How Middlesex County Was Settled

with

Farmers, Artisans, and Capitalists:

An Account of the

Canada Land Company

in

Promoting Emigration from
the British Isles
in the 1830s through the 1850s

by Marvin L. Simner

with a Map, Illustrations, and Excerpts from Letters and Diaries of the Times

Cover: The wording on the cover, as well as the layout, is typical of that which appeared on books published in the early to mid-1800s. The purpose of the cover was to promote sales by emphasizing the most important features of the book as well as the book's intended audience.

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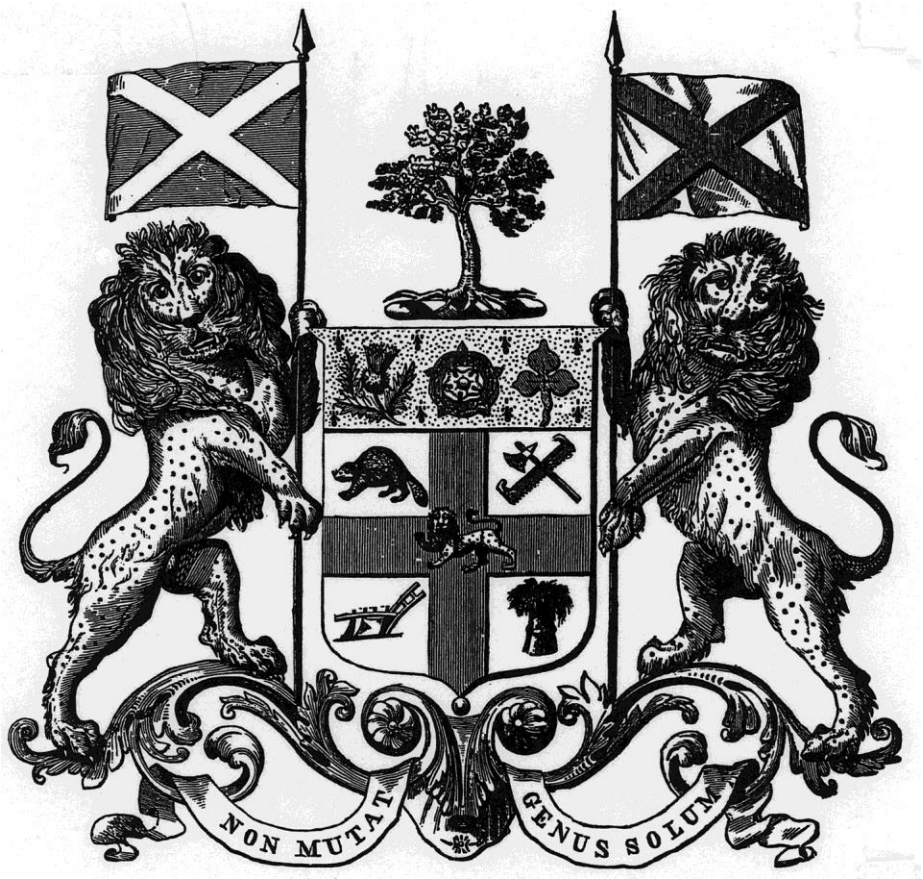

Canada Land Company Coat of Arms (courtesy of the University of Western Ontario Archives, RC#921)

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Introduction

The need to attract settlers to Southwestern Ontario in the 1830s resulted, at least in part, from a growing fear that if the land bordering Lake Erie remained largely unoccupied it could be absorbed into regions to the south of the Great Lakes and ultimately become part of the United States. Indeed, this fear was not unfounded. As late as 1827 the overall population of Middlesex County, which at the time reached Lake Erie and was somewhat larger in area than today, was only 9,838 (History of the County of Middlesex, 1889). In addition, there was considerable sympathy among certain segments of the population for a republican form of government similar to that which had been established in the United States following the American Revolution.

> Conflicts arose between commercial and agrarian interests, between elected representatives of the people and members of the government appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor, and between different religious groups. Strong opinions were held on the relationship of Canada to Britain and to the United States, on the kind of schools to be established, on the system of granting land, in short on the nature of the society being formed. All of these issues were fought out within a political framework created by the Constitutional Act of 1791[1]. By the 1830s, it seemed to have become inadequate to solve the problem and (the problem) itself became a source of bitter controversy (Robeson, 1977, p. 79).

One of the most outspoken critics of the Constitutional Act was William Lyon Mackenzie. In addition to being mayor of Toronto, Mackenzie was elected as a pro-American reformer to the House of Assembly in Upper Canada. He was also the owner of a widely read newspaper. As an illustration of his stand on this matter, on November 15, 1837 he published, in the form of an editorial, a draft of a constitution that he felt should replace the Constitutional Act of 1791. The wording in the preamble to Mackenzie's suggested constitution and the wording in the preamble to the U.S. Constitution is indeed striking.

<u>Preamble to Mackenzie's constitution</u>

> We, the people of the State of Upper Canada, in order to establish justice, ensure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of civil and religious liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do establish this Constitution (Robeson, 1977, p. 99).

[1]An act approved by the British Parliament as the foundation for governing Upper Canada

Preamble to the Constitution of the United States

> We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, ensure domestic Tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessing of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Shortly after the appearance of his editorial, Mackenzie issued a proclamation urging an armed uprising against the government of Upper Canada. While the Rebellion of 1837 was short lived, the very fact that it took place encouraged the British Parliament to further its longstanding goal, which began soon after the American Revolutionary War (1775-1783), of seeking immigrants to Upper Canada who would favour the British over the American system of government.

How was this goal to be accomplished? The first person charged with settling the area bordering Lake Erie with British sympathizers was Colonel Thomas Talbot. Although Colonel Talbot is usually given credit for settling this area, his approach to attracting settlers, which started around 1803, was largely passive.

> For several years there were no settlers or other inhabitants (on his land other) than his own hired men. In order to supply this deficiency, he distributed large placards to attract settlers, which had the effect of bringing a great many people into the settlements, but many of these turned out to be very worthless characters (Ermatinger, 1859, p. 26).

In fact, Talbot's early plan to colonize the land was merely to "introduce himself to the body of Welch and Scotch who arrived in New York in 1801 and win them over" (History of the County of Middlesex, 1889, p. 30). Perhaps because of this approach a number of the early settlers on the Talbot Tract were from the United States and their allegiance to the Crown was often suspect. For example, the Quakers who settled around Sparta "were consider by many Canadians to be very republican in their political ideas (and some were even) personally involved in the radical reform events of the 1830s" (Paddon, 1975, p. 80).

The Canada Land Company, on the other hand, which was founded in 1826 and served as a "major corporate rival" of Colonel Talbot (Whebell, 1992, p. 47), made use of a much more aggressive and systematic approach to attracting people, who, it was hoped would be sympathetic to the British cause. In what follows, we discuss the purpose of the Company, the role played by John Galt in organizing the Company, the nature of the immigrants desired by the Crown, and the methods used by the Company to attract these immigrants. To fully understand the experiences of the immigrants who settled this area we also describe the sea voyage for those who travelled in steerage as well as for those with sufficient funds to travel as cabin passengers. We then conclude with the arrangements

made by the Crown and the Company to assist the newly arrived immigrants to find jobs and/or to purchase land.

