

Incidents in the Early Military History of Canada, V.

With Extracts from the Journals of the Officer commanding the Queen's Rangers During the War—1755 to 1763.

A Lecture delivered on the 12th January, 1891, by Lieut.-Col. R. Z. ROGERS, 40th Battalion—
Lieut.-Col. W. D. OTTER, President, in the Chair.

(Continued from page 513.)

"I landed half a mile short of the fort, and fronting it, where I drew up my detachment in a field of grass. Here Captain Campbell joined me, and with him came a French officer, to inform me that he bore Monsieur Beletere's compliments, signifying he was under my command. From hence I sent Lieutenants Leslie and McCormack with thirty-six men to take possession of the fort. The French garrison laid down their arms.

"The French colours were taken down and the English flag hoisted, at which about 700 Indians gave a shout of exultation. They seemed amazed at the submissive salutations of the inhabitants, and expressed their satisfaction at our generosity in not putting them to death, and said they would always in future fight for a nation thus favoured by Him that made the world.

"I went into the fort, received a plan of it, with a list of the stores, from the commanding officer, and by noon of the 1st of December we had collected the militia, disarmed them and administered the oaths of allegiance."

An attempt was made to reach Michillimakinak, but after a two days' journey on Lake Huron the ice compelled them to return to Detroit.

On account of the winter season setting in, a return by the lakes was impossible.

Consequently, after establishing a sufficient garrison at Detroit he, on the 23rd December, commenced the return march with the remainder of his detachment around the west end of Lake Erie.

The bearings and details of each day's march through the woods are given, until, as the journal states, "On the 23rd of January we came again to the Ohio River, opposite Fort Pitt, from whence I ordered Lieut. McCormack to march the party across the country to Albany, and after tarrying there till the 26th, I came the common road to Philadelphia, and from thence to New York, where, after this long and fatiguing journey, I arrived February 14th, 1761."

Major Rogers was sent to Detroit again in 1763, and took part in the defence of that place against the combined Indians under Pontiac.

A short time after that he went to England, as mentioned before, and on the 10th of January, 1766, he was appointed Governor of Michillimakinak, the duties of which he entered on in August of that year. In September, 1767, he was recalled, and proceeded to Montreal to answer to a malicious charge, preferred against him by parties who quarrelled with him in the west. He was honourably acquitted and his expenses paid by the British Government. He then again went to England, where he remained till June, 1775. On arrival at Baltimore he was arrested by the Revolutionists, but released on parole, which parole was broken by his assailants in arresting him the second time, from which he made his escape, and then proceeded to re-organize his Rangers on a war footing.

Before the end of the Revolutionary War Major Rogers had to go again to England, and was succeeded in the command of the Rangers by Colonel Simcoe. The corps since its reorganization was more in the nature of a regiment taking the name of the original company, and later on received the addition of a troop of cavalry as an auxiliary attachment.

Major Rogers did not again return to America, but died in England in 1784.

Having now traced the actions of some of the participants in the strife for the supremacy of the British cause in North America during that early period, permit me to refer briefly to the continuance of the same bold spirit of loyalty, which impelled many of those men to make still greater sacrifices a few years later, when the unfortunate complications which led to the revolt of the thirteen American Colonies came about.

It was from this same class of sterling, hardy colonists that this Province received its first pioneer settlers.

Those men who in their Transatlantic settlements, while having good reason to feel they were undergoing very

serious disadvantages on account of the want of a better understanding between the Home Government and the Provincial authorities, at the same time could not be persuaded that there was sufficient cause to sever the ties of allegiance to their lawful Sovereign and to the land they still called home.

When the contentions of those times unfortunately ripened into hostilities, those men naturally and energetically espoused the Royal cause, and though the fortune of war eventually prevailed against the principles they thought were right, they heroically proved their devotion to those principles, and voluntarily gave up their possessions and moved into that part of the country where they could still live under the flag they loved.

It is estimated about 10,000 came into this province at that time, and as many more into the Maritime Provinces.

A Canadian poet thus feelingly refers to the movement:

They who loved the cause that had been lost,
Yet scorned an alien name,
Passed into exile,—leaving all behind
Save honour and the conscious pride
Of duty done to country and to king.

It may be satisfactory to some to have specific proof of individual cases of sacrifices made at that time.

If you will excuse my making such frequent use of my own name, I would like to say that in the case of James Rogers, the commanding officer of one of the companies of Rangers, the same, by the way, who owned this old powder horn, on the disbandment of his corps at the conclusion of the French War he acquired, partly by grant and partly by purchase, a tract of 22,000 acres of land in Wyndham County, in the Province of New York, and

now in the State of Vermont. I have here the Crown Patent of that land, as well as another of 3,000 acres on the shore of Lake Champlain, the date of which is 1765. Those desirous of inspecting the style of conveyancing of those days will find these old documents very interesting.

