

THE
BEECHWOOD^{WAY}
MAGAZINE

NEW EDINBURGH -
A thousand, thousand stories

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February 20, 1904. Everyone in New Edinburgh knew John Ferguson, a foreman at the Edwards mill. In fact, the mill closed early to allow workers to attend his funeral, the largest in living memory at MacKay Presbyterian church, and mill-owner Gordon Edwards sent a lavish floral tribute.

As the cortege moved slowly down Crichton Street on its way to Beechwood Cemetery, the “little German church” tolled its bell in honour of John Ferguson, dead of pneumonia at age 68. After 50 years in Canada and 37 years as a worker at Rideau Falls, Ferguson was going to his final rest. He is only one of many over the years who made that final journey.

Founded in 1832 by Thomas MacKay, a Scottish stonemason, New Edinburgh in its first few decades of life was a little industrial village gathered around a complex of mills at the Rideau Falls. Along with a few shops on Ottawa Street (today's Sussex Drive), the village featured rows of humble, gable-ended houses where the workers lived, along with a few grander houses belonging to doctors and lawyers or to the managers and owners of mills.

When Ottawa was named capital of the Province of Canada in 1857, the village changed. A new population began to arrive, made up of civil servants and military men. Like the Governor General himself, these newcomers chose to settle on the quiet outskirts of Ottawa. There, they were joined in the 1880s by an influx of German labourers, people whose grandparents had been serfs in Prussia and whose grandchildren grew up to be business owners and government workers.

These were the people of New Edinburgh. They ran the mills and owned the businesses; they made the shoes, drove the streetcars, delivered the milk and built the houses. Their wives cooked the meals and watched their children anxiously as one epidemic after another swept through the neighbourhood, leaving devastation behind.

For many of these people, their journey ended in the quiet, almost rural beauty of Beechwood, where a thousand, thousand stories are buried under simple stone markers.



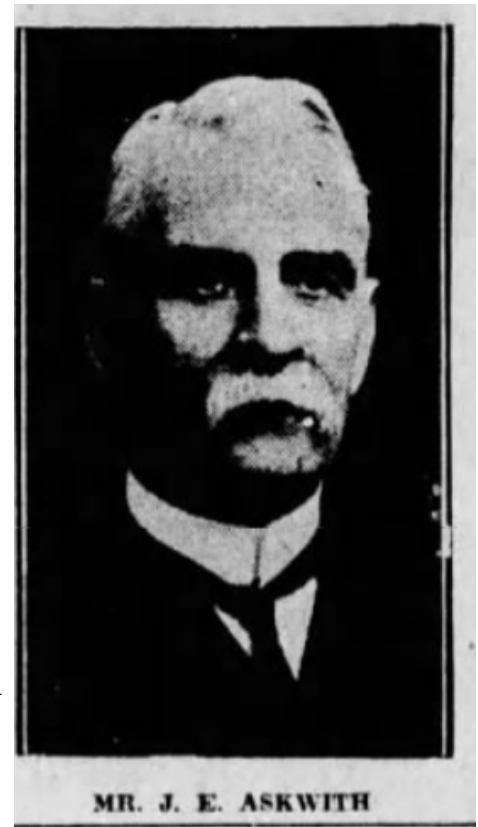
JOHN ENGLISH ASKWITH - Section 22, Lot 44 W

Born in Bytown in 1841, Askwith represented Rideau ward on Ottawa's city council for 11 years. Chairman of the Ottawa Parks Commission for a period, he also played a leading role in acquiring Rockcliffe Park for the city. In addition, he served as a councillor in the village of New Edinburgh before it became part of Ottawa.

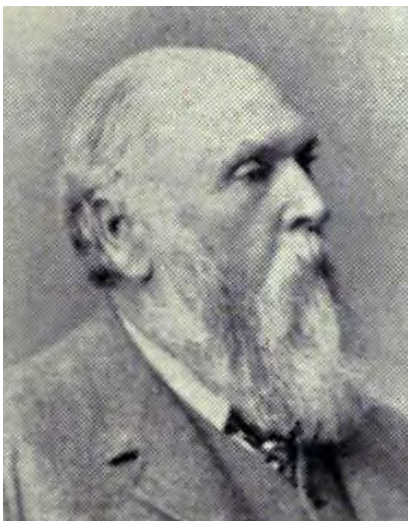
For 40 years, he worked as a contractor, engaged in structural railway work, the government printing bureau, the Halifax armouries and many other Canadian public projects.