Chapter 1. The Canada Land Company

The attempt by the British Crown to settle Middlesex County and the surrounding area was accomplished using the same procedures that had been followed in settling portions of Crown land elsewhere in British North America prior to the American Revolution. In 1609, for instance, a Royal Charter was granted by the House of Commons to a private group of shareholders who formed the London Company to settle what are now portions of Virginia. Similarly, Massachusetts was settled by another group of private shareholders who formed the Massachusetts Bay Company through a Royal Charter granted in 1629 (Linklater, 2003). Each of these privately owned companies was formed by wealthy land speculators with the intention of generating a profit by eventually selling the land they had initially purchased from the Crown.

Thus it is not surprising that in attempting to settle the southwestern portion of Upper Canada, legislation was introduced in the British House of Commons in 1825 to create the Canada Land Company, which also consisted of a private group of shareholders (Lee, 2004). Governed by a Court of Directors, the Company had acquired from the Crown approximately 2.5 million acres scattered throughout what was then Western Canada. While about 1.5 million acres was divided into smaller lots of 200 acres apiece, there were also larger parcels or blocks of around 3000 to 9000 acres. The largest single block consisted of one million acres. Known as the Huron Tract, this block was roughly triangular in shape and extended from Lake Huron through much of present-day Huron and Perth County as well as through portions of Lambton and Middlesex County.

The Company also owned many individual lots in the London District, which encompassed not only Middlesex County, but Oxford County and Norfolk County and extended as far north as Georgian Bay and as far south as the Talbot Tract on Lake Erie. The Company's land also included lots in the Western District, which bordered Lake St. Clair and the Detroit River, as well as in the Gore District in the east which was located around Guelph (Hoffman & Taylor, 1999, p. 356). In short, the Company had acquired most of the property throughout Southwestern Ontario (see the map on the next page) and between October 1828 and April 1829, the Company had already placed settlers in six of the 17 townships in Middlesex County (Colman, 1978), four of which were located along Lake Erie in the Talbot Tract (Southwold, Yarmouth, Malahide, Bayham).

From the Crown's perspective, the most desirable settlers were not only farmers who would "til the soil" and build the roads, but others with sufficient funds to erect mills and establish inns. Also required were artisans such as stone-masons, saddlers, shoemakers, tailors, and blacksmiths, to name a few of the necessary skilled occupations (Robeson, 1977). In other words, the Crown wanted people who would remain loyal to the Empire and who would help to create permanent, thriving rural communities.

John Galt, the first secretary to the Canada Land Company, was the person largely responsible for developing the procedures to attract appropriate settlers to this area. Prior to arriving in Upper Canada, Galt visited the Holland Land Company that had been established some 30 years earlier in Batavia, New York. Owing to the success of this company, the purpose of his visit was to learn how to recruit enterprising immigrants (Karr, 1974). Indeed, the information he obtained during his visit formed the groundwork for the policies that the Canada Land Company was to follow during its first twenty years of existence.

Map of Southwestern Ontario circa 1835 (courtesy of the University of Western Ontario Archives (RC#921)

Galt encouraged immigration in a number of ways. He established agencies in Quebec (City) and Montreal to assist prospective settlers who initially landed in Lower Canada, to eventually arrive in Upper Canada. He also established agencies throughout England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland to promote immigration through an extensive advertising campaign. For example, the Company printed large posters that were mounted in prominent locations throughout the British Isles, the purpose of which was to address the most commonly cited concerns voiced by farmers contemplating emigration.

While some of the topics dealt with taxation, the costs of purchasing land, livestock and erecting buildings, others focused on opportunities for religious worship and schooling, whether wild beasts were "troublesome to new settlers," and even "The probable expense of supporting a Family of five or six grown persons until they could get sufficient from the Land to support themselves" (Colman, 1978, p. 117-120).

Further posters encouraged immigration by providing an extremely favourable impression of farm life in Upper Canada. The following is from an 1832 poster housed in University of Western Ontario Archives (RC#921).

Climate

On comparison with the climate of Great Britain, the heat in the summer months is somewhat greater, but never oppressive, as it is always accompanied with light breezes. There is less rain than in England, but it falls at more regular periods, generally in spring and autumn. The winter cold, though it exceeds that of the British Isles, is the less sensibly felt, in consequence of its dryness, and seldom continues intense for more than three days together, owing to the regular fluctuation of the wind between the north-west and south-west points...It is hardly necessary to state that in a country so overspread with timber there can never be a deficiency of fuel...

Soil

Perhaps there does not exist in any quarter of the globe, a country of the extent of Upper Canada, containing so small a quantity of waste land, either of marsh or mountain, yet there is not any deficiency of water; for, independently of the numerous rivers and streams which flow through the country on every side, good springs are universally found either on the surface or by digging for them...

Agriculture

All the fruits and herbs, common to the English kitchen-garden, thrive well in this province; and several of the former, which cannot in all seasons be had in perfection in England without forcing, succeed there in the open air; melons, in particular, which are excellent. There is also great variety of apples, pears, plums, etc, of the finest quality which are known to European orchards...After wheat, which is generally harvested in the month of July and the beginning of August, rye can be sown on the same ground in the autumn to advantage;
the rye crop is frequently laid down with clover or grass seed, which, unless the farmer is pressed for ground, will continue to furnish good meadow and pasture for four or five years...

Along with posters, the Company also promoted immigration in other ways. First, the Court of Directors subsidized and made available throughout the British Isles a number of pamphlets and books produced in London, England, that described in some detail the advantages of immigrating to Upper Canada (Kerr, 1974). Second, the Company provided free postage to Britain for settlers who wished to correspond with their relatives at home. Because many of the immigrants were illiterate and depended on others to write for them, not all of the letters were produced by the persons who were said to have been the authors. Owing to the possibility that some might even be forged, certain precautions were sometimes taken before the immigrants departed.

> Probably the favourite measure was to tear off a corner of a sheet of paper which could be left behind to be matched up with the first letter received. They also carried with them signed pages, pages with a portion cut off through a signature, and a variety of agreed tokens, seals, and signs to include in a letter from Upper Canada (Cameron, Haines, & Maude, 2000, p. xxxi-xxxii).

How many of the letters actually contained the true views of the authors, of course, remains unknown. Nevertheless, to obtain this free postage service, the settlers had to leave their letters with the Company's agents, who in turn, often selected the most promising for distribution in England as still another form of advertising.

> The Canada Company published over 20,000 copies of letters from Canadian settlers to the Motherland. It is quite possible that this was the most effective advertising that the Company used. People could relate more easily to the words of their former neighbours than to a more pretentious poster (Karr, 1974, p. 91).

In addition to advertising material, the Company also made use of further agents supplied by the Crown who were stationed in the major ports of embarkation. Their duties were to arrange transportation and to provide any other assistance deemed necessary (Lee, 2004). As a general guide the Company issued the following poster in 1835 with the names and locations of the agents along with travelling and packing information (University of Western Ontario Archives, RC#921).

> *His Majesty's Government, with a view of affording protection and assistance to Emigrants proceeding from the Outpost, have appointed the following Agents:*
>
> *Liverpool.....Lieut. Low, R.N*
> *Bristol.....Lieut. Henry, R.N*
> *Leith.....Lieut. Forrest, R.N.*
> *Greenock.....Lieut. Hemmans, R.N.*
> *Dublin.....Lieut. Hodder, R.N.*

Cork.....Lieut. Lynch, R.N.
Limerick.....Lieut, Lynch, R.N.
Belfast.....Lieut. Miller, R.N.
Sligo.....Lieut. Shuttleworth, R.N.

