the birds from eating the corn just as the grains began to fill. She was sick and weary and almost desperate as to her fate and went to the field alone. Her sickness grew worse and she became delirious and unconscious. She could not tell by days nor weeks, how long she remained in this condition; but when she began to recover she found that the young corn, that was just coming into the milk state when she was taken ill, was now well glazed and getting hard. She could remember of only once being visited by a squaw during her sickness.

Months and years were passing without Elizabeth Turner hearing from her people and without any prospect of her making her escape. They were now in the Indian settlement of the upper Sandusky in the northern part of what is now the State of Ohio, hundreds of miles through a wilderness, from Pittsburg. She occasionally met a white trader or prisoner, but they knew nothing of her people or her country. The war of the revolution was not yet ended in the West. The Indians were the allies of the British and were employed by them in bands and companies and singly to fight the rebellious Yankees, either commanded by British officers, or under their own Chief. The cruelties and atrocities that the British officers allowed their Indian allies to inflict upon prisoners and non-combatants, is a blot upon our prided Anglo Saxon civilization, that can never be erased so long as history records the facts.

Elizabeth Turner was, at times, an unwilling witness to tortures inflicted upon prisoners. Col. Crawford of the patriot army of the revolution was a prisoner of the Indians at the upper Sandusky villages while Elizabeth was there. She sought a personal interview with him and warned him of his impending fate and urged him to try to make his escape. Crawford told her that he did not think it possible to escape and said he was too old and feeble to attempt it. He told her that Simon Girty, a noted hunter and pioneer among the Indians and an ally of the British had offered to assist him to escape, promising to furnish him a horse and guide. But he said it was of no use and seemed resigned to his fate. When the day arrived and preparations were being made to burn Crawford at the stake, Elizabeth made an excuse that she ought to go out early in the morning to bring in a horse, fled to the woods and remained completely concealed until the terrible business was over. The Indians had intended that she should be a witness to the execution. For the first time they accused her of cowardice, and told her that they believed Crawford was her father and that for that reason she had hidden away.

## CHAPTER IX.

### Elizabeth Turner Meets Alexander McCormick—Courtship and Marriage.

In the fall or winter of 1782 the band of Indians with whom Elizabeth was, left the Sandusky villages and went north to the Maumee country in the neighbourhood of where the city of Toledo now is. They there met with the Shawnee tribe, among whom was a white man who, in dress and general appearance seemed to be completely identified with the Shawnees; in fact he appeared to be one of them and one of some prominence and authority, though he was white. He was later found to be an Indian trader, who had been adopted by the tribe, and had been with them some eight or nine years, Alexander McCormick by name.

McCormick was greatly surprised to see among the Wyandottes a white squaw and soon made her acquaintance. Elizabeth's hopes were buoyed up with the expectation of hearing something from her friends, and possibly making her escape through the new-found acquaintance. McCormick could not give her any news from her friends in Pittsburg, but he showed great interest in her welfare, and it was a relief to her to have some white person's companionship. As a few months passed McCormick's interest in the white squaw increased, and as his Indian wife had died some time before this, he now thought of trying to win her for his wife. Elizabeth was glad to make a new friend under the circumstances she was in, and did not discourage his attentions. He was not long in making a proposal of marriage, but she was not prepared to accept his offer then. Before she was captured she had a lover in Pittsburg to whom she was betrothed, and felt that she ought to be true to her lover and her vows, and that a separation of three years ought not to release her from them. But McCormick pled with her to overcome these scruples. He told her that there was no probability of her ever seeing the young man again—that doubtless he had considered her dead and had married some one else, or he might be dead himself—probably killed by hostile Indians, and finally succeeded in getting her consent to marry him.

But there was another difficulty in the way. The Wyandottes refused to allow Elizabeth to leave their tribe, or to give her up to McCormick. McCormick thought to overcome this difficulty by paying a liberal ransom for her; but when he went to take her away they refused to let her go, having regretted their bargain. McCormick's Scotch blood was now roused, and he determined to have her, even if he had to steal her and run away with her to Detroit; and he laid his plans with this intention. Circumstance favored his project. He was, that Spring, engaged in collecting furs and skins to be loaded in row boats at Maumee City, of which he was to have charge to take them to Detroit, as he had frequently done before. When all was ready, by previous arrangement with Elizabeth, he got her into one of the boats, secreted her in the bottom and completely covered her with the skins. When the Wyandottes missed their white squaw they immediately suspected McCormick of spirited her away, and went to search his boats for her. They removed nearly all the skins from the boat that she was in, seemed satisfied that she was not there

and left a few skins in the bottom; but these few completely concealed her. When the Wyandottes withdrew without finding Elizabeth, they both felt greatly relieved, for when once on their way in the boats there would be no danger of rescue. The voyage by row-boats was a slow one. First down the Mannece river into Lake Erie, thence up the lake keeping along the shore and camping on land at night, and the same way up the Detroit river against the current, they at last reached Detroit safely.

McCormick took Elizabeth to the house of one of the friends he had made in Detroit on former visits—one Col. Allen. There he bountifully provided her with the dress of civilization, to which she had been a stranger for three years. He also provided her with the best wedding dress and outfit that could be bought in the town and they were married in the house of Col. Allen in May, 1783, by an English Church minister. Mrs. McCormick often described to her children and grand children her wedding outfit in detail and it would now be a curious costume.

## CHAPTER X.

### Alexander McCormick's Married Life.

After the marriage of Alexander McCormick to Elizabeth Turner they soon began to make preparation to return to the Indian settlement in the Mannece country from which he had lately come; and with his young wife and some necessary articles that would be needed, he left Detroit and embarked upon their frail boats in the same way that they had come. It seems that McCormick preferred to live among the Indians and keep up his fur trade. With his Scotch thrift he had made money, and proposed to take up land and establish a more permanent home than he had had with the Indians. They were both familiar with the Indian life, inured to its hardships, and apparently were quite satisfied with it, so it was no great sacrifice to them to live thus.

On May 30th, 1784, a child was born to them, whom they named William. The veil of the future of this child has been opened to us, and we know his future career; but at that time the most sanguine optimist could not have predicted that a child born in such unfavorable circumstances would become a prominent man in his sphere—a member of the Canadian Parliament, and the first white owner of Point Au Pelee Island.

A very natural desire came to Mrs. McCormick to visit her old home at Pittsburg to see her relatives and friends, and to let them know that she was still alive. But it would be a difficult undertaking. Pittsburg was some 200 or more miles distant and the whole route was through a wilderness without roads and without inhabitants, save some roving bands of Indians. It was not convenient for her husband to leave his business and go with her. But that same indomitable will and spirit that had enabled her to go through so many trials, now came to her aid, and she devised a plan to accomplish her desire and executed it. She selected a trusty squaw to be her only companion on the

journey and McCormick provided them with two horses and such a small outfit as they could carry with them, of little things that would be most necessary to them. Thus equipped, with her young child in her arms, Mrs. McCormick (nee Elizabeth Turner) set out on horseback to make the journey to Pittsburg. The journey was long and tedious and not without thrilling adventures and hardships. No friendly houses along the route to shelter them at night and for many days travelling not an Indian wigwam to be seen. When night overtook them, they camped alone in the wilderness. It is hard for us even to imagine a young mother with her babe making such a journey, but Mrs. McCormick's four years experience of Indian life enabled her to do it successfully.

She found her father and mother alive, but the appearance of their daughter before them was like one rising from the dead. Four years had passed since she was taken from them and they had not heard one word from her. To see her return with a child—a child of her own, greatly added to their surprise. She found her former lover, who was still unmarried, but he said he did not blame her, under the circumstances, for marrying McCormick, and thought that she had no right. She remained with her friends a few weeks, and then returned to her husband in the same way that she had come—on horse back with her lone squaw companion.

The war of the revolution was now over and a treaty of peace had been made. Whether McCormick took an active part in fighting the revolutionists with the British, or with their Indian allies is not known; but the Indians were the British allies, and he was thoroughly identified with them, and no doubt strongly sympathizing with the British cause. He had perhaps, been guilty of acts which led the Yankees to look him as an enemy, and as the number of Yankees were increasing, it made it unpleasant for him to remain among them. In the eastern colonies, made independent states by the success of the revolution, there were a number of Tories who still believed in the "Divine right of Kings," and refused to be disloyal to King George, who determined to leave the New England States and seek a new home in the English Province of Quebec, now Canada. They gathered up their families and effects, shook the dirt from their feet, and entered British territory. Some entered from New York near Niagara, others pushed on further west to Detroit and crossed the river into British possession and formed a colony in what is now the County of Essex, Ontario. These Loyalists were encouraged and rewarded by the English government with a gift of 200 acres of land to each family. McCormick being loyal to the King and not satisfied with living among the Yankees determined to gather up his effects, take them to Detroit and cross the river, and join this colony of Loyalists on British ground, and make himself and family a permanent home. He selected his 200 acres of government land in that part of the County now known as the Township of Colchester, near the shores of Lake Erie. This county was almost an unbroken wilderness covered with a very heavy growth of forest, with but few white settlers in that part of the county, but they were more numerous upon the Detroit river. There were Indians in abundance and McCormick again found himself in his old element, and there is no doubt but what he engaged in his old business of trading with considerable success, as well as doing a little farming. The writer has not been able to secure the exact date that



McCormick came to Canada. Some place the date about the year 1787 or 1788, while there are other evidences that it was four or five years later—some-where in the early nineties. When McCormick was married to Elizabeth Turner he was at least 40 years old, while she was but 21. There were born to them 8 children in all, 4 sons and 4 daughters viz., William, Alexander, Matthew, John, Elizabeth (Betsy,) Mary, Nancy and Sarah. Mary married John Ferriss, Nancy married——Stockwell, Sarah married——Price; and their descendents by these names are still known in that community. "Betsy" remained unmarried. The sons all married and settled in the county, and some of them lived to an old age and raised large families, who still perpetuate the name in the neighborhood. The particular branch of the family we wish to follow in this narrative is through William, the eldest child—the one that was born among the Indians, and was carried from the Mannees to Pittsburg and back on horseback by his mother; and the one who became the first white owner of Point au Pelee Island.

