
Picturesque Orillia



ORILLIA'S history goes back to the days of Champlain, and the Jesuit Missions to the Hurons. When the great Frenchman visited his Indian allies in 1615, their capital was situated near the site of the present thriving town. The white settlement began in 1832, at which time the site was occupied by a band of Chippewas, who were removed to Rama in 1839. The place was first called "The Narrows," subsequently Newtown, and finally assumed the much prettier name of the surrounding township. As to the origin of the name Orillia there has been much speculation and dispute. It would appear to be a Spanish word, meaning the lesser or smaller shore, as compared with Oro, which indicates the greater shore on the larger lake. The name was probably given by some of the officers who were with Wellington in Spain.

The growth of the hamlet was slow until the seventies, when the increasing importance of the lumber trade of the northern regions, combined with the arrival of the "iron horse," gave it a great fillip. It was incorporated as a village in 1867, and reached the status of a town in 1875. It is now a prosperous town of nearly six thousand inhabitants, with large suburbs. Though its importance as a lumber centre has declined, other interests have grown up, and, with the exception of a transition period, fortunately short, steady progress has been maintained. This happy condition is due in no small measure to the enterprise of the merchants, who have gained for the town a reputation for push and for close selling which has brought to the town the trade of the whole north country.

Orillia's claim to be the prettiest and most progressive town in Ontario will receive greater support from the photogravures in the following pages than from anything that can be said in cold type. Yet no photograph or collection of photographs can do justice to the beauty of the town and its environs. Perched upon a hillside it looks out over two lakes—Couchiching and Simcoe—which, besides giving to the landscape that completeness and charm which is never secured without a broad sheet of island-dotted water, add greatly to the pleasures of the dwellers on their shores.

Tourists never tire of singing the praises of Orillia and its pretty lake. Only one quotation can be given here: "Without fear of successful contradiction," wrote the editor of the *Belleville Ontario*, after a personal visit, "the good people of Orillia can claim to have the prettiest and liveliest town of its size in Canada."

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