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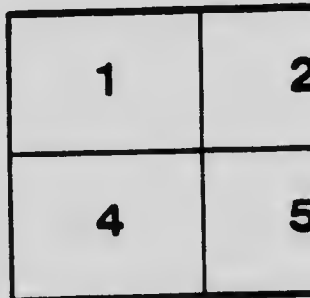
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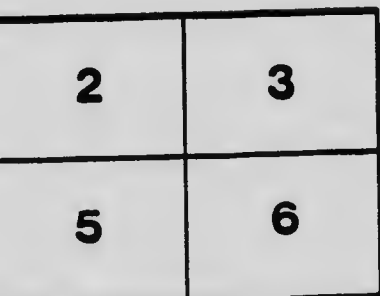
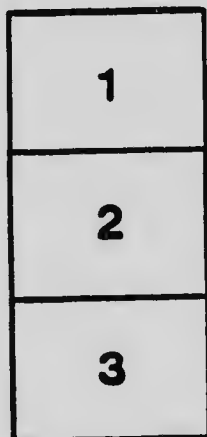
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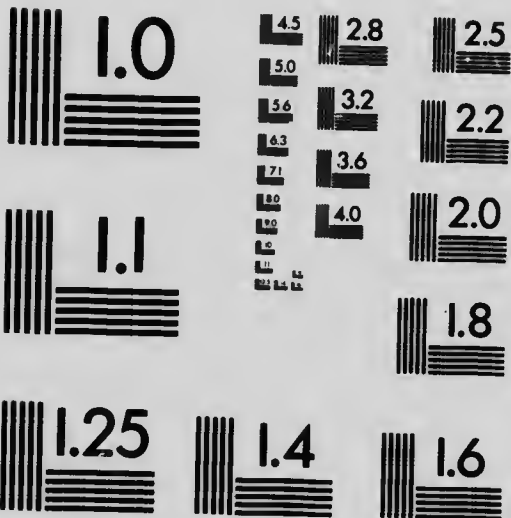
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MEMORIALS OF DAYS  
GONE BY.

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# CHAIRS

Made Out of Historic Wood.

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PRESENTED TO THE UNIVERSITY  
OF TORONTO FOR THE DAIS  
OF CONVOCATION HALL,  
BY J. ROSS ROBERTSON.

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TORONTO  
1913

15/10/13 24220

0 900740





The President's chair, made of wood from Barby Church, in Northamptonshire, England; the Niagara chair, of wood from the Navy Hall Building, Niagara, the first Government House of the Province of Upper Canada, and the residence of Gen. John Graves Simcoe, the first Governor. The Scorpion chair, from wood of the man-o'-war at Penetang, and the Government chair from wood of Government House, Toronto, are all of the design shown in the above picture.





The Bishop's Chair, from wood out of Bishop Strachan's dwelling, on Front street, Toronto. The Crown Court chair, from wood out of the Presbyterian Church in London, England, of which the celebrated Dr. Cumming was pastor; and the St. Gabriel chair, out of wood from the first Presbyterian Church in Montreal, are of the design shown in this picture.



## HISTORY TOLD IN TIMBER.

### The Chairs on the Dais of Convocation Hall, Toronto University.

There are seven chairs on the dais of Convocation Hall which have value from a Canadian historical standpoint. The wood out of which these chairs have been made was collected during the past few years by Mr. J. Ross Robertson.

The design of the chairs, for they are all similar, was made by Mr. Frank Darling, the well-known architect of the magnificent structure known as Convocation Hall.

The wood in five of these chairs has an interesting Canadian connection, for it relates to places that were important, not to say prominent, in the history of Upper Canada. The wood in the two other chairs has also association with Canada by the connection of the donor with the persons and places from which the wood was obtained.

There is not any other building in the world that contains in the form of chairs so many examples or memorials of the bygone days, as are now in Convocation Hall. Indeed, the history of the old wood will carry the reader back to the yesterdays of the eighteenth century, when in Navy Hall, the long, low building recently restored at Niagara, the first Legislature of old Upper Canada, now the province of Ontario, was opened in due and proper form.

The Barby chair, lectern and table were presented to the University by Irving E. Robertson, B.A. (Oxon) an alumnus of Toronto University and second son of Mr. Robertson.

The other chairs were presented to the University by Mr. Robertson at various dates between October, 1908, and Christmas Day, 1912. A brief history of the chairs is given herewith:

## THE BISHOP STRACHAN CHAIR.

Made from Threshold of the Bishop's  
"Palace," Front Street, Toronto.

Right Rev. John Strachan, D.D., was in 1829 consecrated first Bishop of Toronto, a diocese comprising the whole of Upper Canada. He was rector of St. James' Church, York, 1812-24, and in 1852 founded Trinity University, Toronto. From 1818-67 he lived on Palace (Front) street in the third brick house erected in York (Toronto). His residence was known as the Bishop's Palace, and from a piece of Canadian oak of the step or threshold of this veteran Bishop's home, Mr. J. Ross Robertson had two chairs made, on the top rail of which is an excellent carving of Bishop Strachan's face. One of the chairs was presented to Trinity University on 7th Sept., 1904. Before formal presentation, however, it was used at the University of Toronto when the Archbishop of Canterbury, at a special convocation, occupied the chair, and received his degree of LL.D. from that institution. In June, 1909, the second chair was presented to the University of Toronto for use in Convocation Hall.

## THE BARBY CHAIR.

Made from the Wood of Barby Church,  
in Northamptonshire, England.