*It is expedient that the Emigrant should embark early in the spring, that he may have the summer before him, and leisure to settle his family comfortably before the winter sets in. Great improvements have taken place in the mode of conveying the Emigrants up the St. Lawrence from Montreal within the last two years, by which the hardships and privations formerly suffered on that route are avoided (*for a description of the hardships see page 12 in this booklet*), and they may now have covered conveyances all the way, for a very moderate addition to the old charges. They have now, also, the option of taking the route by the Ottawa and the Rideau Canal, by which a saving of time is effected at a small additional expense.*

The ordinary baggage of Emigrants consists of their wearing apparel, with such bedding, and utensils for cooking, as may be required on the voyage, and any articles of clothing, not intended to be used at sea, ought to be packed in water-tight cases or trunks, not exceeding eighty or ninety pounds in weight.

Perhaps because of this aggressive campaign, emigration from the British Isles rose substantially over the years. Whereas in 1829 only 13,307 people set sail for British North America, by 1832 the number had reached 66,339 (Robinson, 1977, p. 10). Moreover, as testimony to the overall success of recruiting largely from the British Isles, the number of immigrants from England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales who settled in Middlesex County, according to the 1880-81 census, was approximately 150,000, while the next highest number was only around 8,000 from Germany (History of the County of Middlesex, 1889, p. 210).

It is useful to note, however, that in 1832 the Crown also considered it necessary to issue the following cautionary notice so as not to mislead any prospective emigrants. Although the reason is not entirely clear, perhaps the Crown felt that the wording in the Company's many posters, books and pamphlets may have conveyed a somewhat misleading impression, especially with regard to the possibility of free land, financial aid, etc.

The object of the present Notice is to afford such information as is likely to be useful to Persons who desire either to Emigrate, or to assist others to Emigrate, to the British Possessions in North America.

In the first place, it seems desirable to define the nature of the assistance to be expected from Government by Persons proceeding to these colonies. No pecuniary aid will be allowed by Government to Emigrants to the North American Colonies; nor after their arrival will they receive Grants of Land, or gifts of Tools, or a supply of Provisions. Hopes of all these things have been sometimes held out to Emigrants by Speculators in this Country, desirous of making a profit by their conveyance to

North America, and willing for that purpose to delude them with unfounded expectations, regardless of their subsequent disappointment.

Land, indeed, used formerly to be granted gratuitously; but when it was taken by poor people, they found that they had not the means of living during the interval necessary to raise their Crops, and further, they knew not enough of the manner of farming in the Colonies to make any progress ...therefore, they were obliged to work for wages, until they could make a few savings, and could learn a little of the way of farming in Canada...now land is not disposed of except by sale.

These are the reasons why Government does not think it necessary to give away Land in a Country, where by the lowness of its price, the plentifullness of work, and high rates of wages, an industrious Man can earn enough in a few Seasons to become a freeholder by means of his own acquisitions.

Although Government will not make any gifts at the Public expense to Emigrants to North America, Agents will be maintained at the principle Colonial Ports, whose duty it will be, without fee or reward from private individuals...to acquaint them with the demand for labour in different districts, to point out the most advantageous routes, and to furnish them generally with all useful advice upon the objects which they have had in view in emigrating. And when a private engagement cannot be immediately obtained, employment will be afforded on some of the Publick Works in progress in the Colonies. Persons newly arrived should not omit to consult the Government Agent for Emigrants, and as much as possible should avoid detention in the Ports, where they are exposed to all kinds of imposition and of pretexts for keeping them at Taverns till any money they may possess has been expended (Robeson, 1977, pg 8-9).

Chapter 2. The Ocean Voyage

Once the decision was made to emigrate, appropriate travel arrangements were now required. The ocean voyage from the British Isles to North America in the 1830s-1850s was accomplished largely by steamship, though sailing ships were still in use. The voyage via sailing ship to either Montreal or New York normally lasted six to seven weeks, whereas, steamships were considerably faster. In 1838, for example, the Great Western steamship left Bristol in the south of England on April 8th and arrived in New York only 15 days later (Hoffman & Taylor, 1999).

Many emigrants destined for Upper Canada preferred New York over Montreal as their initial destination even though travel from England to the port of New York was more costly (Hoffman & Taylor, 1999). The reason was that ships arrived at New York

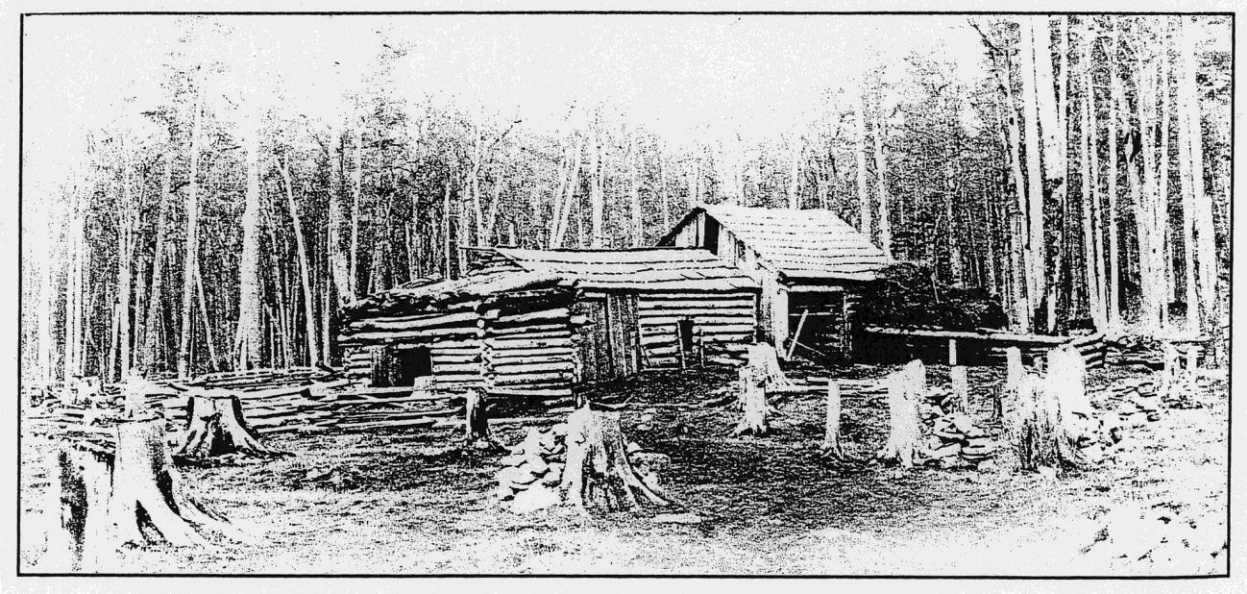
somewhat sooner than Montreal and travel from New York to Upper Canada through Buffalo by train or boat along the Erie Canal was far more comfortable and faster than travel from Montreal, as the following description of such a trip suggests. The description is from a letter written by Mrs. J. Burchell who made the trip in 1832.

> From Montreal we were taken in a Canadian Batteau to Lachine (Quebec) fastened on to a Steamer and crossed Lake St Frances to the Island of Cedars, where we waited 3 days for horses to commence our journey up the rapids of 140 miles, which took us 5 days; at times drawn by horses but at the west parts by oxen, this was a most fatiguing part of our journey as we were obliged to walk a good deal at the dangerous parts of them, the water at some places flowing at such a rapid rate, it was unsafe to pass through in a boat, we travelled by day and encamped in the woods or barns at night, whichever was most convenient (Cameron, Haines, & Maude, 2000, p. 13).

