

THE COLONY OF NIAGARA, 1780-90.

There is usually a romantic interest connected with the struggles of an infant colony which seldom accompanies its riper years. This is specially true in respect to the loyalist settlements in Upper Canada, which have since grown into the present prosperous Province of Ontario, as they owed their existence to the throes and turmoil of a prolonged and disastrous civil war, and may be said in a manner to have been born prematurely and out of due time.

The settlement at Niagara actually preceded that at the Bay of Quinte by nearly four years. The scheme of promoting a colony of farmers here had its origin in the great difficulty that had been experienced in supplying the garrisons of Fort Niagara and its dependent posts with provisions, as transportation was both precarious and expensive. The excellence of the vegetables grown in the military gardens established at this and other posts had become known to General Haldimand, the Governor General, many years before, while a regimental officer, and suggested the idea of their development until they were capable of supplying the troops stationed there with everything they required for food.

It was first definitely proposed by him, in a letter to Lord George Germain, the Secretary for War and the Colonies, in a letter dated 13th September, 1779:

"By encouraging the settlement of farmers to raise grain and cattle in the vicinity, the security of these posts would be increased and the troops better supplied. This plan would be attended by some additional expense for two or three years, but he anticipated that in as many more would amply repay it."

By the third article of a treaty concluded by Sir William Johnson at Johnson Hall on the 3d of April, 1764, the Senecas had agreed to "cede to His Majesty and his successors forever in full right the lands from the fort of Niagara extending easterly along Lake Ontario about four miles, comprehending the Petit Marais or landing place, and running from thence southerly about 14 miles to the creek above Fort Schlosser or Little Niagara, and down the same to the river or strait, thence down the river or strait and across the same at the great cataract, thence northerly to the banks of Lake Ontario at a creek or small lake about two miles west of the fort, thence easterly along the banks of Lake Ontario and across the river or strait to Niagara, comprehending the whole of the carrying place