In 1802 Alexander McCormick made a trip to Ireland and visited his relations there. He returned and lived to a good old age, but died many years before his wife. Mrs. Elizabeth Turner McCormick died in 1839 about 77 years old. She lived to see all her children raised to manhood and womanhood, in fact at her death her children were well advanced in years. She lived to see many grand children—to tell them of the wonderful incidents and adventures of her early life among the Indians. A few of these incidents have been gathered by the writer, but are only feebly told in this narrative. She lived to see that child born among the Indians, that she carried in her arms when a babe hundreds of miles on horseback, become a prominent man in the community in which he lived, and to see him become a member of the Canadian Parliament; and when he came to Pelee Island to live she came with him, and lived there several years—but she died in the Township of Colchester, while there on a visit, as before stated, in 1839.

## CHAPTER XI.

### William McCormick—A Sketch of His Life.

We have seen the unfavorable circumstances in which William McCormick began life. He may have been six, or he may have been ten years old when his father brought him to live in Canada. The record of his age at that time is missing. He may have had some elementary teaching by his father and mother before he left the Indian country. After this he may have been sent to Mulden or Sandwich, to such schools as existed there, as there was probably none nearer to his home. In the main he was indebted to his own energy and ambition for such learning and knowledge of books, and of business that he acquired. He made good use of every opportunity to improve himself, but had to depend upon his own resources. The English speaking settlers around him were mostly composed of that sturdy intelligent New England stock who were loyal to the King and left the New England States to settle in Canada, and their descendants, who became known as the "United Empire Loyalists,"

whom many Canadians are now proud to own as their ancestors. These formed a nucleus of good society to which the young man had access. From them he no doubt learned much, and was indebted to them for what proved to be of much more importance to him in after life than any knowledge he might have obtained from them, a good wife in the person of Mary Cornwall, the daughter of John Cornwall, who left Connecticut after the Revolution to make a home in the "King's Dominion."

It was at the age of twenty-five, William McCormick was married to Mary Cornwall, who was then seventeen. This was on January 29th, 1809. They settled on the old homestead farm, already enlarged by purchased addition. Besides the society of the United Empire Loyalists, there was a military station at Fort Malden where there were army officers and government officials and their families, a society to which McCormick had *entree*. But the greater part of the inhabitants of the county were Canadian French, half-breeds and Indians.

In such a community an intelligent, energetic young man like McCormick was bound to come to the front and hold a position of respect and of influence. This, we find, he did. His first official position was that of postmaster for the Post Office of Colchester, which was established in an out-building in his yard. Later he was appointed a magistrate for that district. In addition to the magistrate's duty of holding court, committing violators of the law, and settling disputes, it was his duty under certain circumstances to perform the marriage ceremony on account of scarcity of ministers, and distance of the churches. McCormick had frequent applications at his house, from young people who wished to be united, but could not wait until the quarterly visit of minister and he became quite a popular administrator of this rite. Nor was his popularity confined to his particular neighborhood, but extended all over the county.

The name of the old French village L'Assumption had been changed to Sandwich, and this became the county seat. Along with Malden, now Amherstburg, these were the two principal settlements, Windsor then being only a few scattering shanties. McCormick made frequent visits to these towns and was well known throughout the county. In 18— he received nomination, and was elected a member of the Canadian Parliament for the county of Essex. In 1823 he made a trip to Ireland to see and become acquainted with his father's brothers and their families. It was a trip that he greatly enjoyed and often talked of in after life.

William McCormick's attention was first called to Point au Pelee Island in 1815—or the first record of his taking any personal interest in it was soon after it had come into possession of Alex. McKee's only son, heir of Col. Thos. McKee, half-breed Indian Chief, and first personal owner of the Island, under a lease from several Indian tribes for 999 years, which lease has already been referred to in these pages. At this time—1815, McCormick leased the Island from McKee, but what use he made of it, or of what profit it was to him we are not informed. The Island seems to have had great attraction for him, and he must have had great faith in its possibilities of development, for in eight

years after he had leased it, he bought the whole of McKee's interest for the sum of \$500. This was in 1823, but he did not remove to the Island with his family until 1834. It does not appear that he made much use of the island, or received any benefit from it during these eleven years that he owned it before moving to it. Some tenants, both white and Indian, were sent over, who cleared up some small patches of land and built a few cedar log houses. Cattle, horses and hogs were also sent over to the Island. Some cedar timber was cut and shipped: some of it was sold to the Government for repairing the fort at Amherstburg. In 1833 the lighthouse that is still upon the island, was erected, and the stone with which it was built was procured from McCormick.

When William McCormick moved his family to the Island in 1834 he had eleven children—eight sons and three daughters—two other children had died in infancy. Along with the family was his aged mother—she who was a captive among the Indians, and a maiden sister. His children were Alexander, the eldest, who was then 23 years old, John, 21; David, 19; William, 17; Thomas C., 13; Lucinda, 12; Charles, 8; Mary, 6; Sarah Ann, 5; Peregrine, 3; and Arthur M., an infant a few months old.

The north end of the Island was selected for the homestead. Here were two cedar log houses, connected by a frame apartment built between, which formed the family residence. It was only a few yards from the bluff at the beach, facing that beautiful sheet of water, the north bay of Pelee Island. Here the main land was in full view across the north channel of the lake; and as nearly all the shipping and commerce of the lake in sail or steam vessels passes through this channel, it was in plain sight from the house. Almost in front of the house was a good location for a dock, which was afterwards built, affording a landing-place and safe harbor for boats—a very important consideration, as all intercourse with the main shore and the rest of the world was by boats.

Other log houses had been built in different parts of the Island and were occupied by tenants. The names of only a few of these tenants are obtainable. The Allens and Butlers, and John and George Fox were some of the earlier settlers. The Foxes and their children remained on the island several years, George Fox was drowned in the north bay, across from Colchester: The families finally moved to North Bass Island and became the owners of nearly the whole of that island, and pioneers in the grape business. Subsequently, when there was a boom in the price of all island land for the purpose of growing grapes, they sold some of the island at great profit. Peter and Simon Fox and their sister Mrs. George Wires, who spent their earlier years on Point Pelee Island, are still living with their descendants, on North Bass Island, well to do and highly respected and influential citizens of that place.

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## CHAPTER XII.

### Condition of the Island When the McCormicks First Removed to It.

When William McCormick and family went to the Island they found it almost in its primeval state, with only here and there a few log houses and small clearings made by tenants under Mr. Askin, when he, Askin, held the lease, and by the tenants sent over by Mr. McCormick before he came over himself. The Island contained, as was ascertained by a survey made some time after this and known as the Salter survey, an area of 11,549 acres. It was computed that 5,413 acres of this was marsh land, but little above the level of the lake; and about 2,000 acres was low wet timbered land that was sometimes covered with water; leaving about 4,500 acres of up-land, some of which was too rocky for cultivation. There were three marshes, two small ones, and one of over 4,000 acres extending entirely across the Island, making it impossible to pass from north to south except on a narrow sandy strip along the edge of the lake, thrown up by the waves. This marsh was often overflowed by water running into it from the lake; at other times the flow would be from the marsh into the lake. It was always covered with water from a foot to five feet deep, but was overrun with a heavy growth of aquatic grapes and other vegetation. There were no trees upon it. The upland was heavily timbered with large trees of hickory, elm and basswood, and a limited amount of very large oak. The lower lands had a growth of soft maple, basswood, elm and other varieties of trees, while the rocky ridges were covered with hard maple, ash and oak. There was a quantity of red cedar trees in groves, and scattered about among the other timber, most of them entirely dead but perfectly sound. They had been in this condition beyond the recollection of the oldest visitors to the Island—perhaps for generations. There were some groves of live cedar, however, and some individual trees scattered through the forest. There were also dead and nearly dead mulberry trees scattered over the island almost as valuable as cedar for fence posts.

