

THE CITY OF HAMILTON.

The site of the city of Hamilton was originally covered with a dense growth of tall, coarse serrated Indian grass. The land between the mountain and the bay consisted chiefly of deep ravines and patches of swamp, affording a favorite haunt for rattle-snakes, frogs and quail. The monotony of the immense patches of Indian grass was relieved here and there by a tall water elm and close, low and almost impenetrable shrubbery, which formed a safe retreat for packs of wolves. On the plot now occupied as the Market Square there was a particularly dense growth of this thicket, which was the rendezvous of wolves innumerable.

When this part of Canada was first settled a deer trail extended over the brow of the mountain, and passed where the reservoir is now situated to the bay. An Indian trail extended from the villages on the Grand River through the Dundas valley down to the bay, near the foot of Emerald street, near which the Indians had a burial mound. This hill was fifteen feet high and fifty in diameter, and though almost levelled now by nearly a century of cultivation, its site can still be traced. A large number of mortuary remains, flint spear and arrow-heads, stone hatchets, wampum, pottery, etc., seems to indicate that this was the scene of a sanguinary conflict many years ago. This view is strengthened by a tradition among the Indians that a small tribe called the Attawandarons was here completely destroyed.

In the year 1778 Robert Land settled on three hundred acres, occupying the greater part of the east end of the city between the mountain and the bay. Here he sowed the first acre of wheat, breaking up the land with a hoe and harrowing it with brush loaded with stones. For a long time after the arrival of Land very few settlers came here. Immigrants preferred the high grounds of Ancaster and Barton. Stoney Creek and Ancaster were places of considerable importance before Hamilton was more than a mere hamlet, yet it appeared to have been a sort of rendezvous for the surrounding neighborhood. At a very early period a man named Smith built a tavern on the site of Charlton's vinegar works, corner of King and Wellington streets, and a lodge of Freemasons met here as early as 1795. In 1796 and following years a considerable number of settlers arrived. In 1812 the following occupied the site of the city. Robert Abel and Ephraim Land, John Aikman, Col. Richard Beasley, Peter Ferguson, James Mills, Peter Hess, Nathaniel Hughson, David Kirkendall and Captain James Durand. A man named Barnum kept a tavern on the north-west corner of King and James streets, and owned the land from King to Merrick. In 1813 a portion of the site of Hamilton was laid out in town lots by Geo. Hamilton, at that time and for many years after member of Parliament for Gore District. In 1814 a frame building on the corner of King and John was occupied as a store by William Sheldon; Black, Carpenter, Shute and Knight, were the first cabinet-makers; John Aikman was the first wagon-maker, and Edward Jackson the first tinsmith. McQuesten & Co owned the first foundry and stone building, which occupied the site of the present Royal Hotel. Thos. Reynolds owned the first blacksmith's shop, which was situated on the corner of King and Ferguson avenue. John Law kept the first district school. Barnum was succeeded by Andrew or "Yankee" Miller, who kept the tavern till it was destroyed by fire. In 1823 twenty-six charters were granted for the construction of the Burlington Bay and Desjardin's Canals. These works gave a great impetus to the prosperity of the village. In 1833 the town of Hamilton was incorporated; three years later the population was 2,846, and the assessed value £44,020. In