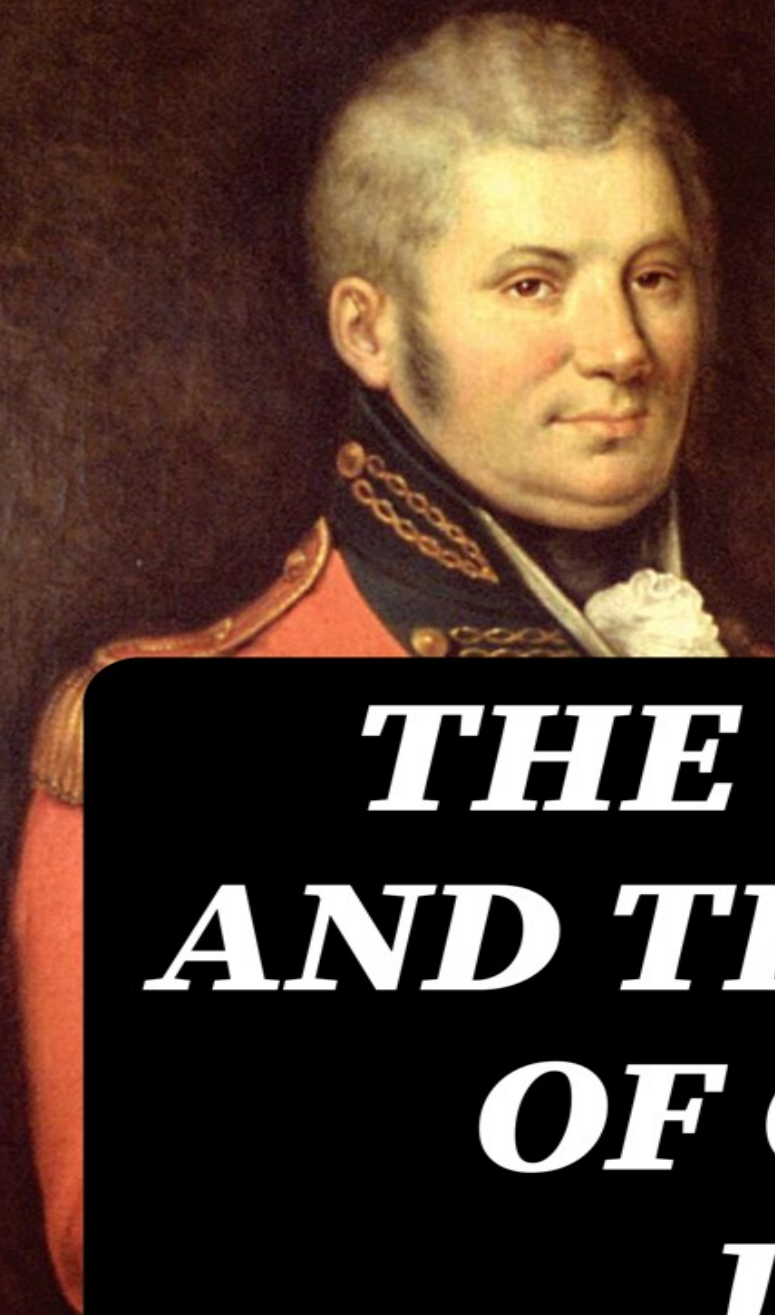


D. B. READ



***THE LIFE
AND TIMES
OF GEN.
JOHN
GRAVES
SIMCOE***

D. B. Read

The Life and Times of Gen. John Graves Simcoe

EAN 8596547187288

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PREFACE.