There was a time when elk and deer roamed the Island, as is evident from deer horns and numerous immense antlers of the elk found in the woods, and more recently in the marshes since these have been reclaimed. But these animals had both disappeared. There is no evidence that any of the large ferocious animals such as wolves, bears and catamounts were ever on the island; foxes and raccoons were plentiful and muskrats numerous, their houses dotting the marshes, giving the appearance in the Fall of a prairie meadow covered with hay cocks. They were trapped and speared by both white and Indian hunters—sometimes to the number of 5,000 or 6,000 a year. No mink or otter was found; no rabbits or squirrels; no moles or skunks; no quail or grouse. The wild duck made this both a breeding and a feeding place. The mallard and wood duck and other varieties used to breed in the woods and marshes, and great numbers of ducks and wild geese stopped here in the Spring and Fall, in their migration north and south, to feed upon the wild rice and other food abounding. Snakes were innumerable and of many kinds, including

the poisonous rattle-snake. Myriads of mosquitos, deer-flies, horse-flies and other biting flies, were there throughout the summer, to torment both man and beast. Such was the condition of the island when this family first went upon it in 1834, and it remained nearly in the same condition for the next twenty-five years.

The McCormicks engaged in general farming, but chiefly in stock raising. Horses and cattle could live in the bush for nine months in the year: in fact horses lived out of doors the whole season and became quite wild. Hogs fed upon hickory nuts, acorns and roots and were fat by the time Winter set in. It was great sport at the first snow to go out with dog and gun and lay in the year's supply of pork and lard. But they turned their attention largely to getting out cedar and oak timber for shipment and to selling firewood, as these were cash articles. In 1836 a saw mill was erected at the south east end of the island to cut red cedar railroad ties for shipment to Cleveland and other United States ports. The older of the McCormicks, Alexander, John and William, had the management of getting out the timber and other work on the island, and while so engaged "kept shanty" at different places on the island. They probably did this sometimes before the family moved over permanently. Canadian French lumbermen, experts in hewing square timber, were brought over to the island, and the huge oak trees were felled and hewn into sticks the length of the body of the trees and as large as the timber would admit, sometimes more than two feet square. These were dragged out to the beach when there was snow, by several yoke of oxen; thence floated out to vessels lying at anchor, taken aboard by horse power, and finally shipped to Europe for ship building purposes.

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### A Battle Fought on the Island—The "Rebellion of 1837-38.

Their work and peaceful possession of the island by the McCormicks was interrupted in 1838 by the "Patriot Rebellion," as the uprising against the Canadian Government by a rough lot of Fenians and sealawags in 1837 and 1838 was called, when a number of these "rebels" invaded the island from Sandusky, Ohio, to seek for plunder and to capture the McCormicks.

The greatest activity of these so-called rebels was in the eastern part of the Province of Ontario, in the Niagara District; but some of the invaders came over from Detroit and made an attack upon Windsor also from the rear. A few British regulars under Col. Prince were at Windsor and met the invaders, easily defeating them. Another party in a vessel appeared along the coast of Colchester and committed some depredation, continuing on until opposite Amherstburg when a short sharp battle took place and the boat with all the crew were captured or killed by the Canadian volunteers. In March 1838 a party of these worthless fellows said to have numbered 450, came from Sandusky on the ice to Pelee Island. As there was no British military establishment here, nor any British soldiers, they could have no other object

but plunder and theft from the McCormicks; and possibly a desire to take some of them prisoners for ransom.

The McCormicks got notice in some way of the approaching trouble and preferred to retreat rather than fall into the hands of an irresponsible mob. They gathered up the family and crossed to the main land on the ice, and made haste to inform the military authorities at Fort Malden of the invasion of the island. Col. Maitland, with three companies of regulars and one company of militia volunteers were sent to the island, guided by young William and David McCormick.

There is a printed record and description of the battle fought on Pelee Island, or more properly on the ice near the south end of the island, on March 3rd, 1838, which will be quoted here from the book containing it:—"Col. Maitland sent men over to examine the ice to see if it was safe to send cannons over. They reported it safe; and one company of volunteers and three of regulars, one under Capt. Brown and the others under Col. Maitland, came with two brass pieces. The rebels believed them to be all volunteers, and not being afraid of these prepared to fight; but when the regulars drew off their overcoats and displayed their uniforms, consternation seized them. Running to the south end of the island, where Capt. Brown had been stationed, a battle ensued between them and him. Five men were killed and fifteen prisoners were taken. The British had one killed and twenty-eight wounded. Three rebels retreated to the east side and attempted to get away on the ice. About one hundred broke through and were drowned; the rest made their escape."

This account differs somewhat from that given by the McCormicks, who were here on the ground; especially that part saying one hundred of the rebels were drowned, which is no doubt a mistake.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### Death of William McCormick.

When Pelee Island was invaded by the rebel mob, in March 1838, the McCormicks left it, and did not return permanently until the summer of 1839. This disaster had a depressing influence upon William McCormick and his health began to decline. He died, February 18th, 1840, fifty six years of age, leaving a widow and eleven children. Five of these children were then young men from eighteen to twenty-nine years of age. His aged mother, who was formerly Elizabeth Turner, the captive among the Indians, died about a year before him. She had been living with her son on the island, but had left with the family at the time of the invasion, and died in Colchester at her old home, aged about seventy-six years.

A prominent idea with William McCormick in buying Pelee Island was to establish homes for his children by giving each of them a good farm, and so settle them on the island as a family colony. His health failed quite rapidly,

and in 1839 he made a will devising the island to his eleven children. In this will he specially designated certain points on the island where each child was to have 300 acres of land allotted to him. The residue of the land, including the north, was to be divided equally, as nearly as possible, between the children, excepting 100 acres which was to be set aside for the purpose of maintaining a school on the island—the rents and profits therefrom to go to support the school. He also left 10 acres at the north end of the island for a village plot and church. Each one of the heirs selected his homestead of 300 acres, as provided in the will, and took possession. But no division of the island by legal survey was made until 1847, seven years after the death of William McCormick. P. H. Salter, a provincial land surveyor, was then employed to survey the island and make the division as required by the will, so that each member of the family could know the boundaries of his or her land. Alexander, being the eldest of the heirs, was allowed by the others to act as their agent in the management of the survey. But instead of dividing the land as the will directed he had it divided differently, and in a way that was not at all satisfactory to the other heirs, who refused to accept the survey or to recognize the division made by Salter.

This led to family dissensions and animosities that retarded the prosperity of the island for the next 20 years. Alexander McCormick held to the land he claimed, retaining possession by tenants, and in 1848 built the stone cottage at the north end, which still stands in good preservation. He not only put tenants upon the land, but sold large tracts of it to outside parties who took possession of it. A company in Cleveland, Ohio, of which a Mr. Whipple was a member, bought land of Alexander. Mr. Whipple came to the island with tenants and had erected several frame houses, the material for which was brought from Cleveland all ready to put up. These engaged in clearing land, shipping cedar and other timber and wood. Alexander McCormick died in 1854, leaving matters in this unsettled condition. The other members of the family would not admit the validity of the sales made by Alexander, but Whipple and others held possession of a large part of the island and the McCormicks could not get them off. They still held possession some ten years after the death of Alexander McCormick, continuing to clear the land of its cedar and saleable timber, and shipping quantities of wood. Feeling so sure of their hold on the island, one of them, Henry Price, planted a vineyard of two or three acres, the first vineyard ever planted on the island, which was afterwards to become famous for its many vineyards and fine grapes.

The McCormicks had heretofore rested satisfied with their title to the island obtained from the Indians through Chief Thomas McKee, from whose heirs the late William McCormick had bought it, the deed thereof being duly registered in the county registry office. But when it was desired to sell any of the land, or to raise money by mortgage, it was found that this could not be done, because there had never been a patent issued by the Government for the island to any one and parties would not invest where the title was defective and in dispute.

This condition of the title led them to consult lawyer John Prince in 1859. Mr. Prince advised them to have the Government bring suit for intrusion, and

they would be sure to get a judgment in their favor. He would attend to it and see that they got their rights. Accordingly Prince had the Government bring suit against the McCormicks for intrusion on Pelee Island, but he failed to attend to the case properly, and did not produce in court the evidence by which the McCormicks claimed title. Judgment therefore was given against them. This decision of court left the McCormicks in a worse condition than they were before, for by it the island still belonged to the Government; and the other parties now claimed that the McCormicks like themselves, were merely squatters on Government lands.

## CHAPTER XV.

### The Title Perfected.

It was not until 1854 that the McCormicks made another attempt to have the title to the island settled in their favor. They then employed lawyer John Stewart to investigate the whole matter, find the cause of their failure in the former suit, and to present a memorial to the Governor-in-Council, setting forth all the evidence and facts relating to the Indian title; the occupancy of the island by the McCormicks for more than forty years in undisputed possession; their rights never called in question by the Government or by any others. A memorial and brief, covering the whole ground of the case was prepared by Mr. John Stewart, presented to the Government, and submitted to the Hon. Henry J. Boulton for his legal opinion. Judge Boulton gave his decision: "That the former judgment against the McCormicks should be set aside; that the Island had never been ceded to the Crown by the Indians; that the Government had never been in possession of it, or taken any profits from it; and that no others than the McCormicks had any rightful possession of it." He therefore recommended that patents be issued to the McCormicks severally; dividing the island among them in the manner directed by the last will and testament of the late William McCormick of said island of Point au Pelee.

The Government adopted Judge Boulton's views, and this decision finally and permanently settled all dispute about the title to the island.