He was deputy police magistrate from 1907 to 1916, then chief police magistrate until 1922. John Askwith passed away on October 7, 1925.

Clipping from The Ottawa Citizen (Ottawa, Ontario, Canada) · 19 Sep 1925, Sat · Page 11



DR. WILLIAM RALPH BELL - Section 21, Lot 27



Born in Thirsk, England on December 14, 1832, Bell was educated at Kirklington Academy and Brainham College. Once he completed his required curriculum, he went on to study areas in art, philosophy, medicine, surgery and obstetrics.

Later, he served in the Arctic as medical officer on the ship Lady Franklin, then came to New Edinburgh in 1866. He was an assistant surgeon to the Governor General's Foot Guards, having been an officer of that regiment since its formation. He died on March 22, 1915 at the age of 82.

Photo Credit: Cochrane, William; Hopkins, J. Castell. 1896. "The Canadian album: men of Canada; or, Success by example". Bradley, Garretson & Co. Brantford.

WILLIAM (BILL) BEVERIDGE - Section 19, PC 427

Born in Ottawa on July 1, 1909, Bill Beveridge was an outstanding goaltender from an early age. He played with the Shamrocks of the Ottawa Junior City League at the age of 14, and later enjoyed success with New Edinburgh, winning the Ottawa City and District championship in 1926-27.

In 1929, prior to the start of the season, the Detroit Cougars of the National Hockey League came calling and Beveridge made his NHL debut on November 29, 1929. He was loaned to the Ottawa Senators for the 1930-31 season, and then, while the Senators took a sabbatical from the NHL for a year, he moved to the Providence Reds of the Can-Am League where he registered 23 wins.

With the return of the Senators, Beveridge was the top net-minder until the demise of the team in 1933–34. He followed the franchise to St. Louis for one season before heading to the Montreal Maroons for the next three campaigns. After that, he made stops in the minors with teams in Syracuse, New Haven, Providence, Buffalo and Cleveland before returning to the NHL with the New York Rangers for 17 games in 1942–43. During his career, Beveridge posted 18 shutouts in 297 games and had a 2.87 average.

After his retirement, he started up a juvenile hockey league in 1945 in order to develop young players. In 1947–48, he coached Carleton College in the Intermediate Intercollegiate Hockey League. After his playing career, he turned to the real estate field and was a member of the Ottawa Real Estate Board. He was also an active member of the community with the South Ottawa Kiwanis Club. He passed away on February 13, 1995.

JOSEPH MERRILL CURRIER - Section 60, Lot 33

Currier was born in North Troy, Vermont, in 1820 and came to Canada in 1837 as a young man. He joined the lumber trade in the Ottawa Valley, and worked his way up to managing Levi Bigelow's mills in Buckingham, Quebec, and then Thomas McKay and John McKinnon's lumber business in New Edinburgh. By 1850, Currier had partnered with Moss Kent Dickinson, a prominent lumberman and politician and together they built a sawmill and grist-mill complex in Manotick and supplied sawn lumber to the American market.

Currier also started a lumber business of his own in New Edinburgh on the Rideau River in 1853, and was a partner in the lumber firm Wright, Baston & Company (later Wright, Baston & Currier). He withdrew from the first two of these ventures in the early 1860s, and focused on his other business interests.

These were extensive: Currier was the president of the Citizen Printing and Publishing Company (which owned the Ottawa Daily Citizen) from 1872 to 1877, and was also the president of the Ottawa and Gatineau Valley Railway Company and a director of the Ottawa City Passenger Railway Company. He was also involved with the Upper Ottawa Improvement Company, the Victoria Foundry (with Horace Merrill) and many other enterprises.

Unfortunately for Currier, during the mid-1870s his business career foundered, and he was, according to his friend and business associate Alonzo Wright, "hopelessly bankrupt". He managed to retain his home on 24 Sussex Drive, which he had built in 1868. Currier lived in this house until his death. (In 1946, the Canadian government acquired the property and converted it into the official residence for the Prime Ministers of Canada.)

Currier was also active in politics, which helped to save him from financial ruin in the late 1800s. In the decade leading up to Confederation, he represented By Ward on the Ottawa City Council and was elected to parliament of the Province of Canada for Ottawa. He was a supporter of Confederation, and represented Ottawa in the newly-struck federal parliament until 1882. He was also appointed postmaster of Ottawa in 1882.



