

WILLIAM KING

—BY—

WILLIAM R. GREGG



REVEREND WILLIAM KING
After his retirement

MATHEWS ACADEMY

Formerly known as the Grammar School of Louisiana College, is situated in Jackson, in the Parish of East Feliciana, twelve miles from the Mississippi River, being connected with it by stage and railroad.

The location of this institution, as it regards beauty of scenery, salubrity of climate, and advantages for literary pursuits, is not surpassed by any in the Southern country. The health of the place may be known from this fact, that although upwards of 200 pupils, male and female, annually attend the Seminaries in Jackson, sickness is scarcely ever known among them.

The Academy is under the direction of William King, assisted by four competent and experienced teachers. The course of instruction is thorough in all the branches of an English Education; embracing also, Latin, Greek, French, and such other studies as are usually taught in Academies.

The arrangement of studies is adapted to pupils of every age; they are instructed in such branches as may be requisite either to qualify them for a commercial life, or to prepare them for a Collegiate course, according to the wishes of Parents or Guardians.

Particular attention is paid to the health and morals of the pupils. The government is strict, and at the same time parental, employing such discipline as may most effectually tend to call into action the best feelings of the scholar.

The Academic year is divided into two Sessions, the first begins on the first Wednesday in July and ends the 20th of December. The second commences on the 10th of January and terminates on the first Wednesday of June following.

There are two vacations in each year; one of three weeks at the end of the first session, and another of four weeks at the end of the second.

TERMS.

For Tuition per Session, \$20.00

For Board, Washing, Lights, etc., per Session, 80.00

All charges must be paid at or before the beginning of each Session, either in cash or by a negotiable endorsed note, bearing interest at the rate of ten per cent per annum.

Each pupil is requested to have every article of Clothing marked with his name at full length.

JACKSON, (La.,) DEC. 2, 1841.

R.C.Carman, Printer, Clinton, La.
WILLIAM KING, Rector.

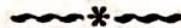
The African in North America

Their Welfare After Freedom
as Effected and Influenced by

The Life of William King



Facts Regarding the Characters Portrayed
—by—
Mrs. Stowe in Uncle Tom's Cabin



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By WILLIAM R. GREGG, Oakville, Ontario



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The African in North America

Foreword

This is an article written by William R. Gregg of Oakville, Ontario, and published in the Toronto Sunday World, July 6th, 1924. Copies were sent to a number of Historical Societies but the article has never been published in the United States until now.

The family of Wm. King, father of Rev. Wm. King, whose life is outlined, is today numerous and highly respected throughout Ohio and the original homestead at Delta was the centre of family reunions.

John, a brother of Rev. Wm. King, was an active friend of escaping slaves and managed a station, or hiding place, on the "Underground Railway."

In researches as to family history Mrs. E. A. Brooks of Ashtabula was this year shown a copy of the article, which had been kept on file by the Western Reserve Historical Society in Cleveland and was greatly interested as she is a grand-niece of Rev. Wm. King.

As copies of the article are not obtainable, Mr. and Mrs. Brooks have prepared this booklet for distribution among the members of the King family and others who are interested in the history of the successes and hardships of slaves seeking freedom and the doings of the Underground Railway.

—*William R. Gregg*

WITH the exception of the northern and northeastern borders, adjacent to old world civilization, the continent of Africa was long a land of mystery and barbarism.

The opening up of the "Dark Continent" about the time of the discovery of America was brought about by the military aggression of the Portuguese and other Europeans, the enterprise of explorers and the zeal of missionaries. Commerce and industry were introduced, but commercial enterprise went beyond the bounds of benevolence and the slave trade was the consequence.

This trade was begun by the Portuguese, but was participated in by all the European countries until the ravages extended over a tract of over four million square miles and three million, five hundred thousand inhabitants had been torn from their country, treated with inhumanity, and transported in overcrowded ships to America. They were huddled together to such an extent that many perished miserably in the passage, and of those who landed in the West Indies and the other colonies many died in the "seasoning" which followed.

The trade of procuring these slaves was abolished by one European country after another. It was abolished by England in 1807, but slavery still reigned undisturbed in the Mother Country, and her colonies, with the supply restricted to

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the natural increase of the slave population which included every man, woman and child of African descent, whether full blooded or partly white, and in time it included many mulattoes, with one parent black and one white; quadroons, with one parent mulatto and one white; octoroons, with one parent quadroon and one white. There was no name for a person who was one-sixteenth African, but this amount of African blood would keep such a person a slave.