Depending on their finances, passengers made the ocean voyage either in steerage or in a cabin. While the fare to cross the Atlantic varied considerably as a function of the shipping line, the nature of the vessel, as well as the accommodations, in 1832 the average cost for an adult in steerage was four pounds, whereas for someone in a cabin it was 15 pounds. To appreciate the significance of these fares, the cost to travel in steerage was nearly equal to the wage a person eventually might earn after two months of farm labour in Ontario (Hoffman & Taylor, 1999). If a passenger wished to reside in a cabin, the cost would be nearly equal to eight months farm labour. Because the experiences of both groups were exceedingly different, we begin with a brief description of travel in steerage, followed by a brief description of travel in a private cabin.

Steerage Passengers

The passengers who travelled in steerage from England to North America in the early 1800s were mainly carpenters, shoemakers, etc. who paid their own way, as well as unemployed farm workers and labourers who were aided by parish sponsors. Of the many parish sponsors in southwest England, one of the most thoroughly researched is the Petworth Emigration Committee in Sussex. They were responsible for sending nearly 2000 emigrants to the southwestern portion of Upper Canada between 1832 and 1837, a number of whom established homesteads in Adelaide Township in the western part of Middlesex County (Cameron & Maude, 2000).



Pioneer homestead on Lot 15 in Adelaide Township.
Courtesy of the University of Western Ontario Archives (RC#10005)

Though outwardly humanitarian, the ultimate concern of this committee, founded by the Reverend Thomas Sockett, Rector of Petworth, was to help rid England of the growing population of the unemployed which, it was said, if left unchecked, would lead to increased crime coupled with increased taxation on the wealthy through the poor law regulations of 1834. Sockett's concern over crime was perhaps best expressed in a letter to a member of Parliament which outlined his views on the children of the unemployed.

> ...a burden to their parents...a nuisance to their neighbours...(and) from absolute want of employment, becoming first pilfers, then poachers, and eventually thieves upon a larger scale, crowding our prisons with juvenile offenders, and adding, at a fearfully increasing rate, to the accumulating mass of crime and misery (Haines, 1990, p. 6).

In short, according to Sockett, the unemployed must be sent to some distant shore largely for the good of England.

In addition to clothing, cooking utensils, etc. all families who travelled in steerage regardless of where they originated or who was responsible for their support, were told to bring sufficient food to last the entire voyage because meals were not supplied by the shipping companies. To supplement their food provisions, however, families supported by the Petworth Committee received a daily food allowance. The amount set aside for one adult, or two children, was as follows:

Sunday - beef 1lb, potatoes 1 3/4lb, rum and water 1/2 pint

Monday - flour 1/2 lb, butter 1/4 lb, cheese 1/2 lb, raisins 1/4 lb.

Tuesday - pork 1lb, potatoes 1 3/4lb, rum and water 1/2 pint

Wednesday - flour 1/2 lb, butter 1/4 lb, cheese 1/2 lb, raisins 1/4 lb.

Thursday - beef 1lb, potatoes 1 3/4lb, rum and water 1/2 pint

Friday - flour 1/2 lb, butter 1/4 lb, cheese 1/2 lb, raisins 1/4 lb.

Saturday - pork 1lb, potatoes 1 3/4lb, rum and water 1/2 pint

While these allowances, at first glance may seem meager, they were based on what the average farm worker and his family would normally have consumed on a daily basis at home as well as what was given to those who resided in a poorhouse which was also supported by the Petworth Committee (Haines, 1990). How did they manage their meals on board ship?

> the emigrants were divided into messes; each mess drew its rations at ten o'clock in the morning and took turns so there was no undue delay and everyone got their fair share. Each mess may have put their rations of (salted) meat and potatoes together, cooked them en-masse in a communal pot, and doled them out in what seemed fair shares. On the other hand, each family may have cooked its own rations separately, putting their meat and potatoes to boil in marked nets or other containers in the communal boiler (Haines, 1990, p. 26-28).

Since most ships had well over 100 passengers, cooking took place on deck and probably went on throughout the day to accommodate the large number of required messes. The meals were consumed on a large table in a galley space located in the sleeping area below deck.

Reproduced by permission from Haines, S. (1990). No Trifling Matter.
Brighton, England: Centre for Continuing Education, the University of Sussex.

With respect to sleeping, the quarters were extremely crowded. Upon arriving at the port of embarkation, whether part of the Petworth group or not, a six-foot square berth would be allocated to every three adults, or six children under the age of 14. Above the lower berths would be a second tier, so that the headroom between the two was only two to three feet (Haines, 1990, p. 3).

Beyond these eating and sleeping arrangements, what was life like on these long voyages? In addition to passengers, transatlantic ships were often old, had very limited sanitary facilities and, depending on their size, carried livestock (cows and calves, sheep, goats, pigs, and hens) needed to supply fresh meat largely for the cabin passengers.

Greenhill and Giffard (1979) summarized the overall living conditions that the passengers were forced to endure in the following way.

> The smells were, of course, among the most notable features of life on board. The combination of animal and human excrements, foul water from the bottom of the ship below the pump wells which never came out, the remains of old cargoes, and the perpetually rotting wooden structure of the vessel herself must between them have produced a dreadful stench, unrelieved by any kind of ventilation system in the ship (p. 14).
>
> Sanitation comprised buckets screened around and sometimes fitted with seats. There were no special washing places and water was rationed. This was a great hardship to any with fastidious tastes. Often the water was taken on board from the river in which the vessel lay before the beginning of the voyage and before long smelt foul and tasted worse (p. 17).

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Cabin Passengers

In addition to the Petworth emigrants who settled in Adelaide Township, there were others who also settled in Adelaide Township but were fairly wealthy. These passengers made the voyage in private cabins and, in one history of the township, were referred to as "gentlemen farmers" because they "brought with them immigrants to do the actual work of opening up the country" (Cuddy, 1927, p. 36).

The cabin passengers usually had no need to bring food because they had the option on paying for their meals when they booked passage and, depending on the ship, were often well fed (Greenhill & Giffard, 1972; Hoffman & Taylor, 1999). The following daily food allowance is from a previously unpublished series of letters, portions of which were written during a trans-Atlantic voyage in 1858 by John Howard, who eventually settled on a farm near Mount Brydges. The letters, housed in the University of Western Ontario Archives (E42) were written for the benefit of his mother who remained in England. Throughout his voyage and even after landing in Upper Canada, he wrote an extremely detailed account of his daily activities.

> On board ship breakfast was at 8 o'clock, lunch at 12, dinner at 4, and tea at 6. Although he could have dined with the other cabin passengers in a public saloon, he chose to eat most of his meals in his cabin because "the smell of the different eatables is too mighty for me."
>
> At times breakfast consisted of "two cups of tea, and two plates of toast and ham, and some very good butter." Other times for breakfast he would be served "chocolate, sausages, pickled salmon...cold fowl, etc...The fish is always salmon one day and turbot the next." His lunch consisted of "soup and cold meats of every description"

whereas for dinner he would have "fish soup, fresh meat of every sort and kind, pies, and stewed pigeons, ducks, geese, and turkeys." For desert there would be "First-rate confectionary, ices, creame, tarts, pies, and jellies of every sort." To prevent these provisions from spoiling "All the fresh things are kept in ice...We have fish enough packed in ice to last us the journey."