24 Sussex Drive as it appeared before 1950, before it was renovated and transformed into the prime minister's residence. (The Ottawa Citizen)

GEORGE HAY Section 37, Lot 117 N (B)

Born June 18, 1821 in Scotland, Hay came to Canada in 1834 and moved to Bytown in 1844 to work with Thomas MacKay. In 1847, he established his own business (hardware and construction) on Sparks Street near Elgin.

George Hay designed the first coat-of-arms for Ottawa and it is believed that he suggested the name Ottawa for the city. He was the founder of a long list of enterprises including the Bank of Ottawa, the Board of Trade, Knox Church and Beechwood Cemetery (he was one of the original shareholders). He passed away on April 25, 1910 at the age of 88.

EDWARD GEORGE (EDDIE) GERARD - Section 28, Lot 25 SW



*Eddie Gerard with the
Ottawa Senators, c. 1913-1914*

Born in Ottawa on February 22, 1890, Eddie Gerard was a natural athlete, excelling in many sports including football, paddling, cricket, tennis and lacrosse. But it was as a hockey player with the New Edinburgh Canoe Club that he drew the Senators' attention. Working at the Canadian Geodetic Survey, he was reluctant to turn pro for fear of losing his day job. The Senators, however, assured him he could continue at the Survey while playing hockey. And for the next ten years he did just that, serving variously as captain and playing-manager, and winning three Stanley Cups as a solid, clean-playing defenceman.

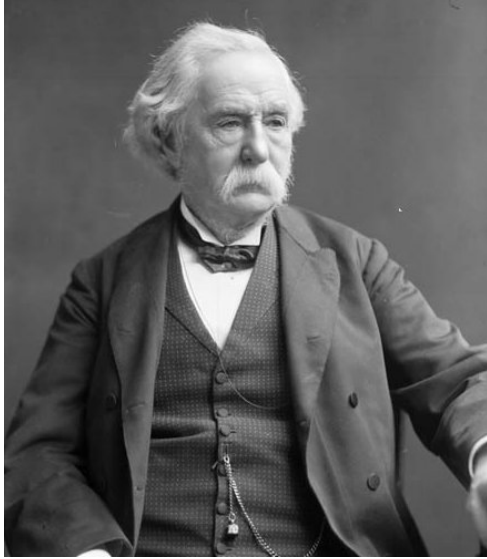
A non-malignant growth in his throat, resulting from an errant hockey stick blow, forced his retirement after the 1923 Stanley Cup season. But Gerard remained in hockey, first as manager of the Montreal Maroons, where he won another Stanley Cup, then as manager of the New York Americans. He retired from hockey in 1934, part way through the season as manager of the St. Louis Eagles. Eddie Gerard died August 7, 1937 at age 47. He was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame in 1945.

JOHN HENDERSON - Section 19, Lot 11 E

Born in Berwickshire, Scotland on April 5, 1835, Henderson came to Canada in 1857. He was alderman for New Edinburgh from 1873 to 1876, then reeve from 1876 to 1891. During this time, he was chairman of the finance committee council.

He was also chairman of the school board and secretary of the board of school trustees in New Edinburgh for over 20 years. He was a city clerk in Ottawa from 1891 and a justice of the peace. For many years, he also served as secretary and chairman of the Knox Church. Henderson died on August 27, 1919.

Thomas Coltrin Keefer CMG (4 November 1821 – 7 January 1915) Section 62, Lot 65



Born into a United Empire Loyalist family in Thorold Township, Upper Canada, the son of George Keefer and Jane Emory, born McBride, his father was chairman of the Welland Canal Company. After attending Upper Canada College, he began his engineering training by working on the Erie Canal and continued his learning experience later on the Welland Canal.

He became well known for his writings, particularly *Philosophy of Railroads* and *The Canals of Canada: Their Prospects and Influence*, and surveyed a railway connecting Kingston, Ontario, and Toronto (1851), was in charge of the survey for a line between Montreal and Kingston, and determined the site for the Victoria Bridge that crosses the St. Lawrence River into Montreal.

However, his engineering focus was on water supply. He became chief engineer of the Montreal Water Board and also built the Ottawa Water Works. One of his best-known achievements was the construction of the Hamilton Waterworks, an achievement commemorated by the preservation of the pumping station as the Hamilton Museum of Steam and Technology. His design for the foundations of the Victoria Bridge (“Keefer’s Shoes”) was used in the construction of the bridge. Keefer was a co-founder and the first president of the Canadian Society of Civil Engineers. He was also president of the American Society of Civil Engineers (1888) and of the Canadian Institute. He was made a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada in 1890 and was its president from 1898 to 1899.

