

FOREWORD.

This narrative is not, nor does it purport to be one of general navigation upon Lake Ontario, but solely of the vessels and steamers which plied during its century to the ports of the Niagara River, and particularly of the rise of the Niagara Navigation Co., to which it is largely devoted.

Considerable detail has, however been given to the history of the steamers "Frontenac" and "Ontario" because the latter has hitherto been reported to have been the first to be launched, and the credit of being the first to introduce steam navigation upon Lake Ontario has erroneously been given to the American shipping.

Successive eras of trading on the River tell of strenuous competitions. Sail is overpassed by steam. The new method of propulsion wins for this water route the supremacy of passenger travel, rising to a splendid climax when the application of steam to transportation on land and the introduction of railways brought such decadence to the River that all its steamers but one had disappeared.

The transfer of the second "City of Toronto" and of steamboating investment from the Niagara River to the undeveloped routes of the Upper Lakes leads to a diversion of the narration as bringing the initiation of another era on the Niagara River and explaining how the steamer, which formed its centre, came to be brought to the River service.

The closing 35 years of the century form the era of the Niagara Navigation Co., in which the period of decadence was converted into one of intense activity and splendid success.