The parish church at Barby, near Rugby, Northamptonshire, England, dedicated to St. Mary, dates from the close of the 12th, or the beginning of the 13th century. The vicar of the parish from 1795-1813 was Rev. Earle Gillbee, D.D., LL.D., great-great-grandfather of J. Sinclair and Irving Earle Robertson, sons of Mr. J. Ross Robertson, of Toronto. Dr. Gillbee was a descendant of Anthony Gilby (Gillbee), the celebrated preacher and theologian, who between the years 1547-1584 published several books and pamphlets, and was one of the translators of the Geneva Bible, known as the Breeches Bible. The sons of Mr. Robertson are his only descendants on this continent. In 1900 the church was restored, and oaken timber obtained from the vicar by Mr. Robertson, and his second son, Irving Earle Robertson, B.A. Oxon., an alumnus of the University of Toronto, had a chair, lectern and table made and presented on 13th October, 1908, the chair being first used on the occasion of Lord Milner's visit to the University, 21st October, 1908, when he was welcomed in the Convocation Hall.



## THE CROWN COURT CHAIR.

Made from the Wood of Dr. Cumming's Church, in London.

The historic Crown Court Presbyterian church, one of the most noted in connection with the Presbyterian body, was built in 1718 in Covent Garden, London, Eng., and was demolished in 1908 to make room for the erection of a new and smaller church. Rev. John Cumming, D.D., a celebrated divine, was pastor for many years. Mr. Robertson, who lived in London from 1872-5 attended this church and was a friend of the pastor. When in London again in 1908 he obtained from the contractors wood from the old church, out of which he had some chairs made. One of these was presented to Toronto University in June 1909, for use in the Convocation Hall, and another to St. Andrew's church, southeast corner of King and Simcoe streets, Toronto, of which church Mr. Robertson is an adherent. Every year for over half a century Canadian Presbyterians who visited London in the summer always made it a point to attend at least one service in the old church in Crown Court.

## THE ST. GABRIEL CHAIR.

Made from Wood of First Presbyterian Church in Montreal.

St. Gabriel Presbyterian Church, erected in 1792, was the first Protestant church in Montreal, and in fact the whole province of Quebec, other than the private chapel known as the Cuthbert Chapel. It stood on the north-east corner of St. Gabriel and St. James streets, the lot being purchased from Madame Hertel for £100. It was demolished in 1903, the site now (1913) being occupied by part of the Court House. In 1886 it ceased to be used as a place of worship and a new church was erected on St. Catherine street, near Phillips square.

When the old church was being demolished Mr. Robertson secured some ash beams, out of which were designed two chairs. One was presented to the University of Toronto, for the dais of Convocation Hall, in June 1903. The other was given to St. Andrew's Presbyterian church, King and Simcoe sts., Toronto, with which the donor's father and family have been connected for the past eighty years.

## GOVERNMENT HOUSE CHAIR.

Made from the Wood of Government House, Toronto.

The Government House, Toronto, U.C., was built in 1828, burned in January, 1862, and rebuilt in 1867. It stood on the south-west corner of King and Simcoe streets, and was of Parisian and modern style of architecture, which contrasted with the Gothic of St. Andrew's Church, opposite.

As years passed the expansion of railways and factories and growth of the city northwards necessitated the removal of Government House. The Canadian Pacific railway purchased the fine old residence and grounds, and in 1912 Government House was demolished. During the process of demolition Mr. Robertson procured some oak, out of which a chair has been made, a relic of a place which housed, for nearly half a century, the Lieutenant-Governors of the Province of Ontario. This chair was presented in October, 1912, to the University of Toronto for the dais of the Convocation Hall.

**NAVY HALL (NIAGARA) CHAIR.**

Made of Wood from the Building at  
Niagara in which Governor  
Simcoe Resided, 1792-6.

The group of buildings, four in number, built by Gov. Haldimand for the use of the naval officers on the lakes, known as Navy Hall, stood on the bank of Niagara River just below Fort George. There were four buildings in the original group, but three disappeared years ago, and the last remaining building was removed in 1862 from its original site to the present location in the enclosure of Fort George. For years this historic hall has been neglected and allowed to go to ruin. Hon. Samuel Hughes, Minister of Militia, recommended the Government to restore the building, and this was done in 1912. One of the oaken beams had to be removed, and from this a chair was made and presented by Mr. Robertson to Toronto University on the 25th December, 1912, as a memento of the days when Toronto was not and Niagara was the capital of the province and the home of the first Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada. The arms of the old province of Upper Canada are carved on the top rail of this chair.

**SCHOONER "SCORPION" CHAIR.**

Made from Wood of the U. S. Schooner  
"Scorpion," 1813.

In the summer of 1813 the "Scorpion" was built by the United States for war service by Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry. She took part in the battle of Put-in-Bay, Lake Erie, on 10th September, 1813, where the entire British fleet of six vessels was captured. The following year the Scorpion was one of the fleet that attacked Michillimackinac, then held by the British.

After successes and reverses the Scorpion, carrying one thirty-two pounder and one twenty-four, and a crew of thirty men, was captured by Lieut. Worsley, who renamed her the "Confiance." She remained attached to the Lake Huron squadron of the British navy until the Establishment at Penetanguishene fell into decay. About 1819 the war vessels were dismantled and sunk in Colborne Basin, opposite Penetang.

In 1911, ninety-two years later, part of the remains of the long lost Confiance (Scorpion) were raised. She was built almost entirely of Norway pine, but her sternpost was of oak. Some pieces of the latter were procured by Mr. Robertson, who had a chair made similar in pattern to three of the other historic chairs presented by him to the University on the 25th December, 1912, and it now stands on the dais of Convocation Hall. A carving of the Scorpion as when in commission decorates the top rail of the chair.