Under this decision Alexander Wilkinson, P. L. S., of the county of Essex, was appointed to re-survey the island and sub-divide it into eleven shares, and to make a plot and map showing the whole island and each subdivision. He first laid out eleven lots of 300 acres each, one lot for each heir. The residue of land and marsh was then divided and laid off in such lots for each heir as would enable them to receive each an equal share as near as possible. One lot of 100 acres was set aside for school purposes and ten acres for a village site. A complete map showing all these divisions was made and is on record in the registry office at Sandwich. Upon the completion of the survey and plan of the island in 1867, patents were duly issued to each of the eleven heirs of the late William McCormick, and are on record. It was twenty-seven years after the death of William McCormick before his will was complied with and before his heirs received a good title to the land they had occupied so long. These



twenty-seven years had made but little change upon the face of the island. Clearings had been extended somewhat around each of the half dozen homes established and more land brought into cultivation. Nearly all the red cedar, and all the square-timber oak had been cut and disposed of. Otherwise it remained pretty much in the same condition as heretofore described. But these twenty-seven years had made many changes in the McCormick family. At this time (1867) there were living upon the island, William, David, Thomas C., Peregrine, and Arthur M., Lucinda, Sarah Ann and their aged mother. Alexander died in 1854 leaving a widow and two children. John died in 1856 and his wife soon after, leaving five children to be taken care of by their grandmother. Charles died in 1844 and Mary in 1861. William, Peregrine and Arthur M., were married and had several children each. David and Thomas C., had remained bachelors, nor had Lucinda or Sarah Ann ever married. Thomas C. and his two sisters lived on the old homestead with their mother. Capt. David also made that his head quarters when not sailing.

Only a few other persons besides the families of the late William McCormick were on the island before this time, and we may not be able to record the names of all of these. Capt. Zenas O. Quick was here, engaged in sailing, fishing and trapping. He bought a farm and became a permanent citizen, rearing a numerous family. He, with one of his sons, was drowned by the capsizing of his pound-boat in 18—. Captain James Cummins was on the island as lighthouse keeper as early as 1834 or 1835. He held the position, with an intermission of a few years, until he was retired on a pension. He then bought a farm on the island and was one of the best citizens. He died in 18— leaving a young widow, but no children. Jerry Mahony came to the island in 1859, reared a large family, and is still here, one of the old settlers. Thomas L. and Robert W. McCormick, nephews of the late William McCormick, were and are still here with grown families. Angus Huffman did some fishing and carpentering. He also bought a small lot of land and planted grape vines, but did not remain long on the island. Robert Little was on the island before 1867, and remained a permanent resident. He built and is still the proprietor of, the only licensed hotel upon the island—"The Island Home," near the west-side dock. John McCormick's four sons, now grown, had left the island to seek positions in commercial or professional pursuits. Three of them however, Barrel, Herbert, and Charles, have now returned to look after their patrimonial estate and assist in developing the island.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### Mary Cornwall McCormick, Widow of the Late William McCormick.

A short reference has been made to Mary Cornwall McCormick, but her remarkable life, her long residence upon the island and identification with its history for more than fifty years, deserve a more extended notice. A sketch of her life and tribute to her memory should be given here, even at the risk of some repetition.

Mrs. McCormick was the daughter of John Cornwall and was born in the county of Essex, July 22, 1792. Her father was a United Empire Loyalist who came from Connecticut to Western Canada after the American Revolution and settled near Sandwich in 1777. He was a native of Wales who had come to the American colonies about 1772, and was very loyal to King George. He left his wife and child in Connecticut, and it was twenty years before they joined him in Canada, the son by that time a grown man. He became a man of prominence and influence in the county of Essex and was the first representative from the county in the Canadian Parliament.

Mary Cornwall McCormick began her married life upon the old McCormick farm in the Township of Colechester, near the shores of Lake Erie. There she lived for twenty-seven years and there her thirteen children were born. Her husband was engaged in business, public and private, that required him to be away from home much of the time. The care and responsibility of family affairs devolved therefore largely upon her, under trying circumstances and amid the disadvantages of her surroundings. It was with much toil and hardship that she managed to bring up so large a family. But she was a remarkable woman in many respects and proved to be equal to the imposed task. She had a splendid physical constitution, a strong and active mind, with a very retentive memory, seeking and retaining all the information within her reach. She had great strength of character, and a cheerful disposition under the most trying conditions. Her removal to the island brought more cares and work. In six years her husband died, and her cares were greatly increased. But her previous experience in the hardships of life had prepared her somewhat for the added responsibility that devolved upon her during a long widowhood.

Her industry, good judgment and frugality enabled her to successfully manage and guide the affairs of her household. Her cheerful and happy disposition cheered and stimulated those about her. She had good executive ability, and great influence for good upon those she came in contact with. Her mind was a wonderful storehouse of knowledge of the incidents and history of the early times, much of which was within her personal experience. At the time of her husband's death she was forty-eight years old. She lived a widow for more than half a century—lived to see many changes in the county, especially upon the island where had been her home for fifty-seven years. She died in 1891, nearly ninety-nine years of age.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### A New Era for Pelee Island.—1867.

A new era for Pelee Island was now about to dawn. Previous to the McCormicks getting their patents for the land little had been done to develop the natural resources of the island. Only a small amount of land had been cleared and put under cultivation. The greater part of the arable land was still covered with a dense forest. The occupants had made their living principally from selling cedar, oak timber and firewood, and by raising stock. Cattle and horses would live and thrive well upon the natural grasses and undergrowth with very little attention. Hogs fattened upon nuts. The soil was rich, and when properly cultivated produced good crops of wheat, corn and potatoes and other vegetables; and the cultivated grasses, timothy and clover, grew luxuriantly. A few apple orchards had been planted by early settlers which bore fine fruit.

The question of title was now settled; but there were some other things to prevent settlers from coming to the island. There was no steambout running to the island and no regular line of sailboats, which made it difficult for strangers to reach here. The only way heretofore by which the inhabitants could get off the island and onto it was in their own private sail or row boats, and any stranger wishing to get to the island, would have to take his chances and come by some of these boats. It was but natural that the McCormicks should become good boatmen and sailors. They were all expert in handling both sail and row boats. Captain David McCormick adopted sailing as a profession, and was known as one of the most expert handlers of sailboats on the lakes. He became master of both sailing vessels and steambots.

There was no post office on the island as yet. All mail was obtained from Kingsville and was brought over only when someone happened to be passing. In winter the people were sometimes three or four months without mail. There were no schools and no churches. The thick, damp forests and stagnant water in the marshes produced malaria, and were a breeding place for untold millions of mosquitoes and deer-flies that were a terror to both man and beast in the Summer season. To come here to live was like being a pioneer in a wilderness, away from most of the advantages of civilization, and to endure many hardships and privations.

Fortunately, however, for Point au Pelee Island, it had been discovered a few years before this that Kelley's Island, only twelve miles south, was peculiarly adapted to grape-growing. The Messrs. Kelley and Charles Carpenter, an expert horticulturist, had demonstrated by the planting of vineyards that the Catawba and other varieties of native grapes could be grown and ripened to great perfection on that island, and that a fine wine could be made from them. The cultivation of grapes was extending over Kelley's Island and also over Put-in-Bay and the Bass Islands, and proving profitable. The demand for island grape-land became very great and the price of land advanced. These islands were being rapidly settled up and improved—vineyards planted and wine

cellars built. A daily steamboat connected them with Sandusky; hotels were built to accommodate the visitors who came to seek investment, or for the sport of fishing, or the pleasure of being upon the water. The price of land on the islands, favorably located, went up to fabulous figures. This great boom in island land should naturally have extended to Pelee Island, as it had the same favorable soil and climate for grape growing that the other islands had. The boom did bring to Pelee Island a few prospectors—those who had the courage to come over in sailboats; but they did not seem favorably impressed. Probably the unfavorable contrast with the thrift and business appearance of the islands on the United States side of the international line discouraged them from buying land on Pelee Island.

During the war of the rebellion in the United States, D. J. Williams of Kentucky, being a rebel sympathiser, though he had never taken up arms, thought it would be more agreeable and safe for him in the Queen's Dominions. He therefore came to Windsor with his family in 1863 or 1865. Mr Williams had been a grape-grower and wine-maker in Kentucky, was well posted as to what was being done in that line on Kelley's Island, and was very much interested in it. In Windsor he met Capt. David McCormick, of Pelee Island, and had many pleasant talks with him about the island, grape-growing, wine-making, etc. In company with Capt. McCormick, Williams, in 1865, visited the three islands, Put-in-Bay and Kelley's Island, and the Captain brought him over to Pelee Island.

