

## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE TOWN OF BARRIE.

On the occasion of laying the Memorial Stone of the First Building erected in the Town of Barrie by the Dominion Government for Public purposes, it is deemed appropriate that, in addition to the documents usually deposited in the cavity of the stone at similar ceremonies, a record should also there be placed of some facts connected with the early history of Barrie, which are passing away from the recollection of the present inhabitants, and which would not be easily ascertained at that remote period, which may reasonably be expected to elapse before this record will again be exposed for perusal. We therefore make the following statements in relation to the Town, many of which are within the knowledge of persons now present, and all are believed to be of authentic proof.

It can hardly be said that there were any settlers in the County of Simcoe until after the American War of 1812. At that time the Penetanguishene Road was cut out by the Government as a military road leading from Kempenfeldt to the Georgian Bay, where as early as 1799, the harbor of Penetanguishene was selected as a future depot; but no military were stationed there, nor did a dock yard exist until 1818. Barrie at that time appears to have had no existence, although the adjoining Village of Kempenfeldt, which took its name from the ill-fated Admiral Kempenfeldt, who perished on board the Royal George in Portsmouth Harbour, was known as a landing place for goods and military stores on the way to the upper lakes. About the year 1828, two gentlemen bearing the still well known names of David Edgar and Alexander Walker, settled on the present site of Barrie, where a store house had stood since the war of 1812, for purposes connected with the transport of the Hudson Bay Company's Military Stores to the stations on Lake Huron and the Georgian Bay. The site of this storehouse is immediately to the west, on the property now owned by Mr. A. Arnall. The goods and war material were brought here in boats from the Holland Landing. The two gentlemen named, Messrs.

Edgar and Walker, were probably the first extensive land holders in the Town of Barrie, although the History of the place is considered to fairly commence from the year 1819. The storehouse referred to was afterwards the residence of Mr. Edgar.

Barrie was named after Commodore Barrie, who was at the time in command of the English war vessels lying at Kingston.

In 1825 the Town was honored by a visit from Sir John Franklin when on his way to the North pole by the North-West overland route and there are still persons residing in the County who remember seeing him land here near the spot where this building will stand.

The Government had intended to make Kempenfeldt the site of the Town, and a plot of ground was there laid out, but the law which governs the location of commercial centres, defies even Governments, and it soon became evident that the present position would be that of the future Town, and the authorities ultimately yielded to circumstances they could not control, and made the survey of Barrie, known as the "Old Survey." In early times the limits of the Town were comprised within 300 acres. Now they contain 2100 acres. William Hawkins, P.L.S., laid out the lots.

Captain Oliver, R.N., may be mentioned as a third among the early and extensive real property holders in Barrie. He did not, however, reside here and having lost all faith in its future he gave up his land to the Government for other property at Kempenfeldt. Soon afterwards there was what would now be called a "boom" in Barrie lots and Mr. Edgar and Mr. Charles Perczy, another early and extensive land holder, immediately laid out their properties to the East and West into building lots which still bear the names of Edgar's and Perczy's Blocks.

At an early date the Government built a log hut on Dunlop Street, where Mr. Lower's tailor shop now stands, as a place of shelter for incoming settlers and Mr. S. M. Sandford, the present Treasurer of this County, opened