

years of military service on the Continent, partly in Flanders and partly at Gibraltar, he was still in 1803 a young man with every prospect that is usually considered alluring to ambition. Suddenly, to the amazement of his friends and the public, he abandoned the brilliant career upon which he had entered under so favorable auspices, cut himself loose from civilization itself, and buried himself in the recesses of the Canadian forest. He determined to settle on the north shore of Lake Erie, where he had previously selected a location on one of his journeyings with Governor Simcoe. Talbot had formed plans for diverting the stream of immigration from the United States, or rather for continuing its current as far as Upper Canada. He would attract settlers from New York, Pennsylvania and New England, who were dissatisfied with republican institutions or allured by the fertility of the Lake Erie region, and would build up a loyal British community, under the laws and institutions of the mother land.

It was a memorable event in the history of the County of Elgin, when on the 21st day of May, 1803, landing at Port Talbot, he took an axe and chopped down the first tree, thus inaugurating what has since been known as the Talbot Settlement. Henceforward, Colonel Talbot, Port Talbot, the Talbot Road, and the Talbot Settlement, are names inseparably connected with the history of the making of Upper Canada.

At that time the nearest settlement on Lake Erie was near Turkey Point, 60 miles away. In 1802 there was but one settled minister west of Niagara, Father Marchand, of Sandwich, a Roman Catholic priest. There were but seven clergymen settled in the whole Province. The record (*v*) states, however, that "Besides, there are several missionaries of the Methodistical order, whose residence is not fixed." Even at that early day the circuit-rider threaded the maze of forest between the Long Point clearings and those near the mouth of the Thames, and made his way down the Detroit River to the Essex shore of Lake Erie, where there was a fringe of settlement. But, generally speaking, the country north of Lake Erie to the borders of Lake Huron and the Georgian Bay was still a wilderness of continuous unbroken forest.

(v) Tiffany's Upper Canada Almanac, Niagara, 1802.