He served as chief engineer of the Montreal Water Board and designed the water-supply system for Hamilton, Ontario (1859), as well as the waterworks in Ottawa (1874). His Hamilton pumping station, with its working Gartshore beam engines, has been declared a national historic site.

As the “Dean of Canadian engineers,” he received many honours, including the presidency of the American Society of Civil Engineers. He was appointed a Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George and an officer of the French Legion of Honour.

He died in Ottawa in 1915. His son, Charles Keefer, was also a notable Canadian civil engineer. The Keefer Medal was established in 1942, and is awarded annually by the Canadian Society for Civil Engineering for the best civil engineering paper in hydro-technical, transportation or environmental engineering.



The Victoria Bridge under construction, c. 1858-1860

THOMAS MacKAY - Section 62, Lot 65



Born in Perth, Scotland, in 1792, Thomas MacKay married Anne Crichton in 1813 before moving to Canada in 1817 to earn his living as a mason and contractor. He lived first in Montreal, where he worked on various fortifications and on the Lachine Canal.

A contract to build the first bridge across Chaudière Falls and plans for the Rideau Canal first brought MacKay to Ottawa. With his partner, John Redpath, he was the chief contractor for the eight main locks at the entrance and also for certain other locks at the Ottawa end of the canal.

During lulls in the canal construction work, he also built the first St. Andrew's church.

Due to the speed and skill of his work, and to his shrewd business sense, MacKay apparently made a very substantial profit on his canal contract. According to one story, when Colonel By awarded the contract to MacKay, he assumed that the stone for the lock masonry would have to come from across the river in Hull. MacKay, however, dug down in Major's Hill Park, close to the locks, and discovered stone that he said was as good as the stone in Hull. After some hesitation, Colonel By agreed to the use of the Major's Hill stone. MacKay's gain from eliminating much of his transport charges must have been considerable.

In 1832, with the canal system completed, MacKay and Redpath found themselves relatively well-to-do men. After a while, Redpath moved into sugar refining, but MacKay decided to settle in the district and to exploit the power of Rideau Falls. Between 1833 and 1855, he built a gristmill, a woollen mill, a brewery and a new sawmill at the falls. To house his workmen, he founded New Edinburgh on the eastern side of the Rideau River.

Everything he touched seemed to succeed. In 1838, he built a grand house for himself, Rideau Hall. It was sold to the Canadian government in 1868 as the official residence of the governor general. MacKay also bought a thousand acres of land around Rideau Hall. Then known as MacKay's Bush, it became Rockcliffe Park.



South end of Major's Hill, looking from the construction site on Parliament Hill, circa 1860. By this time, Major's Hill had been largely denuded of trees.

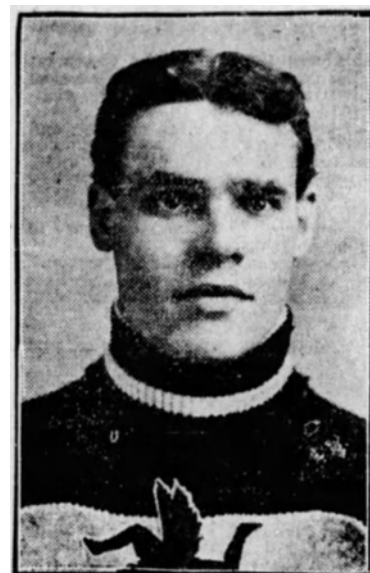
In 1834, MacKay became a Tory member of the Legislative Assembly of Upper Canada, and from 1842 he was a member of the Legislative Assembly of Canada. He also commanded the county militia and travelled widely. MacKay was an early advocate of the scheme to bring a railway to Ottawa; the railway - which conveniently passed through his land - was completed shortly before his death in 1855.

HORACE JEFFERSON MERRILL - Section 39, Lot 55 NW

Born in Toronto on November 30, 1884, Horace Merrill was an outstanding all-round athlete in his youth. He later became a successful Ottawa businessman. For three successive years, he was the Canadian senior single canoe champion while a member of the Ottawa-New Edinburgh Canoe Club. He was also on the New Edinburgh war canoe champion team.