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There never yet has been published a history of the life of General Simcoe, the first Governor of Upper Canada. The pioneers of the country and their descendants are entitled to be made acquainted with the officer who was first entrusted with the administration of their affairs, and was the real founder of the Province. In writing "The Life and Times of General Simcoe" I have endeavoured to recall the public acts of the first Governor of Upper Canada in his different capacities of citizen, soldier and administrator. His career as a soldier and officer of the "Queen's Rangers" during the Revolutionary War naturally demands attention. For much that I have written on that subject I am indebted to the Journal which he himself kept during the different campaigns of the War of Independence. Regarding General Simcoe's career as Lieutenant-Governor I have availed myself of information gained from that valuable collection of manuscripts called "Smith's Papers," which the chief Librarian of the Public Library of Toronto so opportunely secured for that Institution.

Writing not only the memoirs, but a history of the times of Governor Simcoe, necessarily drew me a-field. The great Indian chief, Thayendanegea (Brant) was so intimate a friend of Simcoe, and held in such high regard, not only by the Governor, but by the people of the Province of Upper Canada, that I could not pass him over. I have given him a foremost place in the history of the Times.

The name of Major André, so familiar to those acquainted with the Revolutionary era, also finds a place in this history. His was a sad and undeserved fate, the recollection of which to this day rankles in many breasts.

I must not omit to mention that I have, in preparing this work, derived great assistance from the writings of Dr. Scadding, not only from his "Toronto of Old," but the "Memorial Volume," published to celebrate the Semi-Centennial of Toronto. I first satisfied myself that some record of the early times of the Province ought to be preserved, and acting upon this inspiration I set about writing this history which I now commit to the reading public, in the belief that its perusal will do no harm, and may do much good in reviving a memory of the past, and of the first era of a Province now the foremost of the Provinces of the Dominion of Canada.

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OF

GEN. JOHN GRAVES SIMCOE.

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CHAPTER I.

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Introduction.—Military Career.

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early a hundred years have come and gone since the foundation of Upper Canada as a distinct Province was laid, yet up to this time there has never appeared a faithful account of the man who laid that foundation.

Lieut.-Colonel John Graves Simcoe was the son of John Graves Simcoe, Esq., who was Commander of His Majesty's ship *Pembroke*, and who lost his life in the Royal Service upon the important expedition against Quebec in the year 1759.

Though bred in the Navy the father of Governor Simcoe was equally well educated in the military service. The most striking occurrence of his life, it is said, arose from an accident, improved in a manner peculiar to genius and extensive professional knowledge. The story is that he was taken prisoner by the French, in America, and carried up the St. Lawrence. As his character was little known he was watched only to prevent his escape; but from his observations on his voyage to Quebec, and the little incidental information he was able to obtain, he constructed a chart of that river, and was able to conduct General Wolfe in his famous attack upon the Canadian capital.

Soon after Simcoe's father was killed his mother took up her residence at Exeter, in England, and while living there she sent her young son, John Graves, who afterwards so distinguished himself in several capacities, both military and civil, to the Free Grammar School of that town. At the age of fourteen he was removed to Eton, and from thence, in due course, to Merton College, Oxford. While a schoolboy at the Free Grammar School in Exeter his acquisitions in some departments of knowledge were of a superior kind. He was devoted to the study of ancient and modern literature. He was well versed in modern history, and eagerly devoured every tale of war. Before leaving the University he had mastered Tacitus and Xenophon, ever after his constant friends and companions, whether in the study or on the tented field. At the age of nineteen he obtained an Ensign's commission in the 35th Regiment. This regiment was sent to America, being one of the many regiments sent from England for the purpose of quelling the rebellion of the American Provinces. Ensign Simcoe did not embark from England with his regiment, but he landed at Boston on the memorable day of the Battle of Bunker's Hill, 17th June, 1775. Shortly after this event he purchased command of a company in the 40th Regiment, which he led at the Battle of Brandywine, where the British Commander, Sir William Howe, defeated General Washington and became master of the City of Philadelphia.

The Battle of Brandywine was fought on the 11th day of September, 1777, and was hotly contested by the British troops of the line and Provincials. Captain Simcoe, in command of a company in the 40th Regiment, distinguished