

The University of Toronto.

HISTORICAL SKETCH.

The movement which ended in the establishment of the University of Toronto as the centre of the educational system of the Province of Ontario, originated with General Simcoe, the first Governor of Upper Canada, who was himself an old student of Merton, the most ancient of Oxford Colleges. He repeatedly expressed his conviction, both before his departure from England, and also during his term of office, that the best interests alike of the Government and of the inhabitants demanded the establishment of a University in Upper Canada. It was not, however, during his administration that the project took practical shape.

In the year 1797 the initial step was taken, when the home Government gave authority to the acting Lieutenant-Governor, the Hon. Peter Russell, to set apart for educational purposes five hundred thousand acres of Crown lands, one-half of which was to be applied to the establishment of a University. The actual foundation of the University was not rendered possible until nearly thirty years later, when permission was obtained to exchange a portion of these unproductive lands for other lands still vested in the Crown, which had begun to acquire value from settlement under lease. In consequence of this exchange, a revenue was created, and in 1827 a Royal Charter was granted by King George IV. for establishing at or near the town of York—