After the turmoil and hardships of several years campaigning, he settled down upon that land, and was making satisfactory progress and improvements when the conflict I have referred to occurred, and he again mustered his Rangers and continued in active service as long as there was any chance of benefiting the Royal cause. When all hope in that direction was lost, he with his family and an organized party composed of most of his Rangers with their families and what trifling effects they could speedily bring away, joined the northern tide of United Empire Loyalists, and after weeks and months of privation and sufferings, finally selected new homes on the Bay of Quinte, where they, in June, 1784, commenced the first settlement in that now populous and prosperous district.

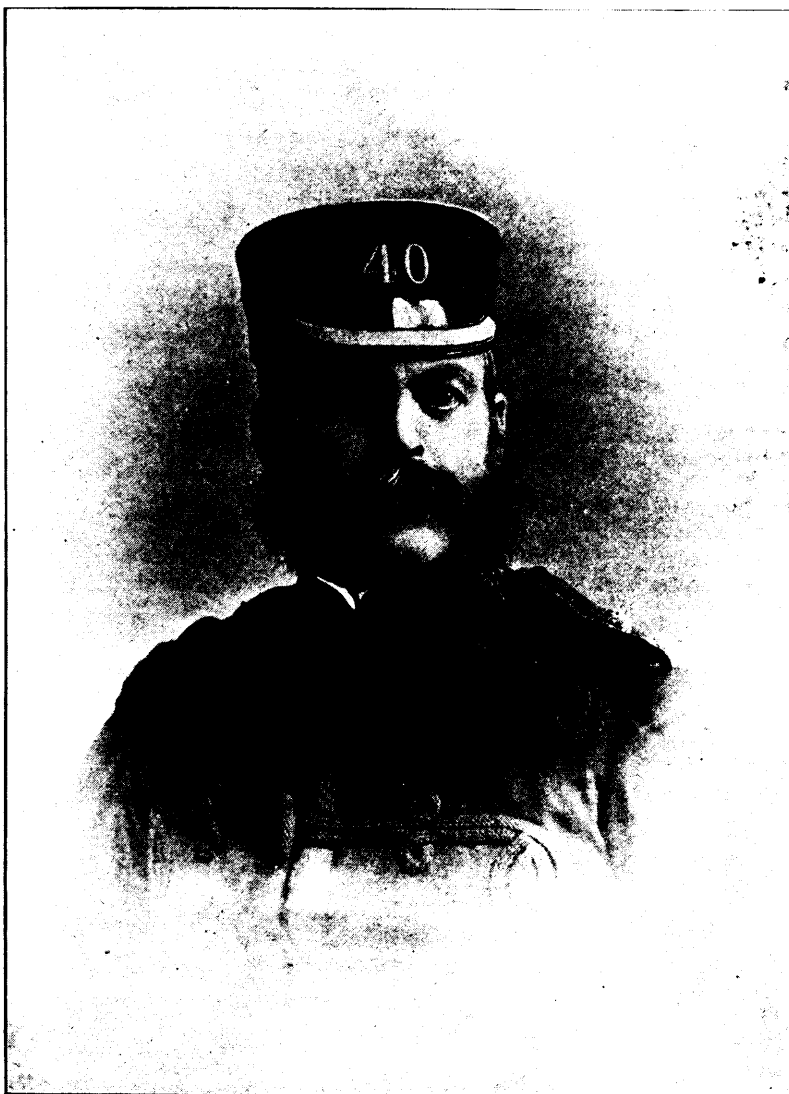
There they lie buried, and I, a great grandson of that old volunteer officer and leader of the Rangers, am glad of this opportunity to publicly express my gratitude to those who have been instrumental in overshadowing their graves with a beautiful memorial church at Adolphustown as a tribute to the memory of those pioneer settlers whose devotion and patriotism supply a noble example to succeeding generations.

I need not here refer at greater length to those who fought for "the Unity of the Empire," and having failed to accomplish their purpose, proceeded to lay the foundation of this British Dominion of Canada.

The old Loyalists of that generation have long since gone to their rest, but far and wide throughout this Canada of ours may to-day be found numbers of their descendants glorying in the name and in the traditions they have inherited, and in the ties that still bind them to the Mother Land.

And in no society or organization are so many of them to be found as in the enrolled membership of the Volunteer Citizen soldiery of our country.

[THE END.]



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