After this Mr. Williams visited his old Kentucky home and talked up grape growing on the islands with his old neighbors, and arranged with one Thomas S. Williams and Thaddeus Smith to visit Pelee Island with the object of making an investment if everything proved satisfactory. The three men visited all the islands on a tour of inspection, in August, 1865. They found the prices of land on the United States islands exorbitant, and also that the McCormicks were holding their land much higher than its real value for any purpose, considering the conditions of the island. Thomas C. McCormick offered Williams his choice of a location on the north end of the island, and to sell him 40 acres upon terms which the parties finally accepted, as it was the choicest location for a vineyard and wine-cellar on the island. D. J. Williams, Thomas S. Williams and Thaddeus Smith formed a co-partnership under the firm name of Smith, Williams, & Co., to buy land on Pelee Island, to plant a vineyard and establish a wine-cellar. The 40 acres of land was chosen as affording a good location on high ground for dwellings and a wine-cellar. In 1866, 25 acres of grapes were planted, and in the course of three years the vineyard was extended to 33 acres. A wine-cellar was dug through solid strata of rock to the depth of twelve feet, 40 feet wide and 60 feet long and completely arched over with stone. Above it was a basement and a stone house one-and-a-half stories high. Other buildings were already built. The cellar and house was completed in 1868 ready for the first crop of grapes. This 40 acres bought by Smith, Williams & Co., was the first land on Pelee Island ever sold by the McCormick family. But the way was opened for the sale of other land; and this was the beginning of the settling up and improvement of the island. In 1867 Thaddeus Smith moved his family to the island and took control, as manager, of the grape-growing and wine-

making plant of Smith, Williams & Co., which they called the "Vin Villa Vineyards." Mr. Smith became a permanent resident of the island and a naturalized Canadian citizen. The Messrs Williams never lived on the island, but frequently visited it. They both died some years ago and Thaddeus Smith became the sole owner of the Vin Villa Vineyards.

Edward and John Wardroper also came to the island, in 1866, and bought fifteen acres of land from William McCormick at the west side, which they improved and planted with grapes. The Wardroper brothers were Englishmen who had lived in the Southern states some years. But the war of the rebellion had unsettled everything in the south and they were ready for a change, and glad to get back to the Queen's dominions. Their attention was first directed to Pelee Island by D. J. Williams whom they met in Kentucky. Edward Wardroper came with Williams to the island in the fall of 1865. Like most Englishmen, the Wardropers were fond of the sport of hunting and fishing, and were probably favorably impressed with the island on account of the splendid duck shooting on the marshes, and the fine black bass fishing around its shores and reefs. The red fox was numerous and they greatly enjoyed the chase. These men were confirmed bachelors, having never married; but they brought to their island home their widowed sister-in-law and her two children. They still live upon the island but are well advanced in years, considerably beyond the allotted three score and ten.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### Progress of the Island.

When the McCormicks were assured that their title to the island would be confirmed, they endeavored to improve the condition of things by getting a small steambent in 1867, and putting her on the route from the main shore to the island and to Sandusky. While this added greatly to the convenience of getting to and from the island it was not a paying investment and was discontinued. Sailboats again became the only means of communication. Two short docks had by this time been built, one at the north end and one at the west side at which boats of light draft could land.

The division of the island and issuing of patents to the heirs by the Canadian Government enabled each individual to dispose of his land in any way he chose. Money could now be borrowed by mortgage and used to develop the land. F. Burrell McCormick, eldest son of the late John McCormick, returned to the island and settled on his inherited estate at the south end. He had great faith in the future possibilities of the island and entered with energy into the work of developing its latent resources. He engaged in cutting wood, building docks, encouraged a line of steamers from Cleveland to stop here for their supply of wood, and in various ways called attention to the island to induce settlers to locate. His brother Charles also returned and joined him in his work. They opened a small general store at the south end—the first store on the island. But this was a premature venture, as there was not sufficient population to sustain it.

In 18— Barrell McCormick and his brother Charles succeeded in getting a friend of the latter, a Mr. Abbot, of Wheeling, West Virginia, interested in putting up a large building for a summer hotel. The building was finished sufficiently to be occupied and was named "Breeze Place Hotel." But it was never completed. Charles McCormick and William Abbot, becoming discouraged, withdrew from the concern and left the island. "Breeze Place" has never been a success as a summer resort, though many parties of anglers have been, and some are still, entertained there.

The younger McCormicks built a large dock at the south end, but unfortunately it was washed away. It was rebuilt and washed away the second time. F. Burrell McCormick's perseverance in trying to develop the island under difficulties certainly merited greater success. But such is often the fortune of pioneers in a new enterprise; seldom do they reap the fruit of their labor.

The population was slowly but steadily increasing. James Brigley and John Finlay, both Canadians, came with their families. They did much towards clearing up and developing the land, and Loth went extensively into grape-growing. Thomas J. Lidwell and his son Albert, with their large families, came early and were permanent settlers. Others followed. But from the scope of this history the names of the pioneers only may be given.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

### Grape-Growing and Wine-Making.

Smith, Williams & Co. and Wardroper Bros. were pioneers in grape culture and the manufacture of native wine, not only on Pelee Island, but in Canada. They were the first to plant vineyards of any extent in the Province of Ontario, and the wines of Vin Villa Vineyards were the first pure native wines ever offered to the Canadian public. The writer, in making this assertion, is aware of the few acres of inferior grapes grown at Cooksville, near Toronto, and that some wine was made from them; but it could not be termed a pure grape wine. There were also a few inferior grapes grown along the Detroit River, where, after the success of Smith, Williams and Co. on Pelee Island, the product was increased. But this does not affect the truthfulness of the statement made. The soil and climatic conditions of the islands in Lake Erie and the long warm autumn induced by the surrounding water, render them peculiarly adapted for growing and ripening to perfection the Catawba and other fine varieties of grapes that cannot be perfectly ripened on the main shore, nor in any locality where the influence of a large body of water is lacking. Hence it is that grapes grown on Pelee Island make the best of wine.

The adaptability of the island to grape-growing, by the year 1871, had been thoroughly and practically established by the immense crops of four and five tons to the acre of the finest Catawba, Delaware and other choice varieties of grapes grown by Smith, Williams & Co., and by the wines of the Vin Villa Vineyards.

In 1875 Thaddeus Smith, in visiting the towns of Ontario to introduce these wines, went to Brantford and called upon Hamilton and Dunlop, wholesale and retail liquor merchants. Here he made the acquaintance of Mr. J. S. Hamilton, the head of the firm, from whom he received an order. Mr. Hamilton was pleased with the wine and soon repeated his order, becoming so much interested that the following year he made a visit to Pelee Island to see the place where such wine could be made, and to enter into a business arrangement with the manufacturers. A young man of fine business ability, full of energy and enterprise, he succeeded in arranging with both Smith and the Wardropers to handle the wines they might produce, an arrangement that continued for twenty years. Mr. Hamilton was energetic in introducing Pelee Island wines, especially the Vin Villa brand. He advertised extensively and judiciously and lost no opportunity of calling the attention of the public to the island and its products through the press and in other ways. He visited the island annually and seemed to take a personal interest in its welfare, independently of the wine business.

The style of the firm was changed to J. S. Hamilton & Co., and the business in island wines increased to such an extent that in 1890 Mr. Hamilton determined to build a wine-house and cellar on the island that the manufacture might be conducted on a more extensive scale. He organized a new company, the Pelee Island Wine and Vineyard Co., limited, of which he is president. This company proceeded to build the projected wine-house at the west side, now one of the most complete wine making establishments in Canada and capable of using several hundred tons of grapes annually.

Henry Rehburg and John Finlay are also extensive grape-growers and make wine on a smaller scale.

## CHAPTER XX.

### Municipal, School and Other Matters.

Pelee Island nominally belonged to the township of Mersea; but its increasing population, and isolation from the rest of the county, demanded that it should be made a separate township. The Ontario Legislature was therefore applied to for a charter and passed a bill in 1868 making Pelee Island a separate municipality, to be known as the Township of Pelee. Full corporate and municipal powers were granted except that, on account of isolation from the rest of the county and sparseness of population, it was separated from the county in the same way that towns and cities are; the township council to be composed of three members, two councillors and a reeve, the reeve not to have a seat in the County Council. The first township council of Pelee was duly elected with A. M. McCormick, reeve, Walter Grabb and Z. O. Quick, councillors, and Chas. W. McCormick, clerk.

A Public School Board was elected and organized and two school houses erected in 1870.

A Post Office was established in 18—and Arthur M. McCormick appointed postmaster for the island, who still serves the public in that capacity. He had some time before this opened a small general store, in which the post office was now kept. The little store, long since becoming too small for his trade, has been replaced by a more suitable and commodious house, in one part of which is established as neat a post office as can be found in any country village. Here Mr. McCormick's obliging daughters act as clerks and deputy postmasters.

A stone church building was erected by the Church of England in a very central location. A steamboat line was established from the island to Kingsville, Leamington and Windsor; the docks were built out into deeper water, and facilities for getting to and from the island greatly increased.

In 1889 an act, to amend the act chartering the township of Pelee in 1868, was passed by the Ontario Legislature. This act increased the number of township councillors to four, and conferred upon the municipality some of the powers exercised by towns and cities, such as the collecting of non-resident taxes and the power to sell land for taxes; but still left it separated from the county council. The act required the township to be divided into four school wards, and conferred the power also to divide the island into wards for municipal purposes. Thus a township was formed that is unique in many respects. The law under which the old school board was formed had become obsolete, and the township was now divided into the four school wards and a public school board of eight members elected. Four new school houses of modern construction were built that would do credit to any county, and affording sufficient accommodation to meet the demands for many years to come.