All through these centuries there were men and women who protested against the system of slavery as unjust, cruel and unchristian—England was conscience-stricken at last, and in 1833 an Act of Parliament was passed, abolishing slavery in all the British colonies. This act awarded compensation to slave owners throughout the British colonies amounting to £20,000,000, and it was provided that slavery was to cease on the 1st of August, 1834. After this date the moment a slave set his foot on British soil he was emancipated and disenthralled, and protected, as a freeman by the whole power of Great Britain. The anniversary of this date is always celebrated with rejoicing by the African population of Canada.

The abolition of slavery in the West Indies was a tremendous undertaking for England and such a course seemed an impossibility to the United States when, in 1776, the British tie was

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cut, while the heritage of slavery remained. The "Declaration of Independence," that "all men were born free and equal, and possessed equal and unalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" was made by men who were aware that it could not apply to African slaves and was made with a mental reservation; and slavery established itself firmly in the Southern States where negro labor was required for the production of cotton, sugar-cane, rice, and tobacco, and the leading citizens were the planters whose wealth consisted in plantations and slaves, rather than in dollars, and who would be ruined unless the Government could grant compensation and this was looked upon as an impossibility.

In the Northern States prosperity depended more upon the manufacturing industries and the question was not such a vital one, but as the North and South were united under one Government it was felt that the claims of the South had to be reckoned with if the union was to remain. The difference of opinion on this subject caused endless discussions and out of this diversity of opinion the civil war arose. It began in 1861 and ended in 1865 when Abraham Lincoln issued a proclamation of emancipation and today the seemingly impossible has happened. The union remains and slavery is abolished.

In the above statements an attempt has been

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made to summarize a long story and no attempt has been made to enter into details but the writer possessed an intimate knowledge of the life of one man who lived during the time when the question of slavery was paramount and who acted in a way which interested many during the time when excitement was high in the United States and Canada and here are given the facts of his life, including some glimpses of pioneer life in America.

William King, a young Irishman who had received a good education, including a literary course in Glasgow University, sailed for the United States when twenty-one years of age, in 1833. He spent the summer in Philadelphia and New York, waiting the arrival of his family, who came to New York in September. The family remained in that city for the winter, intending to go to Ohio and settle there in the spring. William went ahead of them and spent the winter visiting friends of his parents in Ohio. The country around Cleveland was thinly settled and Cleveland had not more than two or three thousand inhabitants. Northfield, where he was remaining for the winter, had no schools at the time, although one had been open for small children in the summer. The larger boys and girls had to work on the farms and were unable to attend, and the parents were too poor to pay for keeping it open. He wrote in 1899: "I had

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nothing to do and I offered to teach the large scholars for nothing while I remained. I circulated the report that the school would be opened on the first of January for advanced scholars from the age of 15 to 24 and would be free. On the day appointed there appeared 25, mostly young men and women. In a few days the number increased to 30. The school house was built of logs, 24 x 36, with a large box stove in the middle of the room, with desks of plain boards running around the whole length of two sides of the room with seats made of benches without backs. The scholars sat around the room with their faces to the desks and their backs to the teacher. The large stove threw a genial heat and kept all in the room comfortable. The young men provided plenty of good hardwood and kept the fire well up. The young women swept the school room out every evening after school and kept it clean and tidy. We required no janitor. We were a happy lot. The young people were delighted to have a young gentleman from Glasgow University to teach them. They were willing to do anything I bid them. They applied themselves diligently to their books and made good progress during the three months I taught them.

“In after years when placed in the responsible situation as Rector of Matthews Academy in connection with the Louisiana College, where

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all the care and worry was upon me, with wild and reckless Southern boys to manage, who were brought up on the lap of luxury and looked upon all restraint as beneath their dignity, I often thought of the pleasant time I had in the log school in Northfield. On opening the day school, I found there were still a number of young men who could not attend, having to work in the woods during the day time. For their benefit I opened a night school. They attended, with nearly all the day scholars. The school room was filled. We had no coal oil or gas in those days. Electric lights were unknown. The want was supplied by tallow candles brought by the scholars and placed in rows along the top of the desks in small blocks of wood, four inches square and perforated to hold the candles."

