

THE STORY
OF THE
GEORGIAN BAY

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1911

SOUVENIR

The Story

Of The

Georgian

= Bay =



"In the land of the Ojibways,
In the pleasant land and peace-
ful." —LONGFELLOW.

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—Established 1867—

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Penetanguishene**

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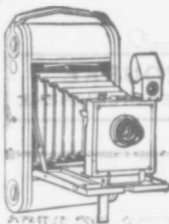
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# Souvenir Story

of the

# Georgian Bay



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## Foreword.

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In the subjoined "story," written by request, any attempt to describe the physical features of the Georgian Bay has been purposely avoided. Many a perfervid pen has already been employed upon that task. The present writer's aim has been to add human interest to natural charm, by presenting, in briefest form, an array of historic facts which have not hitherto been accessible to the general public.

For the tourist and camper the advertising pages will form a business directory which is at once convenient and reliable.

W. H. A.

St. Patrick's Day, 1911.



## Souvenir Story of The Georgian Bay

FIVE years before the Pilgrim Fathers sailed across the Atlantic to write their names forever on the history of this continent; five years before John Alden, that "hopefull



yong in a n," was hired for a cooper at Southampton, and taken aboard the Mayflower; and five years before

Mr. Wm. Mullins' fair daughter "Priscilla the Puritan maiden" of Longfellow's immortal verse first looked upon the face of her destined husband, the written history of the Georgian Bay begins.

In August, 1615, Samuel de Champlain, the bold navigator and explorer, the founder of the fortress of Quebec, the warrior whose name is still borne by the picturesque lake which separates the State of New York from that of Vermont, came hither, following rapidly upon the heels of some of his men, who, with a friar named Le Caron, had struck off in this direction. Like them negotiating the various portages, he paddled up the Ottawa, across Lake Nipissing, and then down the French River, where, at its disemboquement into the Georgian Bay, there burst for the first time upon European eyes the splendid vision of the clear and sparkling waters of Lake Huron. Turning southward, he soon found himself among the uncounted islands of the

Bay in question; and, continuing his course, landed at length near the present town of Penetanguishene, in the territory of the friendly Huron nation. Here he was received with the most marked demonstrations, and was entertained by a succession of pagan feasts and dances as he went from one village to another.

Two years before this, Champlain had essayed a journey up the Ottawa, but, deceived and disappointed, had returned to Montreal. It was on this expedition that he lost his astrolabe. This instrument was afterwards recovered; but, unfortunately some 250 years too late to be of any service to the redoubtable explorer. It was found in Ross Township, Renfrew, in 1867, the date and place of its manufacture being still impressed upon it, viz. ; "Paris, 1603."

After spending a month in Huronia, which, by the way, embraced the north-west portion of the modern county of Simcoe, Champlain set off with a body of Hurons to make war upon their sworn and implacable foes, the ferocious Iroquois. This necessitated an excursion still further to the south. It was now that he crossed Lake Ontario, which he was the first white man to see ; and which was reached by way of Lake Simcoe, Balsam Lake, and the Trent river. Returning in December, after many severe encounters, he was glad to secure even the rough shelter of the long Huron wigwams. "Smoke choked and blinded him, children shrieked and played lawlessly around him, fleas bit him, and dogs nosed his sleeping form, but in spite of

all, on a good diet of Indian corn, dried beans, and venison, he regained his strength and soundness, and in a month was ready for new enterprises." In subsequent months he made a tour among the various tribes west of the Hurons; and then in the following May, with his companions, retraced his way to Quebec. There twenty years afterwards, he died at the age of sixty-eight, after suffering the sorrows, or exulting in the triumphs, of many another adventure.

For the story of the mission which was established among the Hurons, the reader must be referred to the pages of Parkman's "Jesuits in America," and other similar works. It was in 1639 that the structure of rough masonry, whose ruins are still to be seen on the banks of the Wye, a little to the east of Midland, was completed. This was the headquarters of the mission for ten years thereafter, when, however, it was evacuated, and burned by the missionaries themselves. The occurrences which accounted for their deliberately taking these steps were tragic in the extreme. Repeated incursions by the furious Iroquois, who slaughtered the Hurons and gave their villages to the flames, who tortured the devoted missionaries, and with a hideous and inhuman skill put several of them to a dreadful death, left no choice but that a refuge must be sought elsewhere. Accordingly, the survivors of the mission deserted the Wye, and, with the remaining Hurons betook themselves to Christian Island, which lies to the west of the Penetanguishene peninsu-

la. There, to-day, with its ruined well in the midst, may be traced the outline of the square bastioned stone fort which they forthwith constructed, and the foundations of which they laid in hydraulic cement, manufactured on the spot, though by what means it puzzles moderns to determine. But their stay here was only of short duration. During the ensuing winter they were harassed by the ubiquitous Iroquois. They were decimated by sickness and starvation. In one of the volumes of the "Relations" is a letter written on the island, and dated Mar. 3rd, 1650, which says: "Our Hurons are distressed not only by war, but by a deadly famine, and a contagious plague; all are miserably perishing together." When the spring opened, it was at last determined to give up the mission. Accordingly, in June, 1650, a remnant of the Hurons accompanied the disappointed missionaries on the long and tedious journey to Quebec, and the entire region was by both finally abandoned. Eight years later, Radisson reports passing the ruined Huron mission, while working his way westward on that historic trip which first revealed the lands lying beyond the Mississippi, whose shore he reached early in 1659.