Twenty years had now intervened since the first organization of the township and the act of legislature amending its charter. Many changes had taken place during this time that cannot all be mentioned here. The population had increased until it numbered over six hundred. A large area of heavily timbered land had been cleared and brought under cultivation, and devoted to corn, wheat, vineyards, fruit-trees and various other agricultural products.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### An Important Epoch for the Island.—Drainage of the Marsh Lands.

It has been noted that more than one half of the island was a marsh, or more properly several marshes, covered most of the time by from one to four feet of water. This marshland overgrown with a thick growth of reeds, rushes, wild rice, grapes and many other varieties of aquatic plants that grew from one to six feet high, impenetrable to man or beast except the muskrat and the trapper who pushed his light canoe or trapping boat through certain parts of it in the spring of the year when the water was highest. The marsh is nearly on a level with the lake and below it during high water, the water sometimes running out of the marshes into the lake, and at other times flowing in. The drainage of this marsh land in 1888 and 1889 marked the second most important epoch in the



history of Pelee Island and deserves a prominent notice here, as to the origin and completion of the undertaking. In 1878, Mr. Lemuel S. Brown, formerly of Cleveland, Ohio, became interested in Pelee Island and bought 625 acres of land on the east side, being that part of the island locally known as "Middle Island," entirely separated from the other upland by marshes, and containing within its centre a marsh of several hundred acres. Mr. Brown had already been the promoter of various enterprises on other neighboring islands. He had a long lease upon Middle Island property, and at one time was the owner of Ballart Island—that beautiful little island that lies at the entrance to the harbor of Putin Bay, and was also engaged in dock building at Putin Bay. He came to Pelee Island and made the purchase already mentioned, purposing to engage in general farming, paying special attention to stock raising and the planting of vineyards, and inducing a number of Germans to settle on the land for that purpose. It so happened shortly after Mr. Brown came that there were two or three unusually dry seasons in succession, drying up the water in the marshes, leaving some of the marsh land quite high and dry. Brown had some of this plowed and sowed in tame grasses. The next spring, the season having the usual amount of rain fall, he found his cultivated fields two feet under water; and it continued to be covered with water for some years. But the experiment had convinced him of the great fertility of the soil and of its immense possibilities if it could be thoroughly drained. Its drainage became a hobby with him. During his visits to Putin Bay he had met Dr. John M. Scudder, of Cincinnati, Ohio, who, with his family spent the summer vacation at the Bay. Dr. Scudder was the founder, owner and president of the Eclectic Medical College of Cincinnati and was a man of wealth. Mr. Brown soon communicated to him his hobby of draining the Pelee Island marsh, and as the doctor had travelled in Europe and was particularly interested in the drainage system of Holland, he soon became interested in Brown's project also and made a visit with him to Pelee Island. This visit of Dr. Scudder resulted in his determination to buy the marsh land and undertake the enterprise of reclaiming it for agricultural purposes by an artificial system of drainage. Dr. Scudder and Mr. Brown bought the whole of the "Big Marsh" with the wet timbered land adjoining it as per survey and plan of the island, in all over 4000 acres, for which they paid the McCormicks two dollars per acre. In 1888 steam dredges were put to work cutting canals through the marsh to the extent of twelve miles in length. These canals conducted the water all to one point where a steam pumping plant was erected that lifted it several feet and emptied it into the lake. The water thus taken off, the land was left dry and ready for the plow. The plowing was not done, however, without much difficulty, owing to the heavy growth of weeds and rushes, tussock-grass and roots but enterprise and capital can accomplish much. Those who saw the marsh before it was reclaimed now look upon its cultivated fields with astonishment. The soil of this reclaimed land is very rich, a clay subsoil with from one to two feet of vegetable mould. It is very productive of hay, corn and potatoes, and where not too rich yields good wheat and oats. On parts of it, are growing vineyards and good peach orchards.

The draining of the Big Marsh and the Middle Island marsh was followed by the draining of the South marsh of 470 acres, by Messrs Dwelle and Lewis of Sandusky, Ohio, who bought it along with a farm of 300 acres of upland.

The drainage of this marsh land has proven a matter of the greatest importance to the island. It has more than doubled the amount of arable land, thus more than doubling the agricultural products and making room for a larger population. This increases trade and the volume of business, which in turn brings boats and better facilities for communication with the outside world. It has greatly improved the sanitary conditions, drying up the malarial area. It has destroyed the breeding places of mosquitoes, dipterous flies and snakes, until there are but few remaining. The embankments made by the earth thrown out of the canals furnish excellent roadbeds and have become a part of the public road system of the municipality.

While this great enterprise has been of so much benefit to the island in general, it has not been a financial success to the promoters. Mr. Brown's enthusiasm led him to go more extensively into the enterprise than he could well afford and the most of his interest has passed into other hands. Dr. Scudder was well advanced in years and only lived a few years after completing the work, not having fully carried out his original design. Some of the land has been sold, but the larger part of it is controlled by the late Dr. Scudder's heirs, under the management of Dr. W. Byrd Scudder of Cincinnati, who has his summer cottage on the island.

The whole marsh drainage system was afterwards put in charge of the township officials, under the Municipal Drainage Act of Ontario. The Municipality borrowed on debenture \$22,000 and had the canals re-dredged much deeper than originally. Two additional pumping stations were also erected. The whole of the annual expense, including payment of principal and interest on debentures and the cost of running the pumps and all incident expenses, is charged to the lands and public roads benefitted thereby, and collected annually as taxes upon said lands.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### The Fishing Interests of the Island.

Some matters of importance have not been mentioned in their chronological order; among them the island fisheries. In the seventies and early eighties, pound fishing was engaged in quite extensively and very profitably. At one time there were more than twenty pound nets set around the shores of the island. The fish taken were sold in Sandusky, Ohio, the business developing to such an extent that the fish packing company of Post & Co. sent a steam boat regularly to the island during the spring and fall fishing, and a good part of the summer as well. This not only benefited the fishermen, but was of general benefit, affording convenient facilities for getting back and forth. The quantity of fish taken out by these pounds gradually diminished, and this fact, along with the restrictions of license fees and close season imposed by the Canadian Government, has rendered the fishing unprofitable. But few pounds are now set and these only at the south end. Some gill-netting is done at the north end and is quite remunerative, but only herring are taken.

The shores and reefs of the island have long been known for their fine black bass fishing with rod and line, and have been a favorite resort for anglers.

Parties from Ohio and Kentucky frequently came to enjoy the sport spring and fall. The usual stopping place of the anglers from Ohio is Dr. F. B. McCormick's, at Breeze Place. An organized fishing club from Dayton, Ohio, called the Dayton Club made this their head quarters also, bringing with them attendants and provision. They came twice a year for several years, but have of late ceased to visit the island. The Kentuckians and some others frequented the north end stopping with Thaddeus Smith. Still others visited the west side. Others again more fastidious as to accomodation, would stop at Putin Bay and hire a boat to bring them over daily to fish.

In the fall of 1879 a party of young men from Sandusky and Cincinnati, composing a fishing party, encamped at the north end. A severe storm came up, blew down their tents and flooded them out. They came to Mrs. Thaddeus Smith and begged to be taken in out of the storm, being sick of tenting it. Among these was Charles L. Mills of Sandusky, who continued to put up with Mrs. Smith for four or five years, spring and fall. Mr. Mills met a fellow-fisherman, Mr. John Maginis Jr., of New York City, who, with a party of friends was stopping at Dr. McCormick's. Mr. Maginis told Mr. Mills that they wished to organize a fishing club with a permanent location of their own and invited him to join them. The club was organized, and the site for the house selected at the extreme N. W. end, the very place where Mills and his young friends had encamped years before. In 1883 the Club House was erected and their first meeting was held that fall. The number of members of the club is limited to 25. John Maginis Jr. was made President and Charles L. Mills vice president and general manager of the club's business. The membership is composed mostly of Chicago and New York men of wealth, with a few from Cleveland and Sandusky, some of them men of national reputation in the army and the state, as well as in commerce and finance. Among the charter members are the names of the late Gen. Aason Stager, the late Gen. Phil. Sheridan, the late Judge Walter Q. Gresham, Secretary of State under President Cleveland; the late Benj. Campbell, ex-marshall of the State of Illinois; J. R. Jones of Chicago, ex-minister to Brussels; Col. V. C. Turner, Chicago; Robt. T. Lincoln, ex-Minister to England; Marshall Fields, multi-millionaire merchant, and others of note. The club buildings occupy a park of 10 acres and have been added to at various times, until they form an extensive group, the main building having over forty rooms, with bowling alley, billiard room, boat houses, etc., all lighted with gas and furnished with water and all the appliances of a first class summer hotel. The club uses this house only twice a year, during fishing season, two weeks in May and two weeks in October. Its members leave annually a considerable amount of money upon the island: they employ from twenty to thirty oarsmen on liberal pay, buy what provisions they can obtain on the island, and have contributed liberally towards building churches and for other charitable purposes.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### The Present Condition of Pelee Island. —A.D. 1899.

In sketching the most prominent events and improvements of the island since 1867, some of these have not been mentioned in the order in which they occurred, and others have only been alluded to. It is now proposed to sum up in a recapitulation the condition of the island as it is found at this writing—1899.

