

Lake Erie. Beyond this there was no attempt at settlement while the French held sway in Canada. A few soldiers and fur-traders occupied these outlying posts, while occasional schooners and batteaux carried merchandise and furs alternately from garrison to garrison. The early race of French colonists displayed slight inclination to till the soil.

The final struggle for supremacy in the New World, which terminated in the conquest of Canada, brought the rival armies to the shores of the Niagara. English garrisons took the place of French ones, and clusters of houses sprang up around the stockades they occupied during the next twenty years, still there was no attempt at permanent settlement. The woods swarmed with game, the lakes and streams abounded in fish, the fur-ships went and came, the hunter and the trapper plied their craft with rich success, but the settler with his axe and plough was yet to come.

During the war of the American Revolution those Loyalists who were driven from their homes in the Mohawk and Wyoming valleys and formed the famous partizan corps known as Butler's Rangers, made these posts their winter quarters and base of operations for their raids into New York and Pennsylvania. A small ship-yard was established at Navy Island, where several schooners were built for lake navigation. When the treaty of peace of 1783, by which the independence of the United States was recognized and the Loyalists were excluded from all hopes of regaining their lost estates, it was determined to reward them for their fidelity by a grant of lands in the vicinity of the posts occupied in Canada. The country lying on the west bank of the Niagara and south shore of Lake Ontario was accordingly surveyed and divided into townships. The entire peninsula was covered with an unbroken forest, except in few places near the coast of the lake, where there were natural meadows of small extent thinly dotted with trees. A narrow horse-path wound along the bank of the Niagara, but there was nothing that could be termed a road in any direction. There was probably not a single white settler living out of sight of the trading posts in the whole of Upper Canada. The grants of land made by the government to the disbanded Loyalists were certainly liberal in quantity. Field-officers were allowed to select 5,000 acres, captains, 3,000, subalterns, 2,000, and privates, 200 acres each. A few years later another order-in-council was issued, by which every child of a Loyalist who had borne arms was granted 200 acres of land on arriving at the age of twenty-one. They were provided with seed-grain and farming implements at the public expense and furnished with provisions and a certain amount of clothing for two years after their settlement upon their lands. In the summer of 1784 about forty families were established in this manner within the boundaries of the present County of Welland. Tardy justice may yet some day be done to the character and motives of those who in their zeal for the maintenance of the "Unity