

Over 150 years elapsed after the Huron tribes were driven out of this section by the implacable Iroquois before settlers arrived to hew homes out of the forest which covered the site of the present town of Collingwood and the surrounding country. At first they came very slowly, and it was not until the opening years of the last century that there was any great movement to the northern part of the present county of Simcoe. About the early thirties the township was surveyed and the site of Collingwood was named Hen-and-Chickens, on account of the number of small islands off the shore. The largest of the group was named White Spruce, which appears on maps as late as 1851. This name was little used and soon lost sight of. In 1904 this island was re-christened Birnie Island, after John Birnie, K.C., who secured a patent for it from the Department of Crown Lands, at Toronto. Between 1848 and 1852 a little settlement had formed on the shore, at a most exposed point, to the east of the business centre of the town of to-day, and took upon itself the name of Hurontario, from the main or Hurontario Street (Huron, name applied to Indians by the French owing to their unkempt hair and o-no-ta-ri-io, Indian meaning "handsome lake"), which extends from the Georgian Bay, in a sense part of Lake Huron, to Lake Ontario. During the next two years the proposition to build a railway from Toronto to Collingwood assumed definite form, and Mr. F. W. Cumberland, Sheriff B. W. Smith, and others interested in the construction of the Northern Railway, came north to locate a terminus for the new line. Upon reaching here in January, 1852, by way of the Scotch Corners, now Duntroon, they were met by the residents of the village of Hurontario, among others Mr. D. E. Buist, and made an inspection of the Hen-and-Chickens Harbor. Upon returning from the trip of inspection they drove across the ice on Sheephead Bay, so known in early days on account of the great quantities of sheephead variety of fish caught there, now commonly called "the Bend." While stopping at a rock which peered above the deep snow, the discussion turned to the name of the new town, for it was to be a town within a few weeks owing to its being selected as a terminus of the contemplated railway. Mr. Cumberland suggested Victoria in honor of our late lamented Queen, others advocated retaining the name Hen-and-Chickens, which met with little favor, while Mr. Buist offered the name Collingwood Harbor, which, in view of the township of that name being so close by, was thought to be fitting and was thereupon selected, Mr. Cumberland withdrawing his suggestion. The word "Harbor" was used more or less until the incorporation of the town on January 1st, 1858, when it was dropped. Turning briefly to Lord Collingwood, we find that he was born in 1750