In view of his meals it might seem that he would also have been allotted considerable room and privacy, however, this was not so. Generally speaking, the cabins were quite small and usually housed a number of people who were not necessarily known to one another. In John Howard's case he had to share his cabin with "One Scotch clergyman, a Mr. John McLeane, who is going by appointment of the Bishop of Toronto, to a living near London, county of Middlesex... a Captain Salvadore who brought his wife and family with him together with his wife's two sisters, (and an) old Canadian Scotch farmer, who has a farm about 7 miles from Toronto."

In addition to crowding, even within the private cabins, there was the further issue of having to associate for an extended period, with what were described by many as undesirable travelling companions elsewhere aboard ship.

> I was not long in the ship when I saw what sort of company I was to have. Their language would have told me although I had been blind. There were 260 adults besides children and the ship's crew...A great majority of them were drunk when they came aboard and although it is against the government regulations they kept suckin away at the whisky the whole way... (Hoffman & Taylor, 1999, p. 58).

Chapter 3. Days at Sea

Storms were not uncommon. In fact most of the diaries and letters from this period contain vivid descriptions of the extreme weather conditions and seasickness encountered during the north Atlantic crossing. The following excerpt is from a diary by W. Gliddon who crossed the Atlantic around 1850.

> Thursday,12th. Weather dirty - about 4 p.m. orders were given to close-reef all sails as a storm was expected in half an hour and every sail was furled and the ship pumped out, ready for the worst. By this time the rain had begun to fall and the wind to rattle through the ropes like thunder. This lasted but a few minutes, and we were all in hopes it would pass over easily, but as it got dark the rain again began to fall, the wind to whistle and the sea to rise. By ten o'clock the storm was getting hot. Thunder is no more than a dog's bark compared with the tremendous roar of wind and sea. Ten o'clock all but three passengers went below, to turn in and try to sleep, and I being the hindmost left the scuttle (deck hatch) open, thinking the other three

> would follow. We had scarcely turned in when a sea struck her, making her reel most awfully. It came down the scuttle like a mill-stream, washing some of us nearly out of our beds. Two of our boxes broke from their lashings and rolled from side to side, strewing their contents as they went.
>
> It was an anxious time; females shrieking, the water almost floating our things and the pails, etc., knocking about. It is impossible to convey an idea of such an awful sight. We had very little sleep this night.
>
> I went to the top of the steps (next) morning, just to see the sea. I never witnessed such a sight before; it was one mass of foam, and rolling as high as our topmast, threatening every moment to swallow us up. About 2 p.m. another sea struck the ship, smashing in the cabin skylight and some of the bulwarks. This completed the disaster of last night (Greenhill & Giffard, 1972, p. 19).

Although the cabin passengers often complained about the cramped sleeping arrangements, once they encountered inclement weather they quickly appreciated the benefit of these arrangements.

> Persons who have never been to sea, fancy that the wooden crib for the bed is too narrow in dimensions; but when the ship begins to roll and toss amongst the billows, they soon find error in their supposition. Were the beds not of circumscribed width, they would be tumbled about from one side to the other, and very likely hove out altogether. Many have their beds widened in harbour, but are glad to reverse the matter once on the ocean (Hoffman & Taylor, 1999, p. 62).

Loss of life resulting from stormy weather was also not uncommon. Between 1847 and 1851 at least 44 passenger vessels that left Great Britain were shipwrecked and lost at sea (Hoffman & Taylor, 1999). In terms of seasickness during stormy weather, Henry Christmas, in a book published in 1850, offered the following advice to future passengers on where to select a sleeping berth:

> Choose then, if you can, a lower berth as far forward as possible, if you are a cabin passenger, or aft if a steerage one; because you will thus be nearest to the centre of the motion of the vessel, and so feel the least of the pitching. The only thing to be attended to in taking the lower berth is, if possible to avoid having a very sea-sick or awkward companion in the berth above you, or you may come in occasionally for a share of more benefits than you bargained for (Hoffman & Taylor, 1999, p. 60).

Aside from these difficulties, another danger was possible exposure on board to illnesses of a contagious nature that could lead to serious complications or death.

> ...the great tragedy of the emigrant trade was contagious disease - ship-fever (typhus and typhoid), smallpox, cholera, and childhood diseases such as measles. These diseases were brought on board with the emigrants, they spread among undernourished people in the crowded and unsanitary conditions in the hold of many emigrant ships; and they took a further toll in the quarantine stations, hospitals, rooming houses, and tent cities where emigrants congregated on arrival (Cameron & Maude, 2000, p. 43).

In summary, the best that can be said about the sea voyage is that crossing the ocean, and even travelling down the St. Lawrence, was an extremely perilous undertaking. In view of the hazards and the uncomfortable travelling conditions, what is surprising is that a number of people (mostly cabin passengers) who made the voyage throughout the early 1800s, returned to England either on business or to visit family, and then sailed once again for North America.

Chapter 4. Arrival in North America

Since considerable effort was made by the Canada Land Company to encourage emigration through agents, advertising posters, books and pamphlets, by the 1840s nearly one million emigrants from the British Isles had set sail for North America. The total number of emigrants that arrived at the port cities of Quebec and Montreal (366,360) in Lower Canada en route to Upper Canada, however, was nearly equal to the number that sailed to the ports of New York and Boston (348,804) in the United States (Robeson, 1977).

We mention this point because during the Post-Revolutionary War period (roughly the 1780s through the early 1800s), in addition to the Holland Land Company in upper New York, many other privately owned land companies had formed in the United States also with the hope of attracting settlers. These companies owned large tracts of land in areas that ranged from Connecticut through Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, and even as far away as Georgia (Livermore, 1968). Hence, there was good reason to fear, on the part of the Canada Land Company, that many of those who travelled to the United States, although originally destined for Canada, might be persuaded by agents from the American companies to settle in the United States rather than continue on to Canada.

To counter this possibility Galt also stationed Canadian agents in both New York and Boston (Lee, 2004) and provided the following advice to those who entered North America en route to Canada via the United States.

> With respect to emigrants in general, they will be surrounded on the wharfs, by land agents and other scheming persons, who, by false representations, will endeavour to

> persuade the stranger from his intended route, into the United States...Such persons should on no account, be listened to; and indeed all representations made by native Americans should be received by British emigrants with great suspicion...(Picken,1832, p. 252).

An even more explicit appeal to disregard any offers to settle in the United States appeared in a book by Thomas Rolph, a contemporary of Galt. The point of his message was to alert the prospective Canadian settler to the difficulties they would encounter if they did elect to remain in the United States.

> With regard to choice between Canada and the United States, two circumstances should be well considered: First, to become a citizen of the United States, a person must serve an apprenticeship of five years, during which period he is considered as an alien; at least three years before he is deemed worthy of naturalization, he is compelled to appear before a publick court, abjure forever his allegiance to the land of this birth, and the King, and Constitution, which he has ever been accustomed to revere...(and only) after his purification from all monarchial principles, may he then possess land and houses...but he may rest assured that he will never obtain any (elected) office either of honour or emolument in the state.
>
> In Upper Canada, (on the other hand) a native of Great Britain can hold property at once, becomes eligible to every office, and is indeed and in fact fully entitled to all the rights and privileges he enjoyed at home, and (is) happily exempt from all the burdens (in the United States) which must necessarily co-exist with (their) huge national debt (Rolph, 1836, p. 7-8).