The Iroquois were at last confessedly supreme. But their domination was not to last forever. Years went by, and then appeared the Ojibways, or Chipewas (the two names are really one) from the farther north and west. They swept down upon the Iroquois, and both conquered and dispossessed

them,—not without something of the inhumanity which the latter had shown their Huron victims. The Ojibways, who brought with them their paganism and polygamy, continued in the uninterrupted practice of all the orgies and superstitious rites of their forefathers, until the first quarter of the nineteenth century, when the self-sacrificing missionaries of the Methodist communion commenced their labors amongst them. Since the sale of their lands to the British crown, they have become segregated upon their several reserves,—Georgina, Rama, Christian Island, et al. They retain the use of their mother tongue; but were early taught in the mission schools to speak and write English, which most of them employ with ease. Their morals and manners suffer nothing by comparison with those of any other race which has been removed by a period of only two or three generations from a pagan state. It is noteworthy that not a few blood relations of the Ojibways with whom Schoolcraft became matrimonially allied, and from whom he derived many of the legends which Longfellow, in 1842, wove into his matchless "Song of Hiawatha," are living in old Huronia to-day; where, like their forbears, they

"wrestle with Mondamin,  
Strip him of his plumes and tassels,  
Of his garments green and yellow."

Parry Sound, named after Dr. Parry, the explorer, Waubauskene, Victoria Harbor, Midland, Penetanguishene — "the Place - of - the - White - Rolling - Sands;"—Collingwood—whose name honors Nelson's

associate at Trafalgar,—Meaford, Owen Sound—formerly Sydenham, and Wiarton—these are the towns which lie upon the shores of the modern Georgian Bay. In point of historic interest and importance, however, Penetanguishene—in some quarters curtailed and degraded into the cacophonous “Penetang”—is without either competitor or peer. To her belong the crown of the metropolis and the honors of the matriarch; and it is entirely fitting that her children should break forth in the popular chorus:—

“O, sing the song of Penetanguishene,  
She’s been so long the Mistress and the  
Queen

Of all the Georgian waters with the lands  
that intervene,  
And she reigned o’er all Huronia!”

As early as 1793, not long after the purchase of the first 250,000 acres of land from the Ojibways, Penetanguishene was selected by Governor Simcoe (who, in honor of the then reigning sovereign conferred the title of “Georgian Bay” upon the storied and island-studded wing of Lake Huron,) for the establishment of a naval and military post. The harbor, being land-locked and easily protected, explains his choice. Troublesome times followed the war of Independence; and it had become necessary to defend the waters of the Upper Lakes. For various reasons, the Governor’s plans were not, however, immediately put into execution. Indeed, the war of 1812—the last great fratricidal struggle which the sun will ever blush to look down upon in this quarter of the globe—was being waged before the military road was constructed across the country from York (now Toronto) and

its echoes were dying away before the barracks and residences were built, or the magazine was reared, where it still stands, on Magazine Island. But the first occupants of the post were familiar with the sight of the American warships, the "Tigress," the "Scorpion," and others, which were brought into the harbor and anchored, and which to-day lie there submerged.

Penetanguishene, as an outpost of empire, in those early days welcomed and entertained many an illustrious visitor. Dukes of high lineage, noble barons, and doughty knights, some of whom bore names which had been famous for well-nigh a thousand years, were amongst them. The name, though, which will probably appeal most strongly to the popular imagination is that of Sir John Franklin, who, in 1823, tarried here on his journey to the northern regions. The silver tea-pot, which was daily placed upon his table, is still treasured in the town. It significantly recalls the career of the intrepid discoverer, as well as the sad fate which befell him some twenty years later—a fate whose pathos is well set forth by the lines of Tennyson engraved on the cenotaph which arrests the attention of the visitor to Westminster Abbey.

"Not here! the white North has thy bones;  
and thou,

Heroic sailor soul,  
Art passing on thy happier voyage now  
Towards no earthly pole."

In 1832, and at different dates thereafter, the British government sent out to Penetanguishene a number of discharged or pensioned soldiers, and established them upon "The

Lines," where each man was granted a new log house and a suitable lot. Long years ago they, too, went the way of all the earth. But several of their log homes are still intact; wherein, dowered with their memories of Corunna, Salamanca and Waterloo, they were wont to "sit by the fire and talk the night away." The "military church" of St. James, also, where they worshipped, and which was erected in 1837, is still in good repair, and by reason of the associations which cluster about it, no less than by its real quaintness, is an object of abiding interest.

