




## FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENT TO THE WAR OF 1812



A decorative initial 'In' is positioned to the left of the text. It is rendered in a large, stylized font and is surrounded by floral and leaf motifs, similar to the chapter title above.

A PROVINCE that has been largely settled from first to last by soldiers and the sons of soldiers, it is but natural that a militia force should have been formed spontaneously and almost without an effort on the part of the Government, and too often, it must be added, with scant encouragement on its part.

As early as the summer of 1782 a few discharged soldiers from Lieut.-Colonel John Butler's corps of Rangers began a settlement on the west bank of the River Niagara, near the site of the present town of that name. Next year they were joined by others, and in 1784 the entire regiment was disbanded and officers and men were assigned lands in the twenty townships which were shortly afterwards surveyed for the purpose on the Niagara Peninsula, and composed the original County of Lincoln, bounded to westward by the tract of land along the Grand River, granted to the Indians of the Six Nations. The two battalions of the King's Royal Regiment of New York, the King's Rangers, the Loyal Rangers and fragments of other American loyalist corps, with some men from regular British and Ger-

man regiments, forming a body of nearly four thousand men were at the same time similarly settled on Crown lands bordering on the Bay of Quinte and River St. Lawrence.

That these men were excellent soldiers there can be no question. Major Potts, of the 8th or King's Regiment, who had been appointed to inspect Butler's Rangers before their disbandment reported that "two thirds of the privates were as fine fellows as he ever saw collected together." These men were inured to every hardship. By their enemies they were naturally hated and accused of being cruel and merciless, for they had carried fire and sword for seven years with tireless energy along the border of the revolting provinces from Vermont to Kentucky, and the flower of the American frontiersmen had gone down before their onset at Oriskany, Wyoming, Minniesink, Sandusky, the Blue Licks and many another desperate encounter in the forest, from which few of the defeated party had escaped to tell the story of their disaster.

Of these men and their sons the first militia regiments of the province were formed.

The first official enrollment of the militia was accomplished in 1788 and showed an aggregate of 1,525 of all ranks in the district of Lunenburg, 1,141 in Mecklenburg, 600 in Nassau or Niagara, and 721 French-Canadian and 226 British in Hesse or Detroit.

At its second session in 1793, the Legislature of the newly formed Province of Upper Canada passed a Militia Act. All militiamen were thereby required to provide themselves not only with suitable clothing but with arms, accoutrements and a stated quantity of ammunition. But Lieut.-Governor Simcoe recommended that a request from the MacDonnells of Glengarry to be supplied with broadswords from the Government store should be granted, and that muskets should be provided for the whole of the militia. By amendments to this act the next year militiamen were rendered liable to service in manning vessels on the lakes.

A considerable quantity of arms was distributed, and as war with the United States for some time seemed almost inevitable, the militia of the province was formally enrolled and organized into companies and regiments. On the 17th of February, 1794, Lord Dorchester, the Governor-General of Canada, after referring to General Wayne's projected movement upon Detroit, instructed Lieut.-Governor Simcoe to take steps towards occupying the most advantageous positions with a view to resisting Gen. Wayne's attack should he attempt by force to take possession of the country.

Simcoe proceeded to carry out these instructions by forming a military post at the rapids of the Miami and another on an island in the mouth of that river. Two hundred militia were called out for the defence of Detroit and double that number were embodied in the Niagara settlement, which he termed



MAJOR-GENERAL E. T. H. HUTTON, C. B., A. D. C. TO THE QUEEN  
COMMANDING THE MILITIA OF CANADA

" the bulwark of Upper Canada." The treaty concluded by Mr. Jay put an end to this period of alarm, but efforts continued to be made to improve the organization of the militia, as it was decided to withdraw all the regiments of the regular army then stationed in Upper Canada, for they were sorely needed elsewhere. In 1796 a second battalion of the Royal Canadian Volunteer Regiment of Foot, consisting of nine companies, was enlisted in the province and the command was given to that gallant officer, Lieut.-Colonel John MacDonnell, late of the 84th Regiment. It was distinctly a local corps, and for the next six years, in conjunction with the Queen's Rangers, formed the sole garrison of the province.

An official return of the enrolled militia for the year 1805 shows an aggregate of 652 officers and 7,947 non-commissioned officers and privates. Of the whole number only 200 had received any military training for several years. The unsatisfactory state of relations between Great Britain and the United States had then again begun to excite alarm. As the regular force in the province did not exceed 400 men, the militia were once more ordered to hold themselves in readiness for service and about 4,000 stands of arms were distributed among them. A comprehensive militia act was framed and passed into law providing for a much better organization than any former act, and enabling the Governor to march the militia out of the province to the assistance of the province of Lower Canada when actually invaded or in a state of insurrection, or in pursuit of " an enemy who may have invaded this province and also for the destruction of any vessel or vessels built or building, or any depot or magazine formed or forming, or for the attack of any enemy who may be embodying or marching for the purpose of invading this province, or for the attack of any fortification now erected or which may be hereafter erected to cover the invasion thereof." Lieut.-Governor Gore was evidently very well satisfied with this act, but General Brock indicated the weak point in the act by the remark that it contained " many wise and salutary provisions but few means of enforcing them."

Meanwhile the population continued to increase rapidly, chiefly, however, by the arrival of emigrants from the United States, many of them with strong revolutionary proclivities which they were little inclined to conceal. These men settled in great numbers in the Western, London, Home and Newcastle Districts, where they formed centres of disaffection, and began to plot the overthrow of the Government and the annexation of the province to the United States. Their representations unquestionably led the American Government to believe that the country could be practically conquered by a proclamation calling upon the people to rise and join a small invading army.