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NIAGARA LIBRARY, 1800-1820.

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It says much for the members of any community when we find them providing reading of a high literary order, and especially would this be the case, at the beginning of this century, among a band of refugees just emerged from a great struggle, with the forest around them and everything speaking of a new country and all that is implied in this.

When by the merest chance, some months ago, I laid my hands upon an old, brown, leather-covered Record Book, I had no idea of the rich treat it was to prove. To my astonishment, by dint of much patient study of its thick, yellow pages covered with writing, though large yet very difficult to read, it was shown that in this old town of Niagara in those early days there was a most valuable public library well supported, the accounts showing regular payments and much interest, as evidenced by the money contributed and the regular records. To the boast made by Niagarians that here was held the first parliament for Upper Canada, that here was published the first newspaper, that it contains almost the oldest church records in Ontario, must now be added the honour of having had the first public library, and the first agricultural society. The varied information to be gleaned from this book may be thus classified: 1st, a list of proprietors through the years from 1800 to 1820; 2nd, list of their payments and those of non-subscribers; 3rd, catalogue of library with prices of books; 4th, money expended; 5th, rules and regulations; 6th, account of annual meetings, contingent meetings, etc.; 7th, list of books taken out and date of return; 8th, alphabetical list of subscribers with separate page for entries for each during these years. When we think of the vicissitudes of the years 1812, 1813, 1814, and of the stirring events which took place here, military occupation by friend and foe, of fire and sword alternately doing their cruel work, we wonder how this library was preserved, for preserved in part at least it was, for the issue of books goes on, a new catalogue with spaces left perhaps for books missing, and in the accounts sums are paid to replace particular books. It is interesting to follow up the period of the war and in all these divisions note the latest entry, and then following an interval of two years without the break of a line even left as space