

THE SETTLEMENT AND ORIGINAL SURVEY OF NIAGARA TOWNSHIP.

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It was the successful rebellion of the thirteen American colonies, 1776, which led to the settlement of Upper Canada, now the Province of Ontario. The struggle terminated in 1783, and it was in that year and the year following that the U. E. Loyalists mainly entered the wilderness of Upper Canada. But prior to that, there is good reason to believe, a certain number had crossed the Niagara River from the fort, where, during the war had been a garrison, and to which refugees fled from the time of General Burgoyne's defeat. Fort Niagara, during this time, had been the headquarters of a celebrated colonial regiment, the Butler's Rangers. It was here that the regiment was organized, and recruits were enrolled from among the refugee loyalists, and from this fort the Rangers went forth again and again on raiding expeditions. The refugees collected around the fort in tents and rude cabins, and received the necessaries of life from the Government stores. They consisted of the old, middle-aged, and the young, and of both sexes. Those who were unable to serve as soldiers naturally looked about for something else to do and for a place of more permanent habitation. Consequently there is reason to believe that some time before the end of the war not a few individuals and families had crossed the river and squatted along the river and lake on the western side; so that at the close of the war there had already been formed a settlement in what is now the Township of Niagara, and perhaps more distant places. Not all of these pioneers were connected with Butler's Rangers, but were U. E. Loyalists who had been compelled to leave their homes and estates in the revolting colonies to be appropriated by the rebels.

The survey of the land into townships was begun soon after the end of the war. It is not probable that much more than a beginning was made in 1783, but in 1784 it was actively proceeded with along the Niagara River, as well as in the east, on the Bay of Quinte and the River St. Lawrence. We learn from the original plans in the Crown Lands Department that, commencing July 29, 1784, a line was run from a point about a mile up the river, from the site of Navy Hall, or at the present ruins of