Pelee Island is oblong in shape running north and south, and is of an average of eight miles in length and three and a half miles wide, though its greatest length is twelve miles. It contains according to the survey and plan made by Alexander Wilkinson, P. L. S., in 1867, a total of 10,138 acres. The assessment for 1898 shows 9,657 $\frac{1}{2}$  acres of assessed land and 107 acres more belonging to schools and churches and not taxed. The balance is taken up in public roads. The same assessment roll, 1898, shows a total population of 753, with a school population of 285 between the ages of five and twenty-one years. There are four school houses in which free public schools are maintained ten months in each year. There are now four church buildings; one each of the English and Roman Catholic churches, and two Methodist churches. There are four post offices, three of them located in private houses; but three fourths of the mail matter is delivered at the old central office in A. M. McCormick's store. The government has the mail delivered on the island twice a week in Summer, or during open navigation, and once a week in the four months of Winter, provided always that the mail-carriers are able to cross from the main shore. The postal facilities are not what they ought to be, nor what the Canadian Government should furnish; for there is not another community of like population and volume of business in the Dominion that has not a better postal service. The island should be given three mails a week during the business season and two in the Winter months.

The Government maintains, in connection with its lighthouse signal station and weather bureau service, and the lifesaving department established on the island, a telephone cable to the lighthouse on the main shore, about ten mile across, and thence a wire to the town of Leamington where connection is made with the telephone and telegraph system of the whole country. It has also stretched wires the length of the island, with some five or six telephone stations. The public may have the benefit of the cable and telephone by paying the usual fees; and, by having the messages repeated at Leamington, may have direct and immediate communication by telegraph to any point where there is a telegraph office.

There are three general stores, the largest one at the central part of the island, and the two smaller ones at the north end. Near the west dock is located the old town hall, a modest stone building, erected in the infancy of the township, but which still answers the purpose of municipal and other gatherings. A commodious two story frame hall built by the Society of Maccabees is also located at the west side, serviceable for concerts and other entertainments. Mr. Robert Little's hotel, The Island Home, is here; all together giving the place the appearance of a village, the most conspicuous building being the Pelee Island Wine Company's large wine house and cellars.

Docks for steamboat landings have been built and extended. There are now four docks, two at the west side and two at the north bay. A steam boat runs regularly three times a week to Amherstburg and Windsor and sailing craft ply between the island and Kingsville and Leamington.

The clearing off of the thick woods and underbrush and the drainage of the marsh have removed all causes of malaria, as well as the breeding places of mosquitoes and derflies. Consequently these have almost disappeared, and with them have gone the thousands of snakes that used to infest the island.

Pelee Island has not been boomed as a summer resort nor have summer hotels been built for that purpose; but every season there are parties coming here in search of a quiet cool retreat at which to spend their midsummer vacation, and more would come if they could find suitable accommodation. There are many picturesque views that have often been sketched and photographed by visiting artists. Good roads have been made along the lake shore and on the dikes of the canals which afford pleasant driving and wheeling. There are about 200 acres of land under grapes and over 100 acres planted with fruit trees. Last year there were 100 acres in tobacco whilst the cultivation of potatoes is becoming a profitable specialty on the reclaimed marsh land.

The clay soil and limestone bottom and the peculiar climatic conditions prevailing, due to the surrounding water, make it that the situation of the island isothermally is much more favorable than its latitude would indicate. The severe winter of '98-'99 that has unfortunately proven so disastrous to the peach trees on the main shore opposite the island, did no damage to the peaches here.

A very fine quality of building stone is found on the island, a magnesian limestone deposit, in which two quarries have been worked for many years. One of these is owned by parties non-resident and is not worked of late, owing doubtless to distance from the market, the limited demand for block stone, and in part to the exclusive import duty imposed by the United States Government. But large quantities of stone have been shipped from here from time to time, a considerable amount of the block stone being used in the construction of the locks on the Welland canal. Paleontologists have their hearts made glad by the fossil specimens of unusual size contained in the rock, and sometimes found finely weathered out.

Mention may be made also of the Indian mounds that still remain on parts of the island. The Ontario Government archaeologist, Mr. David Boyle, investigated these during the past summer but found that, apart from the fact of their being Indian mounds, they are largely devoid of interest. Oil and natural gas have been found upon the Island, but not in sufficient quantity for commercial purposes. Thirteen wells have been bored within the last five years. The first well went down to a depth of 840 feet but was not a success. Other wells were bored in the south central part of the island to the depth of 740 to 760 feet and both oil and gas were found in several of them. Three of these were pumped and produced from 2 to 6 barrels a day, but the supply was very irregular and did not increase. Natural gas was found in the same boring with the oil just before the oil strata were reached. With the oil came also salt water strongly impregnated with sulphur and other minerals.

The oil is of the best quality and about 1000 barrels have been pumped and shipped to the refining works at Sarnia. The gas flowed in sufficient quantity to furnish fuel for an engine used to work the drills in boring several other wells near by. It was also used for pumping oil, and is now used by Mr. John Finlay, whose house is near the well, for heating and lighting purposes. There is probably gas enough now to furnish fuel for all the south end of the island, but the great cost of piping prevents its use. It does not appear to diminish in quantity or force. The oil wells have been abandoned for the present by the companies that had them drilled, but it is believed by experts and geologists that if the wells were sunk several hundred feet deeper into the Trenton formation, oil might be obtained in paying quantities. But this requires more capital than is at command.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### What Some Newspaper Correspondents Have Said About Pelee Island.

In far away California in the "Los Angeles Sunday Times" of January 1899 appeared a letter about Pelee Island. It seems that the writer had been a guest of some member of the Pelee Club in the fall of 1898, and felt that he ought to write something complimentary of the members. The article is illustrated with pictures of the club-house, inside and outside. A part of the article is quoted as follows—It is headed:—"Where Statesmen and Millionaires go Fishing." "About ten years ago a half dozen enthusiastic sportsmen held a significant meeting in Chicago, the result of which was the formation of the wealthiest and most aristocratic and exclusive fishing club in the world. That organization, about which little has ever been written or published, is the Pelee Island Club, and its membership list bears the names of most brilliant statesmen and distinguished citizens, men who helped to make the history of this glorious republic, and whose names will ever adorn its pages; warriors and diplomatists, kings of commerce and magnates in the realms of finance, many of them multi-millionaires, with "money to burn." The headquarters of the club is on Pelee Island, the largest of the famous Lake Erie archipelago, and is situated in Canadian waters, being embraced in the Province of Ontario. It is a place which is but little known generally speaking, but the green waters which lap its sandy beach are, at certain times, fairly alive with the gamy and pretty black bass, the favorite fish of many anglers; and this is the Mecca to which the members make swift pilgrimages two, and sometimes three times a year; some of them going a thousand miles or more for a week's sport, and temporarily leaving in the care of others business interests so extensive that they themselves cannot tell their value. The club owns 15 acres on the west north end of the island and has elegant and commodious quarters, the fine club house, boat houses and keeper's dwelling, representing an outlay of one hundred thousand dollars. This, however, is a trifling item when the aggregate wealth of the membership, said to be not far from a hundred millions of dollars, is taken into consideration."

"As to the island itself, it may truly be said that it is a remarkable place for, though only nine miles long and six miles wide, its interior is one of the wildest jungles in America, never trod by the feet of white men and inhabited only by monstrous snakes, fierce panthers, catamounts and myriads of mosquitoes, reputed along the lakes to be of extremely large size and able to

crack hickory nuts with their teeth. In summer the island is a lively spot, and the scene its beauties present under the shimmering light of a mellow autumn sun, is one of grandeur never to be forgotten when once beheld. Now, however, the driven snows and winter winds which sweep over the frozen lakes with unrelenting fury, lend it a bleak and forbidding aspect, and the few desolate fishermen who have the hardiness to dwell there, are shut off from the rest of the world."

The writer continues his account of the Pelee Club at some length, giving the names of both the present and deceased members, with his comments upon them and upon their sport. The account in a general way is correct but the particulars are exaggerated, and the whole style that of a sycophant rather than of one who wished to give facts. That part of the article quoted here which pretends to describe Pelee Island, is such a glaring misrepresentation of the facts, that it is simply ridiculous and needs no comment. The name signed to the above quoted article is John L. Von Blon.

Quite different from the fore-going is another newspaper article that will be quoted here. It is from an unknown correspondent, but evidently from one who made a more thorough and intelligent investigation of his subject than Mr. Von Blon did.

"Sketches and Stories of the Lake Erie Islands," is the title of a book of some pretensions to size, embellishment and literary merit, by Theresa Thorndale, the *nom de plume* of a well-known newspaper correspondent and literary woman of Put-in-Bay Island, Ohio, and is a recent publication, bearing the date 1893. The book appears to be made up, mainly, of articles written at different times for newspapers for which she was a correspondent, and contains nearly 400 pages with numerous illustrations pictures of persons and places.

The author, in her "Introduction," says that it is made up of matters, "historical, reminiscence, legendary, combined with story and romance, tales of adventure and matter descriptive of the picturesque and striking scenes in which the island abounds. Comparatively but a small part of the book is "historical or descriptive, even of the past or present matter-of-fact conditions of the island, but, as the title and introduction indicates, it is mostly given to stories, fancy descriptions, and the picturesque; but it makes quite interesting reading.

