



HISTORICAL

Early History
of the District

WHILE our book treats principally of Waterford and Townsend we thought it would be of interest to give in a brief way the history of the northern portion of Norfolk County, thus making the book more valuable as a Souvenir. *One hundred and ten years ago that which is now known as the County of Norfolk was but a small and unimportant section of the Western District. In 1796 the Court Houses and Gaols for this District were required by Statute to be built at Detroit. By the British Act of Parliament John Graves Simcoe was empowered to divide Upper Canada into as many Counties as he might think fit and accordingly the Governor described Norfolk County as follows: "On the North and East by the County of Lincoln and the River Thames, on the South by Lake Erie, thence by a line running North sixteen degrees West until it intersects the Thames; up the said River until it meets the Northwest boundary of the County of York."

There is no proof that Norfolk was ever settled by Europeans previous to 1785, although the forests in places seemed to have been cut down and fragments of pottery were picked up, indicating that Europeans had made a settlement.

But practically the United Empire Loyalists and British Emigrants, who came to Canada at the close of the struggle which severed the Thirteen Colonies from the British Empire, were the founders of Norfolk County. The former class had sacrificed their homes, their wealth and in many cases their lives in defence of British connection during the American Revolution. Large numbers of them settled in Nova Scotia. About 10,000 came to Canada. Many of those who settled in Nova Scotia afterwards came to this district. At the time Norfolk was first settled, Newark (now Niagara) was the only important village west of the St. Lawrence. Toronto had not a single house until about 1794 and the first house in Brantford was built in 1806.

Thus the settlement continued to prosper and its population was about 3000 when the war of 1812 broke out. The appeal to the settlers to enlist was responded to with alacrity. There was little blood shed within the borders of the County, but at the taking of Detroit, the Battles of Fort Erie, Lundy's Lane and Queenston Heights, the Norfolk soldiery did honor to the sires from whom they sprung.

Of the incidents of the war the most important (so far as Norfolk was concerned) was General McArthur's invasion of