Because of the concern over the loss of emigrants who elected to sail to New York, and as an enticement to these emigrants to select Quebec (City) or Montreal, the Canada Land Company offered to help those who wished to purchase property owned by the Company to reach their destination free of charge.

> The Company's agents, on the arrival of emigrants at Quebec (City) or Montreal, will...convey them, free of expense, to York (Toronto), or the head of lake Ontario, which is in the vicinity of their choicest lands, provided the emigrants pay a first instalment in London (England), Quebec (City), or Montreal, of two shillings an acre, upon not less than one hundred acres (Picken, 1832, p. 255).

Parenthetically, this two shilling price per acre was only a down payment. Because the land could be purchased on credit, the final cost for an acre was around 11 shillings. Since the Company had initially paid the Crown three shillings, two pence per acre (Lee, 2004), the shareholders' profit during the early days of recruitment, was indeed considerable.

Chapter 5. Arrival in Upper Canada

Steerage Passengers

While many passengers in steerage had sufficient funds to make at least a down payment on property, many others did not and therefore depended on jobs such as farm worker or labourer. The latter frequently found work in opening roads into areas designated for settlement. Farm workers, on the other hand, were often in demand a hired hands to assist others who had already purchased land but needed help in clearing the land and/or in farming.

> The hired man had a social status of his own. Whether he was an Irish immigrant or a son of a neighbouring landowner, he was treated by his employer as one of the family. "If a man is good enough to work for me, he is good enough to eat with me," was a common expression. The typical hired man did the hardest chores and was a reservoir of miscellaneous information, and so was always popular with the growing boys. He would sometimes help with the house-work, and (if single) could always be depended on to act as a beau for one of the girls. Probably more often than not he married one of them. Certainly he had an excellent opportunity of deciding which one would make the best wife for a farmer (Jones, 1946, p. 56).

In the case of the farm worker or labourer, as soon as he had accumulated sufficient funds, which could take four or five years, he could then purchase a lot from a corporate land owner, such as the Canada Land Company, or by auction from the Crown. If the lots were obtained from the Crown they usually measured 50 acres. The terms of purchase often granted a three year grace period before the new owner needed to make the "first of three instalments on a price of five shillings an acre and begin to pay interest" (Cameron & Maude, 2000, p. 148).

It was also possible to buy lots from individual land speculators even though regulations had been enacted as early as 1792 against the practice of individuals engaging in land speculation (Gates, 1968). The reason for the regulations had to do with the original purpose for encouraging immigration and settlement. According to the Crown, when land was obtained it was incumbent upon the purchaser to clear a given portion, erect a home of a certain size, and reside on the property for a specified length of time. In other words, the owner was expected to take an active role is establishing a permanent settlement. Rather than achieving this ideal, however, it seems that buying land to hold it for an increase in value was the accepted means of getting wealth...(and) as late as 1854 more than half the land of

Simcoe County was owned by speculators (Jones, 1946, p. 64). In London Township which consisted of 23,724 acres, 6,547 acres were held by absentee landlords, many of whom were given appealing parcels of land, for services rendered, with the intention of (subsequently) reaping a tidy profit (by selling the land) (London Township, 2001, p. 13). Hence, contrary to a frequently conveyed impression of the early pioneers as individuals who left Great Britain with the aim of establishing permanent settlements in Upper Canada, many who emigrated were also capitalists with the goal of buying and selling land in the hope of making a quick profit.

As an illustration of the rapid turnover of property during the early 1800s, consider, for instance, Lot 29 on the first Concession in Westminster Township, which today is located north of Baseline Road and west of Wortley Road in London. According to information on file in the London Land Registry Office (see Service Ontario Middlesex County microfilm # E-33T-019) on February 16, 1819 John Davy was granted a patent (i.e. ownership) from the Crown on one hundred acres in the north half of this 200 acre lot. Approximately 11 months later (January 9, 1820) he sold the first portion to Thomas Duncombe (father of Charles Duncombe who played an active role in the Rebellion of 1837). On March 6, 1820 Davy sold a second portion to George Norton, and on August 9, 1820 he sold the final portion to Richard Dicy. George Norton in turn sold his share to Michael McLaughlin in July, 1825 who then sold the same share to John Stephens in March 1826. Thus in less than seven years portions of Davy's 100 acre lot had changed hands five times.

Since much of the land bought from individual land speculators, as well as from the Crown and even from the Canada Land Company, was uncleared, to buy this land the potential purchaser first had to find the lots that were for sale. Because these lots were rarely located along cleared roads but instead were found mainly in heavily wooded areas, a common practice, according to a diary kept by John McDonald, was to hire a guide.

> ...in every township the ground is divided into concessions or grants, and each concession is again subdivided into a proportionate number of lots. A post is fixed in the ground to mark the limit or boundary of each concession...For this reason most of those who go to view their lots, take a guide with them and two or three go commonly together, which diminishes the expense to each individually because they have to pay their guide five or six shilling every day that they are employed for this purpose, which commonly occupies three days when they go out on a journey of this nature (Hoffman & Taylor, 1999, p. 192).

To select an appropriate lot for farming considerable attention was given to the trees because their nature indicated the quality of the soil and hence the crops most likely to succeed.

> The best land is timbered with oak, ash, elm, beech, bass-wood, and sugar maple. A fair mixture of this species of tree is best, with here and there a large pine, and a few Canadian balsams scattered among the hard-wood. Too great a proportion of beech indicates sand or light loam: a preponderance of rock-elm is a sign of gravel or limestone-rock near the surface (Strickland, 1853, p. 162).

Adding to this advice was the following recommendation in the 1850 book by Henry Christmas:

> When you are upon it, see that it is chiefly covered with hardwood, such as beech and maple, and beware of pine, unless you want it for a saw-mill, otherwise pine land is always very severe land to clear, the stumps an interminable time in rotting out, desperately hard to grub up, and the land sometimes miserably poor when you have done all (Hoffman & Taylor, 1999, p. 193).

Once the decision was made and the land purchased, the first task was to erect some form of shelter. Often the first shelter was little more than a temporary hut open at one side to allow heat from a nearby outside fire to warm the interior. While residing in this enclosure, the settler, with helpers, would begin to clear the land and erect a log cabin to house the remaining members of the family, who in the meantime, often lived elsewhere in a previously established settlement. The following account is from a book by Edward Allan Talbot whose father, Richard Talbot, settled on land north of London in 1818.

> In the latter part of October my father removed his family from Port Talbot to Westminster, where he procured lodgings for them until a house was erected on his own lands...On the 26th of October, my brother and I, with six men carrying provisions and felling-axes, took our departure from Westminster, and, having hired a guide, proceeded into London, to fix upon the most desirable lot, the erection of a house...After spending the greater part of the day in approving and disapproving of particular lots, we unanimously determined on making the second lot, in the sixth concession, the future asylum of our exiled family. When we had agreed on this point, our next consideration was, to procure shelter for the night; for we were upwards of nine miles from the abodes of civilized beings, and in the midst of desolate wilds...
>
> We continued encamped in the woods from the 26th of October, until the 1st of December. During this period, we laid the foundation of a house, forty-six feet long, and twenty-one feet wide; one half of which we finished first, for the accommodation of the family, who (we) removed into it on the 2nd of December... (Talbot, 1824, p. 114-118).

Next, the remaining trees were felled, gathered, and burned often with the help of a logging bee. Samuel Strickland, writing about his experiences in the late 1840s, provided one of the earliest descriptions of a logging bee.