In the spring of 1834 Mr. King left Northfield, went to Cincinnati, spent a month traveling through what was then called the West and then joined his family in Cleveland and went with them to Delta, Fulton County, Ohio, where they settled on a farm of 640 acres. This was about thirty miles west of where Toledo now stands. He remained here until 1835 and saw the family settled in their new home and then went to Jackson, Louisiana and obtained the situation mentioned above as Rector of Matthews Academy. He had four teachers under

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him paid by the State and his own salary was \$4,000 a year with a free home. He married the daughter of John E. Phares, a planter who lived in Jackson, and he remained with this Academy until 1843. He was a Presbyterian and alive to what was going on in Scotland and in this year the "Disruption" took place in the Established Church of Scotland with Dr. Thomas Chalmers as leader of the Free Church.

William King resolved to give up his well-paid position in Louisiana and enter the Theological College in Edinburgh under Dr. Chalmers and in time join the ranks of the protesting ministers, and the account of what followed is from a manuscript in the writer's possession: "I sailed from New Orleans in November, 1843, for Edinburgh and entered the Free College to study theology under Dr. Chalmers, where I remained for three years. When I sailed from New Orleans I left my wife and child, a boy of three years, with her father. I returned in May and settled up my affairs as well as I could do at that time. There were legal difficulties in the way that I could not manumit the colored men I owned. I bought a plantation and placed them upon it under the care of my father-in-law, giving them the proceeds of their own labor until I should return. I left in July with my wife and son, going north on my way to see my parents, who lived in Ohio. At Detroit, on my way to

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Ohio, my son took fever and died. I took him to my father's and buried him there. My wife, who was in delicate health, felt severely the painful bereavement but she rallied after reaching Edinburgh, but in my second year the seeds of consumption began to appear on her lungs and in March, 1846, she died and was buried in the cemetery in Edinburgh. A little girl who had been born in Edinburgh died two months after her mother, and lies in the same grave with her. I was thus left without a family. My father-in-law and mother-in-law had also died before my wife and she had only one brother and he was killed in the Mexican army fighting under General Scott."

On completing his course in the Edinburgh College Mr. King was licensed as a minister of the Free Church and sent to the sparsely settled Province of Upper Canada, now Ontario, as a missionary by the Free Church. He landed in New York in 1846, visited Louisiana and then went to Toronto and spent a winter and spring going about on missionary work. Years after this he wrote—"In April, 1847, I received a letter from the South requesting me to go there as an executor for the purpose of settling the estate of my late father-in-law. It became necessary for me then to divulge a secret I had kept in my own breast up to that time, namely, that I was a slave-owner, and that I must go South

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to give them their freedom as the legal difficulty that formerly had stood in the way was then removed. This statement fell like a bomb-shell in the midst of the Presbytery and made quite an explosion. Mr. E— was furious. Mr. R— otherwise calm, was quite excited. Dr. Burns and Mr. Gale saw the difficulty of my position at once and asked me how long I had been a slave-owner. I said since 1842. Did the Free Church know that you were a slave-owner? enquired Dr. Burns. I said no. I did not think it necessary to inform the Presbytery of Edinburgh who licensed me, as the views of the Free Church announced in the General Assembly of 1845, by Doctors Candlish and Cunningham were the same as I held, that slavery per se was not a sin; that the relation of master and slave was not necessarily sinful, but the burden of proof rested with the master to show that the power that he possessed was not abused, but, was used for the best interests of the slave. This was my position; I owned a number of slaves but could not set them free. There were legal difficulties in the way and when these were removed I could not manumit them in Louisiana. No planter at that time could manumit his slaves and leave them in the State. He was bound to remove them beyond the jurisdiction of the Southern States. This I was now prepared to do, and I informed the Presbytery that

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I intended bringing them to Canada, but as I was about to leave the Province for a time I would resign the commission which I held from the Free Church into the hands of the Presbytery, with the understanding that when I returned again to Canada with my slaves I would resume the connection and labor as their missionary."

