

THE

BEECHWOOD

MAGAZINE

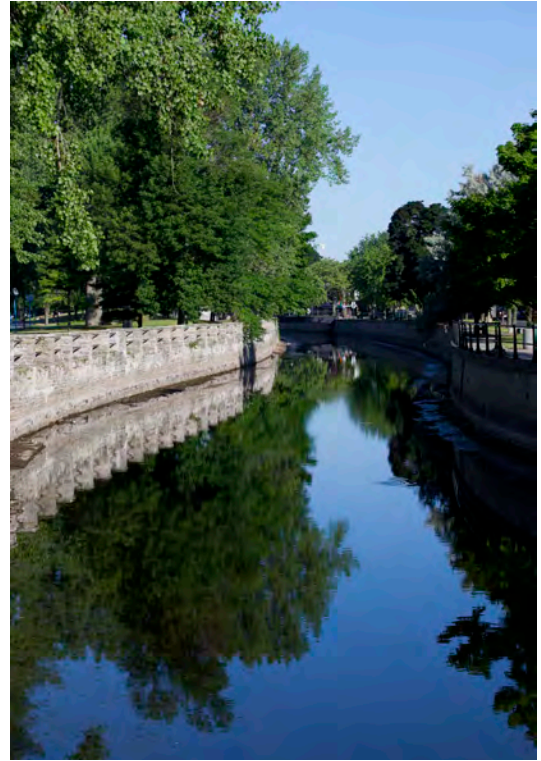
The Beechwood History of Canals

A Beechwood History of Canals

The first Canadian canal was built at Lachine, toward the western end of the island of Montreal. It opened in 1825, bypassing the Lachine rapids, long a barrier to navigation and the site of a now-ancient portage.

The Lachine Canal had an important impact on the economy of Montreal: it changed the city from being the westernmost head of navigation in Lower Canada to being the port of exit for goods coming out of Upper Canada, a way station at the mid-point between southern Upper Canada and the Atlantic.

Because the canal joined the higher levels above Lachine to the lower levels to the east of Montreal, the water flow was fast enough to generate power through water wheels. Industries relocated from the old town centre of Montreal and even Quebec to take advantage of the power supply that could be used to run sawmills and flour mills.



The Lachine Canal served the towns and ports of Lake Ontario. The expanding frontier of farms along Lake Erie, however, had to deal with the Niagara River and the famous cataract there. American investors first found a way to evade Niagara Falls by building the Erie Canal, completed in 1825 — the same year as the Lachine Canal. They followed up with the Oswego Canal four years later, and the American system then connected Lake Ontario and Lake Erie to the ice-free port of New York.

Meanwhile, Canadian investors did not stand still. The Welland Canal opened in 1829, linking Lakes Erie and Ontario, although it was plagued by problems with both route and financing. But as the 1830s opened the Canadians could claim to have kept pace with the Americans during what might be called the “canal race.”

The more defence-oriented Rideau Canal, completed in 1826, was built by the British government as a public venture and was an early indicator of the close link between infrastructure and public funding in British North America. Other Canadian canals soon shifted from private hands to government control.



The canals were technological and engineering marvels in their time but they had real limitations. Although shipping bulk goods by water was much cheaper and faster than by road, that was only true when the water was not frozen. Only so much grain could be moved at the end of one autumn harvest before the ice set in; after that, this harvest had to wait until the following spring before making it to market. Consequently, storage and credit became increasingly important considerations.

As well, the three Canadian canals were built by different companies and, not surprisingly, their specifics varied greatly. The Rideau Canal, for example, was only half as deep as the Welland Canal, which limited the ships that could use it and their ability to survive commercially — or even just to stay afloat in Lake Ontario. Canal-related debt was considerable and, given the involvement of the colonial administration, it left the government of Upper Canada unable to fund ancillary projects like road construction. Pro-canal merchants proposed more taxes on property to address the situation; anti-canal farmers responded that these big projects benefited merchants principally, so trade should be taxed instead to cover the debt. By 1871, railways and even roadways had overtaken canals as the most viable infrastructure in eastern and central British North America.

Following the golden age of canal-building, it is no surprise that they had unintended environmental consequences. The four western Great Lakes flow into one another but they are blocked from Lake Ontario, the St. Lawrence, and the ocean by Niagara Falls. The opening of the Welland Canal joined the two ecosystems and the Lachine Canal similarly circumvented the rapids at Lachine. This allowed different species of fish and parasites to mingle for the first time. Developments in shipping — especially in bilge systems — and the rise of industrial pollution would worsen this situation in the 20th century, but the process began in the early 19th century.



Canal Builders

HECTOR McPHAIL Section 14, Lot 53 N

Born in Scotland in 1789, Hector McPhail was brought to Canada to work on the Rideau Canal locks and stone buildings. McPhail was considered an excellent stonemason and millwright.

He worked on many of the stone buildings in and around Bytown, and it is believed he worked on the first Parliament Buildings. On July 5, 1834, he bought 100 acres of land, where he and his wife built a stone house similar to the one at the Rideau Locks.