> As soon as the ground was cool enough, I made a logging Bee, at which I had five yokes of oxen and twenty men, four men to each team. The teamster selects a good place to commence a heap (of logs), generally against some large log which the cattle would be unable to move. They draw all the logs within a reasonable distance in front of the large log. The men with hand-spikes roll them, one upon the top of the others, until the heap is seven or eight feet high, and ten or twelve broad. All the chips, sticks, and rubbish are then picked up and thrown on the top of the heap. A team and four good men should log and pick an acre a day...On a dark night, a hundred or two of these large heaps all on fire at once have a very fine effect, and shed a broad glare of light for a considerable distance. In the month of July in the new settlements, the whole country at night appears lit up by these fires (Strickland, 1853, p. 96-97).

The logging bees in Middlesex County were often occasions for friendly, competitive social gatherings.

> Enough men gathered to form several gangs, each having a yoke of oxen and a driver. The field was mapped out in rectangular areas each wide enough to permit the gathering of the logs conveniently into heaps, and extending in length from side to side of the field. Then began the race, the result depending largely on the team and driver, as was the activity and expertness of the gang. Some prominent man was often appointed manager and umpire for the whole field. The oxen seemed to understand Gaelic, sometimes not the very choicest, especially when drivers got angry or excited. In this way the timber was all gathered into large heaps, which were subsequently burned (McColl, 1904, p. 5).

After burning the excess timber, a fence would be erected, other structures such a barn would be built, and with the assistance of oxen the tree stumps removed and the field would be prepared for planting. Needless to say, all of this required additional funds well beyond what was initially needed to buy the property.

> Contrary to an impression rather prevalent among later generations, a considerable amount of money or credit was necessary for getting a start in the backwoods. It was estimated that the man who had 100 pounds currency, in addition to what he paid for his land, had a bare minimum. It would take 20 pounds to buy a pair of oxen, a yoke, a longing-chain, and a harrow, 8 pounds for a cow and couple of pigs, 22 pounds for a year's provisions, and 50 pounds for erecting buildings and for hiring labour to assist in chopping and logging. Those who lacked money when they

arrived in the new settlements had to acquire it by one means or another before they could expect to have a farm of their own (Jones, 1946, p. 67).

Cabin Passengers

Unlike steerage passengers, cabin passengers usually had sufficient funds to buy land that had already been cleared and farmed. Returning to the letters by John Howard, after landing in Toronto, "the first thing we did was to send Aunt and the children (who travelled with him from England) and all the luggage that was wanted to a hotel called The Rossin House. It is the best hotel in Toronto." They were to remain in the hotel until he and his uncle, who also travelled from England, located a suitable farm on which to settle. Using Toronto as a base from which to examine the surrounding area, they resided in a boarding house to which they returned most evenings.

To begin their search, "we called at the Canada (Land) Company's house, and had papers and particulars of lands they have for sale. On Monday (July 19) we shall start at 1/2 past 7 o'clock to Niagara, look at the falls, and a farm in the neighbourhood, thence to Buffalo, and a long route westward..." Their journey finally ended on August 18 with the purchase of a farm near Mount Brydges. During their month long stay in Toronto, according to his letters, they travelled over 1000 miles sometimes by boat, but more often by rail and stage accompanied by several Canada Land Company agents. In total they visited around 10 properties.

Their reasons for rejecting certain properties provide an interesting glimpse into, not only the state of the farms that were for sale at the time, but also some of the factors that led them not to purchase a given piece of land.

> Strathroy
>
> We have looked at two farms today. Each of them is two hundred acres. One has a farm house, and no barn. The other had a barn, but no farm house. The worst of it is, the two together have not water enough on them for one (farm). They each have a fair well and sufficient (water) for domestic use, but then there is none for twenty or thirty head of cattle. So these will not do.

Barrie

The next day we went to Mr____'s farm. He seems a nice sort of man. He has been in the country 10 years and on the same farm, yet it looks very dreary and desolate. I believe owing to so much of the timber being heavy pine, he didn't get the stumps out...These being in the ground, the cleared land looks worse, that is more dreary and desolate than the surrounding forest...(also) the neighbourhood is peopled with ignorant and uneducated individuals

Chatham

We saw a beautiful farm here and cheap. It had a good frame house, and also good barns, and all necessary out buildings, but ague (an illness characterized by high fever and chills) prevails and so it is a very unhealthy neighbourhood.

It is also worth mentioning some of the difficulties they encountered during their month long journey before they arrived at the farm they eventually purchased near Mount Brydges.

On reaching Hamilton (at half past three Sunday morning) we found that the train did not go farther (that night), and there was no other till Monday morning. I procured a buggy and team, that is a pair of horses, and off we started for Toronto. By and bye we came to a place by the lake shore where the lake had washed away the road, so we had to go seventeen miles out of our way in consequence. This makes our journey 62 miles instead of 45, and (this) was not the only mishap, for when about 20 or 30 miles from Toronto, one of our horses dropped down and died in about 2 or 3 minutes. Overheated, I suppose, as the owner was driving and taking care of the animals. We now got another conveyance and went on a few miles, when the tire of one wheel came off, then we had to get a wagon and a horse who soon threw a shoe...(we finally) got into Toronto in the afternoon instead of the morning, and very tired we were.

Tuesday, August 10th. Started off this morning (from Toronto) in a railway car to Mount Brydges 150 miles away.. I was suffering very severely from Cholera, and was nearly drawn double with pain. The attack came on about 10 o'clock. Vomiting and diarrhea set in so violently, I really thought the two would soon make a speedy end of me. I travelled like this 120 miles... when we stopped at a station in London. I went to the refreshment room and asked for brandy. They handed me one bottle, I filled a glass nearly full and drank it...When I got to Mount Brydges I found

that (travelling) the next 25 miles was in a cart...I had a drop more brandy, and finally arrived...at the house of a Wm. Bentley, of whom we bought the farm.

Apparently, illnesses of a fairly serious nature were not uncommon among those who travelled by rail in the mid-1800s since, in the last passage quoted above, John Howard also mentioned that "all the railway carriages out here have accommodations for invalids." Although many pioneers lived very long lives, some even into their 80s and 90s, Jones (1946) commented on the prevalence of illness among the pioneer families in the following way.

> Present-day romanticists, knowing that the first settlers had plain food and plenty of outdoor exercise, often think that they escaped sickness. This is a misconception ...Malaria was nearly universal...Individuals died of "decline," of "inflammation of the bowels," of diphtheria, and scarlet fever, and medical science of the time was helpless. Sometimes an epidemic, like the cholera of 1832, would strike down a large part of a community (p. 82-83).

In addition to difficulties of this nature, John Howard also recounted a number of other trying experiences after he purchased the farm on August 12, 1858.

> November 17, 1858
>
> ...while in the woods a tremendous hurricane or storm passed over. The lightening flashed and the thunder pealed. Two trees were blown down quite near to us. Bobby (his nephew) was with me, and wanted to go home. The falling trees frightened him, but the storm drove so, we could not (go home). In Canada, when it does rain, (the rain) comes down in bucketfulls, not as a storm of decent rain comes down in England. Out here it seems to rain, as though none had fallen since the (Biblical) flood, and it was now going to make up for the past.
>
> November 18, 1858
>
> (On the way to market) we passed along some fearfully bad roads with mud holes, I'm sure, more than 3 feet deep. The horses could not pull the wagon out without help.
>
> December 8, 1858
>
> Sharp frost. Thermometer 7 degrees (Fahrenheit) below freezing in the bedroom. Friday, ditto, very cold. Saturday, 9 degrees below freezing in the bedroom.