He went South in May, 1847, sold his plantation and returned from Louisiana in June, 1848, with fifteen slaves he had set free and from that time devoted his whole life to the welfare of the colored population of Canada. A fugitive slave law was passed by the Congress of the United States which, in the Fall of 1849, sent 5,000 fugitive slaves into Canada, stripped of everything but life, without a friend and without a home. His intention was to settle with the negroes upon land which should be granted to them on easy terms. There was opposition by many white settlers, who predicted that a black swarm of lazy and pestilential characters would over-run and demoralize the country.

Notwithstanding all discouragements he went forward and, with the aid and sympathy of many leading citizens, he gained his point. He represented the case to Lord Elgin, Governor-General of Canada and secured his cooperation. A company was formed in 1850, called the "Elgin Association for the Settlement and Moral

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Improvement of the Colored Population of Canada." This company purchased a tract of excellent land, six miles in length and three in width, near Lake Erie and south of the town of Chatham. This land was in its native state, covered with timber, including elm, hickory, black walnut, oak, maple, and ash. Mr. King was appointed agent of the Association and took for his home a comfortable log dwelling which stood at the cross roads. He superintended the surveying and settlement of the land. The tract was divided into fifty acre lots, or farms, which were sold to colored men only, at \$2.50 per acre, to be paid in ten annual installments, with interest at six per cent. A small village grew up around him which he named Buxton.

The fifteen slaves were allotted their farms, and voluntary emigrants followed. If a fugitive came without a cent Mr. King sent him to earn the first installment of \$12.50 on a railroad which was being built, and then he was allotted his farm. He had to clear the land and was required to build a log house at least 18 by 24 feet. The experiment proved successful from its inception until the United States Emancipation. Within fifteen years all the land was occupied by colored settlers, the small band grew to more than 1,000 souls. All the various trades were carried on. In addition to dwellings the little village had a steam saw-mill, black-smith

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and carpenter shop, a pearlash factory, and a brick temperance hotel. A mission Church was built and Mr. King carried on his work as a Free Church minister. He lived among his dusky exiles as a patriarch of old, loved and respected, their counselor and friend.

In 1866 there were four schools with an attendance of three hundred scholars. Seven hundred had already received a good education. Some had been trained as teachers and were in important posts in Canada and the States. Two were engaged as surgeons in the hospital at Washington. The schools had become self-supporting. Four hundred dollars had been subscribed towards the erection of a brick school in Buxton. The Presbyterian Church and Sabbath School were well attended, and Methodist and Baptist Churches had been started and encouraged.

In 1857 a distinguished visitor was entertained and a banquet provided, at which several hundred partook of a dinner furnished by the community from their own produce. Turkeys, fowl, ducks, roast pig, geese, venison, beef, mutton, and lamb loaded the table on such occasions. Vegetables of all kinds, with pickles and preserves were on hand and rich iced cakes and pastry displayed the taste in cookery so characteristic of the race.

Mr. King considered that the settlement had

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done as well as any white settlement would have done in similar circumstances, and that it was proved that a colored community could be industrious and self-supporting, and he believed that the colored people of the South, if put on farms after the war, would become self-supporting.

Mr. King gave a picture of the pioneer life and discomforts of travelling in November, 1850. He and Rev. Dr. Robert Burns, of Knox Church, Toronto, were invited to Pittsburgh to tell what was being done in Canada. They left Buffalo, on their way, on Wednesday evening in a steamer for Erie where they arrived at three o'clock on Thursday morning. The night was stormy and they slept but little, most of the passengers being sea-sick. At Erie a stage was waiting to take passengers to Pittsburgh, and after a hasty breakfast, twelve were packed inside the stage. The journey required two days and two nights. When the first night came on, rain came down in torrents. Though anxious to sleep after a poor night on the Lake, the jolting over rough roads made it impossible. Friday morning they breakfasted on the summit of the mountain range—at the Mountain House, a place as cold and cheerless as the mountain itself. The passengers were not in good humor—the doctor alone was cheerful and praised the poor food of which they had an abundance. This

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put them in better humor. The remaining part of the journey lay among the hills that form the western slope of the Allegheny Mountains. The rain ceased and Dr. Burns still kept the passengers in good humor by his remarks on the scenery, and pleasant conversation. They arrived at Pittsburgh a little after three o'clock on Saturday morning, went to bed four hours, were up at seven. The Doctor preached three times on Sunday in crowded churches. They held a public meeting on Monday evening. The Doctor preached three times the following Sunday. The result of the visit was a handsome subscription for the Mission, and a fine-toned bell sent to Buxton by the colored people of Pittsburgh. After the abolition of slavery, many opportunities were opened up in the United States for those who had been educated in Canada, to occupy desirable positions, and to return from what was a land of exile. The affairs of the Elgin Association were wound up in 1873 after a great number of the settlers had returned to the United States.

