

COUNTY OF SIMCOE.

HISTORY.

To a county so recently settled as this, none of those shining recollections belong which give an undying interest to some spots in the Province, and there is but little to mention beyond such facts as for statistical purposes may be worth recording.

The discovery and exploration of this part of Canada took place in the year 1615. Samuel de Champlain, Governor of Canada, was probably the first white man who ever sailed over the deep waters of the Georgian Bay. Having, between 1603 and 1607, explored the St. Lawrence as far as Three Rivers, and discovered and explored Lake Champlain in 1609, and having already founded Quebec (3rd July, 1608), he bethought him of a great western exploring tour in the above mentioned year, 1615. He ascended the Ottawa, and reached Lake Nipissing by the portage, and descended the French River to its mouth. His expedition was not altogether a peaceful one. He was in league with the Algonquins, Hurons, Ojibways and Eries, and virtually at war with the Iroquois, and all their English and Indian allies. He had several encounters with the Iroquois. He found the Hurons in possession of the northern and eastern coasts and the Islands of the Lake, having been driven thither with great slaughter by the victorious Iroquois half a century before. We have no trace of the inhabitants on the shores of the Georgian Bay anterior to the Hurons and the Petuns. The latter occupied the Saugeen Peninsula, but were driven out by the "Six Nation" in 1650 and fled to Missouri. The Huron tradition is that they came down from the North and spread themselves on the shores of the Upper Lakes before the discovery of America, about 1450.

From the time of Champlain, Georgian Bay was little visited except by traders and Indians. Jesuit missionaries early established themselves on its shores. As early as the year of Champlain's first visit, a