

## CHAPTER I

## WHEN THE COUNTY WAS A WILDERNESS

We have no reason to believe that our county was at any time the permanent home of the red man, though from the relics that have been found we know that he frequently roamed over it in his hunting expeditions and temporarily camped within its limits. We have not been able to find traces of extensive burial places or fortifications such as have been discovered in other localities, where the Indians were known to have resided in large numbers for years at a time. The history of Lennox and Addington is thus a blank until the advent of the white men, and the first European to set foot upon our soil was none other than Champlain himself. In the autumn of 1615 he came down the Trent River with his Huron allies, followed the Bay of Quinte to its mouth, crossed the head of Lake Ontario, and entered the Mohawk Valley to make war upon the Iroquois. Returning from this unsuccessful venture, they wintered somewhere in this district, spending several weeks in a grand deer hunt.

The exact route followed by the explorers after re-crossing the lake has been the subject of much controversy. We have advocates ready to uphold the claims of Cataraqui River as being the stream which they ascended, while others just as zealously award the distinction to Hay Bay, Napanee River, and Salmon River. Champlain has told the story himself, and I cannot do better than give his own words as translated by Annie Nettleton Bourne. Having concluded the description of their retreat from the country of the Iroquois he continues: "After having crossed the end of the Lake (Ontario) from the Island before mentioned we went up a river about twelve leagues; then they carried their canoes by land half a league, at the end of which we entered a lake some ten or twelve leagues in circumference where there was a great quantity of game, such as swans, white cranes, bustards, wild geese, ducks, teal, thrushes, larks, snipe, geese, and several other kinds of birds too numerous to mention, of which I killed a great number, which stood us in good stead while we waited for some deer to be caught.

"From there we went to a certain place ten leagues off, where our savages thought there were a great many of them. Twenty-five savages got together and set about building two or three cabins of logs of wood, laid one upon another and they stopped up the chinks with moss to pre-