Harriet Beecher Stowe heard the story of Mr. King after she had written "Uncle Tom's Cabin" which was published in 1852. She wrote another novel in 1856—"Dred, A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp." Her hero—Edward Clayton, a native of a southern state, at the end of a most exciting career, brought his slaves to

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Canada, bought a large tract of land and did everything that Mr. King actually did with the same success—and in a foot-note, Mrs. Stowe wrote, "These statements are all true of the Elgin Settlement founded by Mr. King, a gentleman who removed and settled his slaves in the south of Canada.

Mr. King, after retiring from active work, lived near the scene of his labors to an advanced age, and died in Chatham, respected and loved by the whole community.

There is no doubt that there were humane slave holders who were considerate in the care and management of the human beings who swarmed upon their plantations, but every intelligent slave, no matter how happy his surroundings, knew that circumstances might change and that he and his family might be thrown upon the market and separated for life, and that there were other plantations, where as Harry said in "Dred," "Nobody isn't anybody's husband or wife in particular" and that no matter how cruelly he should be treated, a slave could not bring action in court for injury by his master or overseer and was not recognized as a legal witness.

Harriet Beecher Stowe published a key to Uncle Tom's Cabin and said she had received descriptions of many characters similar or parallel to Uncle Tom. One of these was Josiah

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Henson, and she gave a sketch of his career. He was born in Maryland in 1787. While young he saw his father treated with great cruelty. He was never taught to read while a slave, but through the influence of camp meetings became a preacher. His master had great confidence in him and sold him his freedom for \$400, but afterwards regretted this and got possession of his papers. Later, his master sent his own son down the Ohio River to New Orleans with some cattle and produce to sell and told him to take Henson along and sell him also. When they reached New Orleans, Henson's soul was so torn by this ingratitude and cruelty that he was on the point of killing the young master, while sleeping, but the thought came to him, "What, commit murder and you a Christian?" and he laid down the axe which he had in his hand. The young master became ill and he cared for him and took him back by steamer to his father. In 1828, Henson managed to escape to Canada and he laid the foundation of a fugitive slave settlement there. He made Canada his home until his death in 1883 and was credited with being the original of Uncle Tom. He learned to read when over forty years of age and was a man of great force of character.

Rev. Mr. King, of the Elgin Settlement, related this story:

"In the palmy days of slavery, Henson was

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lecturing to a large and intelligent audience in the City of Boston and among the hearers were many planters from the South. He had electrified his audience with a vivid description of the horrors of the slave-system of the South, when he suddenly exclaimed, "Would to God I had every planter in the South in my possession," and he paused for a minute, looking his audience in the face. A planter in the audience asked what he would do with them? "I would, said Henson, "pray to God to convert them, every one, and take them to Heaven before they would back-slide." This brought down the whole house and silenced the planter."

Following emancipation, the question of reconstruction was almost as difficult as that of slavery—

