

COUNTY OF PERTH.

Originally the County of Perth formed part of the Huron Tract, composed of 21 Townships, of which was comprised the counties of Huron, Bruce, Perth, and, in part, Middlesex. The Huron District, as it was subsequently called, belonged to the Canada Company, by whom it was explored in 1827, the lands having been previously valued by the Imperial Commissioners appointed for that purpose. An idea of the rapid progress made in the settlement and opening up of this new country may be gathered from the fact that in 1829 there were only three log huts and two unfinished houses in the whole Huron Tract, and the population consisted only of three families. The population now may be estimated at about 120,000. For many years Goderich was the judicial seat of the District, in which were also the offices of the Canada Company; and in 1832 it contained about 300 inhabitants. The town of Guelph was at that time the nearest "centre of civilization," a mail carrier making a pilgrimage once a fortnight between the two places. Until the year 1852, the counties of Huron, Perth, and Bruce were united for judicial and electoral purposes, Goderich being the county town. In that year the County of Perth separated, and the other two counties remained united until 1865.

The County of Perth is bounded on the North by the County of Wellington; East by Wellington and Waterloo; West by Huron; and South by Middlesex and Oxford. It contains fifteen municipalities, viz:—The Towns of Stratford and St. Marys; the Villages of Mitchell and Listowel; the Townships of Blanshard, Downie, Ellice, Elma, Fullarton, Hibbert, Logan, Mornington, North Easthope, South Easthope, and Wallace.

With the exception of several hundred acres of swampy land in the Townships of Mornington, Ellice, Logan, and Elma, the soil is rich and fertile, and is well adapted for agricultural purposes, the surface being slightly undulating and easy of tillage. The timber is principally hardwood; but there are two or three good pineries in the northern section, the largest being in Elma. The rivers Ayon, Maitland, Thames, and two or three minor streams supply abundance of water for manufacturing purposes. The Grand Trunk Railway intersects the county, the main line running parallel with the Huron Road from the eastern extremity of the county to Stratford, thence in a south-westerly direction to St. Marys, intersecting the townships of Downie and Blanshard; and the Buffalo and Goderich District (formerly the B. & L. H.) line running parallel with the Huron Road from Stratford to Goderich. The following are the leading gravel roads, all of which were last June assumed by the county:—Huron Gravel Road, length 33 miles; Stratford and St. Marys, 12 miles; Zorra, 4 miles; Stratford Northern, 17 miles; Logan and Elma, 22 miles; Fullarton, (new and old Mitchell roads,) 10 miles; London and St. Marys Proof Line Junction, miles; Woodstock and Huron, 3½ miles.

The population of the county in 1852 was 15,345; in 1866 it was 38,076; and in 1868 it was 40,917, according to the returns made to Government; enumerated as follows:—Blanshard, 3108; Downie, 3249; Ellice, 3344; Elma, 3390; Fullarton, 2601; Hibbert, 3,252; Logan, 2570; Mornington, 3127; North Easthope, 2654; South Easthope, 1841; Wallace, 2692; Stratford (town), 3530; St. Marys (town), say about 4000; Mitchell (village), 1559; Listowel (do.), say about 1000. (There is evidently a mistake in the returns for Stratford. The special census taker made the census over 4000, and the assessor corroborated his statement.)

The area of the county is 698 square miles, or 505,703 acres, thus