January 19, 1859

> ...20 degrees below freezing in the house, milk, meat, bread, everything that could freeze was frozen.

Comments concerning the extreme cold in the settler's dwellings often appeared in many of the letters, diaries, and books written by the pioneers.

> Even in houses of improved type and construction the cold was often very intense. Mrs. Traill describes how cold it was in her home during the winter of 1833: "The mercury was down to twenty-five degrees in the house. The sensation of cold early in the morning was very painful, producing an involuntary shuddering, and an almost convulsive feeling in the chest. Our breaths were congealed in hoar-frost on the sheets and blankets...John Macaulay wrote to his mother in November, 1837: "We live in a very airy house. The wind almost blows through it"...Owing to the poor means of heating the homes, the cold was felt in town houses almost as much (as in the rural cabins)...water commonly froze in one's bedroom during the night (Guillet, 1933, p. 12-13).

Postscript

In view of the many hardships that the early immigrants to Middlesex County endured, was emigration truly worthwhile and did the immigrants become permanent residents? What happened, for example, to John Howard? By his own admission John Howard was a "gentleman farmer." While in his letters he never mentioned using hired hands to perform the farm work, he did confess to knowing nothing about ploughing or chopping wood prior to arriving in Canada.

> Last June I had never stood between the handles of a plough, but now I have been obliged not only to learn to plough but to break in a span of horses that had never ploughed before. It gave me, a novice in both arts (ploughing and horse breaking), a great deal of trouble and sorely tried my patience. Then again the chopping. Englishmen at home have no idea what an American axe can do. I found them very awkward customers to handle at first, but I have been much more fortunate than many are. I have not cut my foot with one, though twice the axe has glanced and cut off, or rather shaved off, a piece of my boot.

Despite these drawbacks and the experiences referred to above, he seemed to have enjoyed his life on the farm since his letters are full of very positive comments dealing with the daily chores of ploughing, chopping, and tending to the needs of his live stock. He also travelled frequently and hunted small game, though largely for sport.

> Canada is a very different country to Old England. In some parts the scenery is magnificent, and altogether beyond my powers of description, for instance the river St. Lawrence, the Lake of a Thousand Islands, the falls of and neighbourhood of Niagara, and coasts round Lake Simcoe, Erie, Huron, and Ontario. I have visited and sailed on all these lakes and shot wild ducks on Huron and Erie.

He even attended the occasional party.

> There was a grand party at Strathroy, the last night of the year. The dancing was kept up all night, we danced until past 5 o'clock and then broke up. Got home about six o'clock, and slept till tenY

Since many further accounts in his letters are similar to these, on the whole it would appear that emigration from England for John Howard was indeed worthwhile. Nevertheless, like some of the other gentleman farmers who came to Middlesex County and subsequently returned home (see Cuddy, 1927), he only remained on the farm for a short period and eventually sailed back to England. Although his motives are unknown, he later sailed once again for North America but never returned to Mount Brydges and instead moved to Texas.

And what about the emigrants who travelled from England in steerage? The overall impression conveyed in a series of letters written between 1832 and 1838 by those who came to Adelaide Township with the help and financial support of the Petworth Committee, was that emigration was a truly valuable undertaking. Excerpts from a collection assembled by Cameron, Hanes, and Maude (2000) are reprinted below. The first six were destined for friends and/or relatives back home while the final one is from a letter by Frederick Hasted that appeared on February 7, 1834 in the Brighton Herald newspaper. Unlike the others, Hasted's letter was directed to the general population of Sussex in order to clarify the purpose of the Committee's work and to the Petworth Committee to encourage its members to continue their good work.

From William Phillips

Dear Father and Mother, I hope you will come next summer. I would not advise you to come here, if I did not know it would be to your advantage, even if you spend your last shilling to get here. And bring uncle Carpenter with you, and (neither) he, nor you will ever repent coming here for I can get you both a farm, if you want one .

From William Cooper

Dear Father and Mother, brothers and sisters. I have got 100 acres of land, at 2 dollars per acre, one fourth to be paid at the end of 3 years and the rest in 3 years moreYI should like for all my brothers to come here, for here is plenty of work, and no doubt but we shall do very well after next harvest.

From Mary Holden

Dear Friends: Father sends his kind love to all of you, and hopes that you will make up your minds, and take a good resolution to come here, for here is a good prospect of doing well and getting a good living, Father says he would not come back to England again for no respects.

From Stephen Goatcher

Dear Wife: There are about 1500 souls come to this township this year. It is accounted as good land as any in Canada. I want to know how you are getting on. I am fearful the times are bad for farming in England. I do not have overseers call on me for poor taxes (the taxes that were levied on property owners in England in 1834 to support the poor) as you have; that is the beauty of this country.

From Ann Mann

Dear Sons and Friends: I wish you and your little children was here; they would be better off here than you are in old England. Here is a good living to be got with working (and) they don't work harder here then you do (in England) What would have become of my children if they had been in England and I had been put into some poorhouse; but now if I go out at the door I do see great comfort; I can say I am as happy and as comfortable as

ever I was in all my life. Let my letter be copied off and be stuck up at the Onslows Arms (an inn by the Way and Arun canal at Loxwood) to let everyone see that I lives in Adelaide; don't leave no one thing out that I say.

From Charles Rapley

Dear Father, and Mother, Brothers, and Sisters, Friends, and Relations all: If my brother Thomas wishes to do himself any good, I should advise him by all means to come here, he would be sure to do well here, either as a brickmaker, a farmer's labourer, or, if he likes, I will give him the choice either of going in partnership with me on my farm, or let him have half the landYwhether he is married or single makes no difference, for children are not a burden here; if people cannot keep them themselves, there are plenty of the old settlers, glad to keep them, if you will let them have them for a certain term of years, according to their age.

From Frederick Hasted

I now come to say I cannot add much to the good accounts you have already received of this country, but confirm their correctness, especially the description of climate and guide given out with the map (provided by the Canada Land Company) Some people at home were ignorant enough to say that those sent out (of England) by the Earl of Egremont (the wealthy land owner responsible for the funds to support the Petworth Committee's undertaking) were going out like convicts; but let those people (ask), which is most like a convict, - a man chained, as it were, to his parish because he cannot get work (and) is obliged to take what they will give him (and) be looked upon as a useless being, an evil, yea, a pest to society or a man that has all Canada before him, can obtain what land he pleases to employ his family or himself, get good wages, pay his way, and be respected as a useful member of society; this is a true picture and I hope they (the Petworth Committee) will send more (people). It is the best thing you can do for them..

Considered together, these letters convey a reasonable sense of why, for the poor who left England, emigration in steerage to Upper Canada in the early 1800s was a very worthwhile endeavour. In recounting the history of Adelaide Township, Talman (1929) observed that the majority of settlers who arrived as Petworth emigrants stayed and were instrumental in helping to develop the township. The same can be said of other locations in Middlesex County and the surrounding area where the Petworth emigrants settled such as Plympton-Wyoming, Woodstock, Waterloo, Galt, and Guelph, to name a few (see

Cameron, Haines, & Maude, 2000, p. xlviii & xlix). Thus, even though the Petworth Committee was formed with the aim of helping the wealthy to reduce their tax burden and England to reduce its crime rate, the Committee did in fact benefit not only the emigrants but also many communities throughout Southwestern Ontario where the emigrants settled.

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