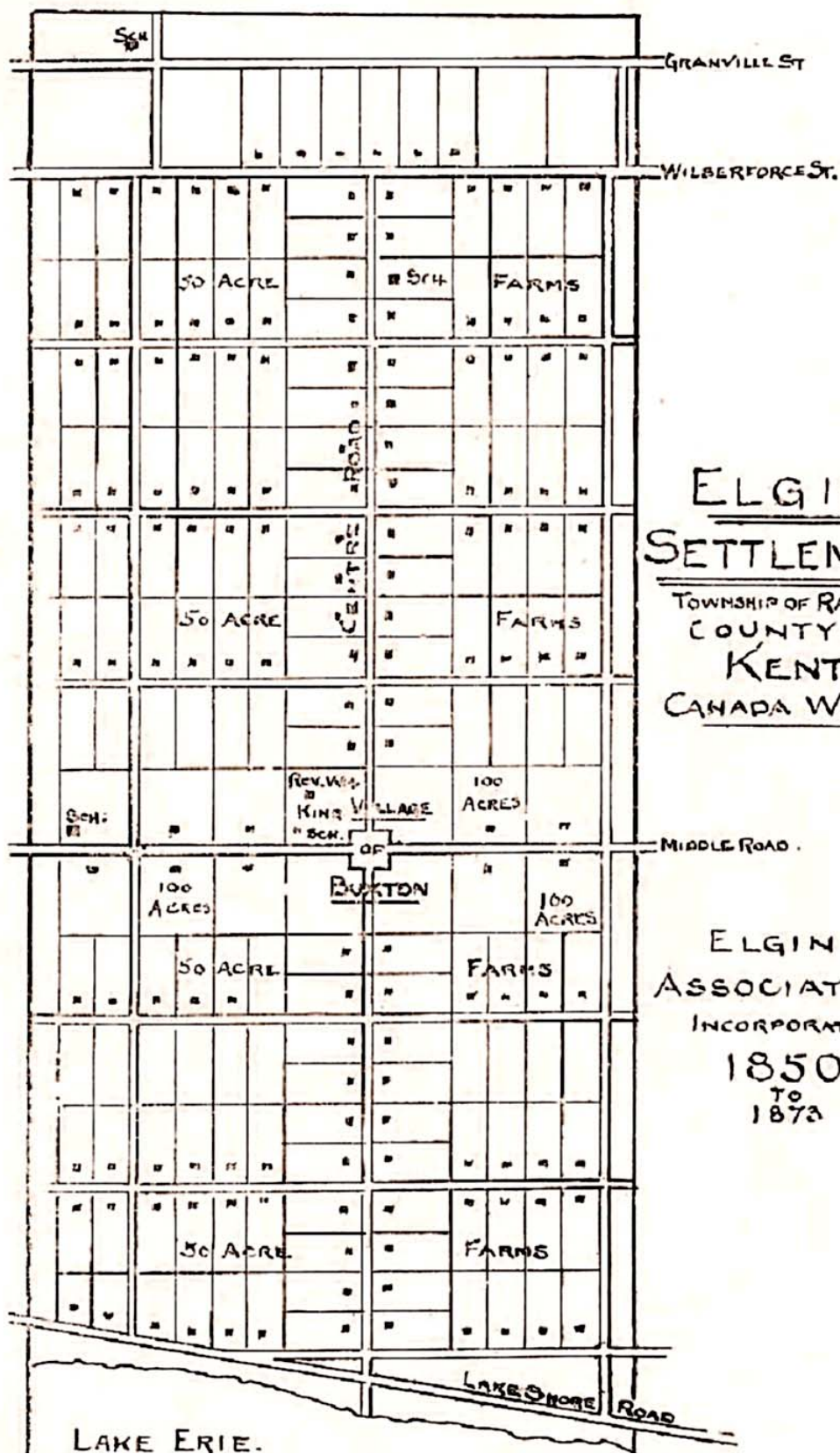
—"The half of manhood which slavery takes from a man could not be restored by merely putting on him the cap of liberty" and the African race in the United States and Canada has even now a checkered career. This is too large a subject to enter into and the present status of our colored population is too well known to require it; but let us examine one case. The pastor of Knox Church, Toronto, Rev. Dr. Burns made the trip described in this article to Pittsburgh to plead the cause of fugitive slaves in the middle of the last century, and in the summer of 1923, the Rev. J. A. Inkster, who was in charge of this

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important congregation, considered that the most acceptable substitute he could find to fill his pulpit when he was away on a lengthened vacation, was a full blooded negro from Hot Springs, Arkansas, grandson of a slave.

Mr. Inkster was absent in July and August and this substitute, the Rev. Joseph J. Hill, D. D., M. D., attracted such numbers that the large new auditorium was crowded at a season when church attendance is usually meagre.

This highly educated citizen of the United States may travel a certain distance, returning to his southern home in a parlor car and then when near home must leave it and pass into a "Jim Crow Car." Is it not a checkered life?"



ELGIN
SETTLEMENT
 TOWNSHIP OF RALEIGH,
 COUNTY OF
 KENT
 CANADA WEST.

ELGIN
 ASSOCIATION
 INCORPORATED
 1850
 TO
 1873

LAKE ERIE.