The part to which attention is now especially called, is what the author has said about Pelee Island. Only one short chapter is given to Pelee, and over half of that is given to descriptions of her voyage and matters irrelevant to the island proper; yet in that short space great injustice has been done to Pelee Island. The chapter is headed: "Adventures in Queen Victoria's Domain" and says in part:—"Here we first set foot upon Queen Victoria's domain. Twilight shadows were thickly falling over the dark forest of Point au Pelee when at last we made fast our lines at the old south dock. The party were received and entertained beneath the hospitable roof of friends, and wearied from tossing on the billows and the nausea occasioned, we went early to bed. But the Pelee mosquito! We had been informed concerning this specialty. To learn that said insect, or animal, cracked hickory nuts with its teeth, and that many of them weighed a pound was not so much of a surprise, however, as the onslaught which, there on the borders of the Pelee marshlands, it made upon us. The night was "filled with music," but the eases thus infested the day stubbornly refused to "fold their tents." In addition to the

mosquito fleet, we were assailed by a chorus of frogs, night-hawks, screech-owls and catamounts. Next morning we started out to view the land, very little of which was visible, however, on account of the thick woods and thicker under-growths running rampant over tracts of land which had once been clearings. The road was a mere wagon-track deeper worn into parallel ruts, close crowded by trees. The road—"the rocky road to Dublin"—was not a circumstance in comparison; its ruts and rooks, holes and lumps, through and over which we were bounced, made memorable the ride. Wild-cats were common, and the mysterious and unexplored depths of the island's land-locked bays and inlets are supposed to form the abiding place, of that terrible, but elusive creature known as the "sea serpent." According to statements of reputable residents of the island, two specimens of this monster have there been seen, one of which was declared to be one-hundred feet long. On one occasion these reptiles ran afool of a fisherman's pound and chewed up and destroyed all the twine, even pulling up some of the stakes to which it was moored. In harvest time these big snakes amuse themselves by coming ashore, chasing the harvesters from the field and tearing down the grain shocks."

But enough has been quoted to show the style and reliability of the author, and to show that no injustice has been done in the estimate herein put upon her book. It does seem strange that a bright and clever woman, like the author, would write and put into a book such ridiculous stories as those about "sea serpents," and "catamounts," and repeat that old old story of "mosquito-cracking hickory nuts with their teeth." There is not even the merit of originality, for Mr. Von Blon tells the same story about the mosquitoes, and neither of them show either "wit or wisdom." It is intimated that some of these stories were told her by the islanders. If so, it was by some island wag who had found one whose credulity was easily imposed upon. But more likely she thought no one would take her seriously and wrote just to make "copy." And yet it looks as if Mr. Von Blon got his impressions of the island from this book.

The author made "a second trip to Pelee Island at a later date." She does not give the date of either visit, but from the incidents narrated we infer that the two visits were a long time apart. The account of this second visit is mostly devoted to the Pelee Club; somewhat in the style of her co-temporary historian, Von Blon, already quoted. While she "gazed with a species of veneration upon the spot" in contemplation of the "distinguished men" and their reputed millions she seems to have become so dazzled that she did not see anything else on Pelee Island worth writing about.

A correspondent writing to the "Daily Register" of Sandusky, Ohio, reviewed that part of the book relating to Pelee Island, soon after its publication, and a part of the letter is here reproduced, although there is a repetition of some facts already given.

"Dear Sir,—I have been very much interested in reading "Sketches and Stories of the Lake Erie Islands," by Theresa Thorndale, recently issued from your press in such beautiful style. These sketches include an account of the author's visit to Pelee Island which would give one a very erroneous idea of our island. I therefore wish to enter a mild protest."

Judging from the descriptions and incidents relative of that visit, it must have been made a long time ago. A part of her description might have suited the Island some 35 years ago. But of course she was indebted to her imagin-



ation for that story of "Wild-cats and Sea-Serpents" and that old "chestnut" of "Mosquitoes able to crack hickory nuts with their teeth." I am aware from the title of the book and the nature of its contents, that it was not the intention of the author to deal with simple prosaic facts—that she preferred to look upon the picturesque, the poetical and fanciful side of her subject, and to use a poetical license to indulge her imagination. But with all due allowance for these, I am convinced that a stranger, reading this account in a book of such recent date, would have a very wrong impression in regard to Pelee Island as it is now.

The author made a second visit to Pelee Island at a more recent date—an account of which is mostly devoted to the Pelee club house and the personnel of the members of that club. Incidentally the great work of draining and reclaiming 5,000 acres of marsh land on the Island was mentioned—nothing more.

It would have given a much truer impression of the Island, if the author had devoted a few lines to tell of the general condition of the Island at her last visit. She might have said that "the thick woods and thicker undergrowth" of her former visit had all been cleared up, and vineyards and orchards, and fields of grain occupied the ground; that the mosquito had disappeared; that snakes were seldom seen. This, of course, is about all we could expect in such a book; but justice required that we should have been given that little."

Kindly permit me to briefly state a few facts as to the present condition of Pelee Island. The Island contains about 11,000 acres of land. It now has a population of nearly 700. Nearly all the timbered land has been cleared up and is now under cultivation. Hundreds of acres of vineyards, peach, pear and plum orchards, grain fields and meadows, now occupy the ground where those forests once grew. The part that was formerly a marsh now produces thousands of bushels of the finest potatoes annually, as well as corn, wheat and meadows. Over 100 acres of tobacco was grown last season.

There are four good school houses of modern construction; four church houses; four postoffices; three general stores; one very large wine manufacturing establishment and three smaller ones; two public halls, and miles of excellent turnpiked and gravelled roads upon which there is good driving and bicycling.

Pelee Island is not noted as a summer resort; yet people come here every summer, from various places in the States and Canada, to spend a quiet summer vacation, and more would come if they could get accommodations. They come here for quiet and rest; out of the way of the "maddening crowd", to enjoy the cool breezes, good bathing, boating, wheeling and driving.

The Island is not wanting in the picturesque. Many points of natural beauty have been sketched and painted and photographed by artists. There are pleasant drives along roads bordered with trees covered with wild grape vines, hanging in a profusion of graceful pendants; Drives upon the dykes of the canals in our "Little Holland" that have reminded the visitors of the beauty of the canals in old Holland. The scientist, in search of prehistoric data, will find here fine specimens of glacial marks upon the outcropping limestone formation; and in the stone he can find fossils of fish and shells; or he may delve into many of the ancient burial mounds for prehistoric human bones and implements. And it is not devoid of legendary stories of romance, either \* \* \* \* \*

The following is the newspaper article referred to on page 40. The article was also issued in an Ontario Government pamphlet distributed in Great Britain.

"One of the most unique municipalities of Ontario, and indeed of Canada, is the Island of Pelee. It is nominally a township municipality of the County of Essex, but is not represented in the county council, and beyond the administration of justice for which it contributes to the county funds, is not in any way connected with county government.

The island is situated in Lake Erie, about seven miles from Kingsville, the nearest port on the mainland, from which mails are received three times a week. The population numbers 677; the greatest dimensions of the island are seven miles long, three miles in breadth, comprising, according to the last returns of the Ontario Bureau of Statistics, 9,980 acres of assessed land.

An interesting feature of Pelee Island arises from the fact that, except for Middle Island, a small adjoining island of about 100 acres, it is the most southerly part of Canada.

Fishing point, which is the south extremity of Pelee Island, is in latitude 41 degrees 36 minutes. A line east and west through Pelee Island passes through Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana and California; through Northern Portugal and Southern Turkey.

One-third of Spain, three-fourths of Italy, and almost the entire Adriatic Sea lie north of Pelee. Fishing Point is fifty miles nearer the equator than the southernmost verge of France.

Due east of the vineyards of Pelee are the vineyards of Old Castle of the Apulian Valley in Southern Italy, and the orange grove of Barcelona.

The Island of Pelee, as has been intimated, is famous for its vineyards, and for the wines which these produce. The best variety of grapes can be grown abundantly and of magnificent size. The failure of the grape crop is almost unknown on the island, whereas in Eastern France, famous in Europe for its grapes and wines, there is a failure about once in three years, while in only one year of the three does the crop reach perfection. Vineyards of from twenty to thirty acres everywhere dot the island, yielding from four to five tons of fruit to the acre.

Tobacco grows luxuriantly, and this year nearly every farm has its sheds and outhouses filled with the profitable, if filthy, weed.

The soil is for the most part a deep vegetable mould. Much of the land in the interior is low lying and has been reclaimed by extensive drainage works costing \$30,000. The removal of water requires a pumping plant which, however, is operated at a small annual cost. The land thus reclaimed is exceedingly rich and productive.

Fig and almond trees, with a little winter protection, bear abundantly. Cotton seed has been ripened, water-melons weighing 50 pounds are grown. Maize, sugar-cane, peanuts, sweet potatoes, the pawpaw, white mulberry, peach, apricot, nectarine and quince will flourish and bear abundantly.

And what is true of the climate and products of Pelee Island is, in the main, true of the County of Essex, its nearest neighbor on the mainland."

