

# STRATFORD The Classic City



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N "ALBUM OF VIEWS OF STRATFORD" would be incomplete without a short reference to the foundation and growth of the Classic City from a mere spot on the map less than seventy years ago, to the present enterprising and progressive city.

The idea of making Stratford a centre first suggested itself to the managers of the Canada Company, who in mapping out the "Huron Tract," selected the most central locality on the road leading from the "settlements" to the extreme frontier on Lake Huron, and Dr. Dunlop and Mr. John Galt, the local Commissioners, gave instructions for the founding of what about fifty years afterwards was to become the "Classic City." A glance at the map at once reveals Stratford's central location, but at the same time the founders unwittingly selected one of the highest points in Ontario. Our altitude is 1,191 feet above the sea level, no other city in the province approaching within two hundred feet of it. This feature in itself marks the city, all other things being equal, as the health resort par excellence of the province.

The first frame building in Stratford was erected in 1832, and in due course followed stores, grist mills, saw mills, and all the other necessities of an early settlement. The early growth of the place was slow, but possessed of superior natural advantages, it has within the memory of many living to-day been transformed from a few houses in the forest to a city of importance. In 1843 the population was about 900, but it was not until 1855 that it elected its first council. In 1859 it was incorporated as a town, and in 1884 as a city.

In 1858 the Buffalo & Lake Huron Railroad was completed, and this acted as a stimulus to the village, and in 1870, when the G. T. R. shops were located here, an additional impetus was given. Eighteen years later the shops were enlarged following the fusion of the G. T. R. and other lines, thus adding materially to the size and importance of the place.