

The Presidential Annual Address, 1897.

Niagara, Wednesday, June 2nd, 1897.

Ladies and Gentlemen :

Your attendance here to-day is very gratifying. The Secretary's Report, with mention of the addition of a few more local Historical Societies to our list within the past year, is also very cheering ; it indicates a progressive interest in loyal and patriotic Canadian history, such as we have been promoting. The presence of a delegation of Chiefs from the Six Nations, Brantford, affords us a very sincere pleasure, and leads us to hope that they will annually take part in the work of this Association. To their braves, in the war of 1812-14, is chiefly due the preservation of Canada to the British Crown.

The annual meeting of the Association, we feel sure, continues to afford to all who have watched it from the first, an increasing pleasure. The celebrity of a place like Niagara, serves to enliven a genuine interest in historic incidents and names belonging to it, revives memories, and rekindles the spirit of loyalty and patriotism in our breasts.

We have visited, in convention, the landing place of the first pioneers of York county, where the new fort now stands as a memorial outside of the Queen City of Toronto. We have enjoyed a visit to Brampton, where pioneers and loyalists began work in 1783 to open out what is now the wealthy county of Peel. Hamilton was the place of our last meeting, "the Ambitious City," the chosen sight also of early settlers in Wentworth county, whose descendants in 1837 were called "The Men of Gore," the name of the District at that period ; and Niagara receives our Association to-day. Thanks to the zealous Historical Society of this place for the cordial invitation sent to us last year to come and see and hear of this most famous place. We are told on good authority (W. Kirby, F. R. S. C.) that Niagara has a record of history beyond that of almost any town in North America. We are told :

"Its beginnings are lost in the mists of antiquity. The relations of the Jesuit Missionaries, written in 1640, tell of the old Indian town of Onghiara, the principal town of the lost nation of the Neutrals, who had lived here from time unknown, when they were visited by the missionaries of the Jesuits. Onghiara was the predecessor of Niagara on the site of the present town. Nearly fifty years after its discovery it was visited by the famous explorer La Salle, who built a trading post on the present site of Fort Niagara. This country remained under the government of France until 1759, when Fort Niagara was besieged and taken by General Prideaux, who fell in the siege, and by Sir William Johnston, his second in command. The siege was a most memorable event in American history. Its possession by the English

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