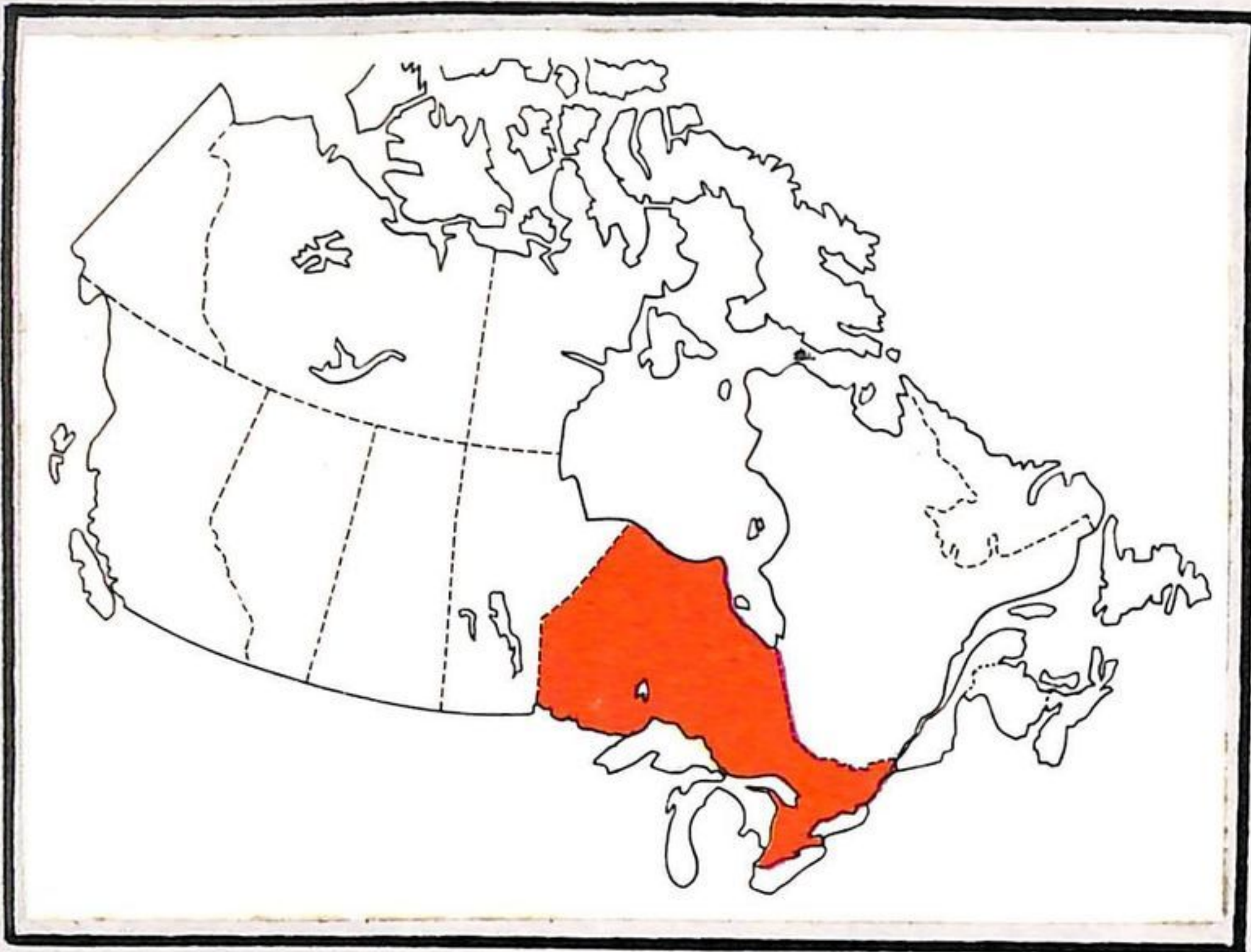


OUR PROVINCE

In the year 1 when "in the beginning God made the heavens and the earth", Canada was included in the divine formation. The Treaty of Paris by which Canada was



formally ceded to the British Crown, was signed 10th day of February 1763. At this time Ontario was virtually an unsettled furtrader's wilderness. The first landfall in what is now Ontario was made by Henry Hudson in 1610. In 1610 - 1611, Eteinne Brule ascended the Ottawa and wintered in Huronia. Samuei de Champlain and Brule by way of Ottawa and Mattawa Rivers crossed the height of land to

Lake Huron, then pushed southward to Lake Ontario in 1615. Brule pressed on alone probably discovering Lake Erie. These journeys began to unfold the geography of the Great Lakes Region and the writings of Champlain are a valuable source of information. The region of present-day Ontario was occupied at the time of European contact by two main groups of Indians, the hunting tribes of the north and the agricultural tribes of the south. The first survey marking off land divisions for the purpose of settlement was made at Kingston in 1785. This was followed by other lots along the St. Lawrence and around Niagara as home sites for United Empire Loyalists, who came in great numbers from the United States following the War of Independence 1776 - 1783. It is stated that as many as ten thousand families came to Canada following this war, some moving here because they wanted to live under the Union Jack and many fleeing, having had their possessions confiscated because they fought for and had their sympathy with the British. These crossed into Canada at the nearest point bringing with them only what they could conveniently carry. These Loyalists constituted the original population of Upper Canada or Ontario. They had to literally hew homes themselves out of the primeval forest. The hardships endured by these refugees almost defy description.

Not drooping like poor fugitives they came
In exodus to our Canadian wilds
But full of heart and hope with heads erect
And fearless eyes victorious in defeat.

Such were the people who first settled the province of Ontario and who first gave to Canada the prospect of a predominantly British population.

In 1788, there was the first territorial division of Canada West under authority of an British Act of Parliament under Lord Dorchester the Governor General of Canada.