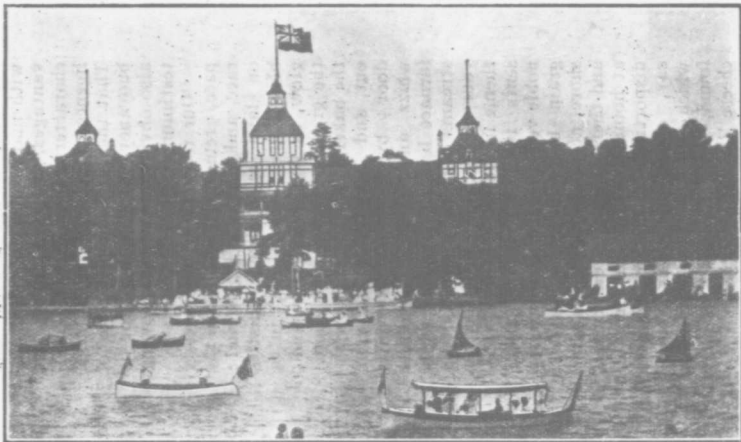
A large proportion of the present population of Penetanguishene is of French origin. Their fathers came from Drummond Island in 1828, or, in more recent years, from the Province of Quebec; and some there are who still speak the English tongue with a musical French accent. Mr. A. C. Osborne, the best living authority on the archaeology, romance, and history of the Georgian Bay, published several years ago a brochure which invested this migration from Drummond Island with singular interest. He has, the public are glad to know, projected a larger work which will include a number of aboriginal legends, notably that connected with the Giant's Tomb,—the island whereon reposes Kichikewanna, the Wendigo who with his own mighty hands scooped out the basins which hold all the waters of these great inland seas!

Midland, the sister and close neighbor of Penetanguishene, demands a word. True, by comparison, she is but juvenile.

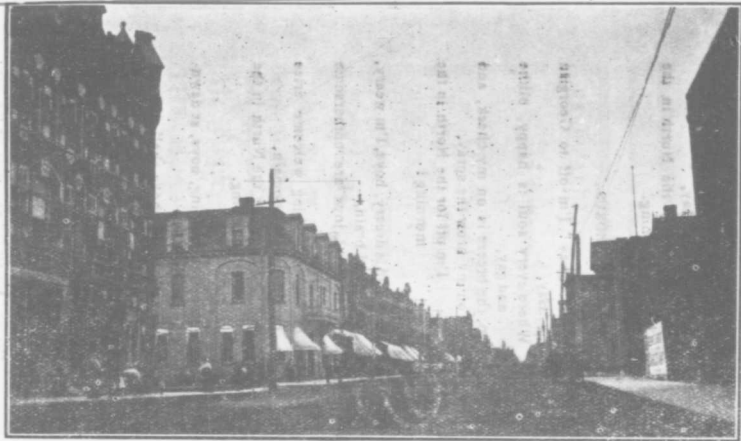


Her history is in the making. Nevertheless, she has already developed a volume of trade and industry which rivals that of the elder town; while her transportation and manufacturing interests are growing rapidly. Nature has endowed her with a fine harbor, and with many other physical advantages, and her citizens are characterized by energy, intelligence, and resourcefulness. That they are not destitute of buoyancy and good humor is also obvious from the following testimony of a local bard:—

“Our town keeps up a steady pace, remembering she’s in the race, and must not lag behind; on land and water whistles blow, and everybody’s in a glow, as you will surely find; the grocer’s wagon runs about, the baker’s ditto stands without, and bread comes to your door; by day the saw mills whizz and boom, by night the furnace lights the gloom, while streams of metal pour. Lift up your eyes, behold, the Bay, a theme for any poet’s lay, presents itself to view; there noble vessels ride with ore, or grain brought from a distant shore, across these waters blue; and there is many a dainty sail at home alike in sun or gale, disporting, in the breeze; oh, say, of all the towns around, which any of you yet have found, our Midland is the cheese!”



REGATTA DAY, PENETANGUISHENE



KING STREET, MIDLAND

## The Ballad of Georgian Bay

Tune: "Marching Through Georgia."

Wake me in the morning, boys, at  
dawning of the day,  
Let me leave the dust and noise, and  
wander far away,  
Thirty thousand islands call from good  
old Georgian Bay,  
I'm off for the North in the  
morning.

### CHORUS.

Away! away! I'm off to Georgian  
Bay,  
Where every soul is happy, blithe  
and gay,  
Lo, the breeze is on my cheek, and  
on my brow the spray,  
I'm off for the North in the  
morning!

Oh, the world is dreary, boys, I'm weary,  
heart and brain,  
Best of artificial joys are bothersome  
and vain,  
Maung\* a ringing welcome cries  
across his glad domain,  
I'm off for the North in the  
morning.

Off then in the morning, boys, at dawn-  
ing of the day,  
Soon our camp-fire smoke shall rise, and  
soon we'll rest and play,  
All the wilds are waiting, boys, and here  
I cannot stay,  
I'm off for the North in the  
morning.

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\*Maung: Ancient Ojibway name for the loon;  
Maung-wawon: loon-egg; Maung-odaa; loon-heart;  
whence Maung-odausee: intrepid, doughty, brave.

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