Merrill also played amateur hockey for the New Edinburgh Club before turning professional with the Ottawa Senators in 1912. A defenceman, Merrill played with the Senators until the end of the 1920 season, when they won the Stanley Cup.

He served as a trustee on the Ottawa Public School Board in 1922 and operated one of the city's largest printing firms, Dodson-Merrill Press Ltd., for over 30 years. He retired in 1945 and died in Ottawa on December 24, 1958.



Unknown author - Ottawa Citizen,
Dec. 6, 1912 (pg. 8)

WILLIAM OSGOOD - Section 24, Grave 1 W

William Osgood was born in Buckingham, Quebec, on January 17, 1861, the only son of Jeremiah and Ann Osgood. The Osgoods relocated to New Edinburgh in the 1870s and, just prior to the outbreak of the 1885 Rebellion, William Osgood was employed as a machinist at Paterson and Law, an iron foundry.

Like so many others of his generation, William was attracted to the militia and became a member of the 43rd Regiment. When the call went out for volunteers for the Ottawa Sharpshooters, William was anxious to serve and was accepted over the protests of the commanding officer of his militia unit.

Osgood, along with his comrade John Rogers, was killed at the Battle of Cut Knife Hill on May 2, 1885, the only fatal casualties suffered by the Sharpshooters in the Rebellion. They were initially buried at Battleford, but were subsequently exhumed and returned to Ottawa where they were re-buried at Beechwood with full military honours.

Osgood was commemorated in a church window in 1886 at St. Bartholomew's Church, New Edinburgh.

Battle of Cut Knife. Contemporary lithograph from "The Canadian Pictorial and Illustrated War News", 1885.



WILLIAM GOODHUE PERLEY - Section 41, Lot 130

William Goodhue Perley was born in Enfield, New Hampshire, on June 4, 1820, and received his education there. As a teenager, he started in the lumber business as a clerk before setting up his own lumber business in Lebanon, NH, and buying land in northern New York State. By the 1850s, his business has prospered and he and his business partner, Gordon Pattee, moved their operation to Bytown to take advantage of the rich timber stands in the Ottawa Valley. They purchased several hydraulic water lots at the Chaudière Falls, running the successful business of Perley & Pattee. Perley bought land in LeBreton Flats and became the area's first rich resident; his stone mansion was one out of only 25 listed in the 1853 city directory. By 1865, his mills were churning out 16 million board feet of lumber a year.

Perley augmented his fortune by ensuring a proper trade route to the United States. He started by organizing the local scene, and in 1866, working with other lumber barons, the Ottawa City Passenger Railway Company was founded. Its horse-drawn streetcars and sleighs ran on rails and provided a cheap and convenient system for moving lumber from the mills at the Chaudière Falls and New Edinburgh to shipping points on the Rideau Canal and the Ottawa & Prescott Railway. Perley also assisted in the founding the Upper Ottawa Steamboat Company in 1868, with Henry Franklin Bronson and James Skead. Finally, with the financial assistance of J. R. Booth and an American investor, Perley founded the Canadian Atlantic Railway (1879-1888), guaranteeing Ottawa's access to American markets.

Perley was generally considered quite private, and did not participate in civic matters or politics until much later in his life. He eventually became involved in the affairs of the Christ Church in Ottawa, and was a supporter of charitable causes such as the Protestant Orphans Home and served as a director for the Ottawa Ladies' College. He also donated land and money to create the Perley Home for Incurables, and served as a Member of Parliament for Ottawa starting in 1887. Even after his death, his estate offered to donate a house for Ottawa's first public library, but ratepayers rejected the project as too expensive.

Perley died on April 1, 1890.



Ottawa City Passenger Railway Company Ottawa circa 1871, Horse drawn streetcar

ROBERT SURTEES - Section 24, Lot 6 NW

Born in Ravensworth, England, on March 3, 1835, Surtees came to Canada in 1856 and settled in Hamilton, where he became assistant city engineer. Surtees came to Ottawa in the mid-1860s and settled in the village of New Edinburgh, where he was reeve until 1878. He was credited with the architectural design of the Ottawa Courthouse, designed pathways in the Experimental Farm area and also planned the roads in Beechwood Cemetery.

Surtees held the position of city engineer from 1876 to 1897. He is credited with subdividing New Edinburgh and naming River Road. Until his death on September 29, 1906, he was associated with the Ottawa Improvement Commission, the predecessor of the National Capital Commission.