The farm remained McPhail's until January 28, 1873, when J.M. Currier, on behalf of the Beechwood Cemetery Company, purchased the land. Under the terms of the deal, when the farm was sold, McPhail's family reserved the use of the log house built at the southeast corner for as long as Hector's son Malcolm and his wife lived. Hector and his wife Mary were two of Canada's finest pioneers. Mary died in 1875 and Hector died on February 22, 1885 at the age of 96.

ALEXANDER JAMIESON RUSSELL Section 41, Lot 96 NE

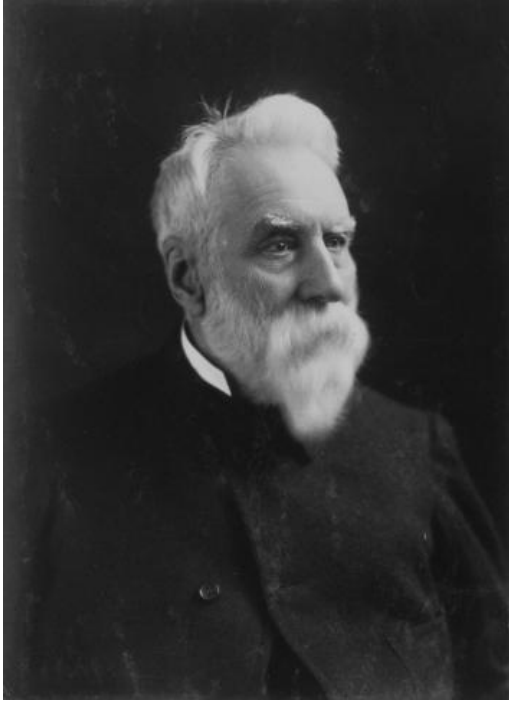
Born in Glasgow, Scotland on April 29, 1807, Russell came to Canada with his parents in 1822 and settled in Megantic County, Lower Canada. He became a surveyor and engineer and worked on the Rideau Canal and on roads and bridges in Lower Canada. He eventually became an official in the Crown Lands Office of the Canadian government.

He was also the author of several books, including *The Red River County and Hudson's Bay and North West Territories Considered in Relation to Canada*. He wrote an important pamphlet called *On Champlain's Astrolabe* (1879). He died in Ottawa on November 12, 1887.

WILLIAM KINGSFORD Section 41, Lot 55 SE

William Kingsford was born on December 23, 1819 in London, England. He was educated in Camberwell, and was apprenticed to an architect at a young age. Not finding the work amenable, at the age of 16 Kingsford enlisted with 1st Dragoon Guards in March of 1837. The Guards left England shortly after, and Kingsford with them, travelling to Canada to reinforce military units in Lower Canada in the wake of the '837 rebellion. He was made a sergeant, and in 1840, thanks to his friends back in England, he obtained his discharge, despite an offer by Sir George Cathcart, colonel of the regiment, to procure a commission for him.

After leaving military service, Kingsford found employment in Montreal as a surveyor, his army training having given him rudimentary skills in the work. He eventually received his qualifications as a civil engineer in Lower Canada in 1844 and became Montreal's deputy surveyor. Showing his characteristic restlessness, after only three years Kingsford left his position and became part owner and joint editor, of the *Montreal Times*. Within two years the paper had failed, and Kingsford returned to surveying, taking on a series of temporary assignments across Lower Canada with the Public Works Department.



In 1849, after completing a survey for the Lachine Canal, Kingsford left Canada to work on the construction of the Hudson River Railroad in New York State and the laying out of streets in Brooklyn. In 1851 a similar project took him to Panama, where he worked on building the Panama Canal Railway. Kingsford returned to Canada in 1852, finding work as an engineer for the eastern division of the proposed Montreal and Kingston Railway. He surveyed his way from Montreal to Cornwall, and went on to work on the line between Montreal and Bytown after the railway was bought up by the Grand Trunk Railway. Kingsford also worked in laying down the lines of the iconic Victoria Bridge in Montreal in 1854.

In 1855, Kingsford accepted the position of chief engineer for the City of Toronto. But after only a few months, he resigned to instead re-enter the service of the Grand Trunk Railway, where he was made superintendent. During his tenure with that company, Kingsford surveyed the tracks from Montreal to Vaudreuil in Quebec, from Montreal to Cornwall, Ontario and from Brockville to Rideau.

He also earned a reputation as a fair and conscientious employers, and proudly claimed in 1861 that on his watch, “not a single accident happened by defect of tracks or neglect of organization.” This record, combined with his ability to speak French, German, Italian and Spanish, led to Kingsford being offered a position with a British firm, which hired him to examine various projects in England and Italy Kingsford returned to Canada in 1862 where he continued to act a consultant on various engineering projects, followed by involvement in the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway. He worked on the enlargement of the Grenville Canal and the draining of Russell, Ontario, before moving to Ottawa.

When the Mackenzie government came into power in 1872, Kingsford was appointed dominion engineer in charge of the harbours of the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River. He continued in this post until 1879, when he was dismissed as a result of concerns over his political sympathies. Throughout his career, Kingsford made many contributions to literature with articles submitted to periodicals on a variety of subjects. He kept his hand in journalism, while also writing technical books on roads, canals and other subjects. At age 60, he began writing a history of Canada which consisted of ten volumes, the last completed shortly before his death.

In 1887, he was among the founding members of the Canadian Society of Civil Engineers. His contributions to his fields were recognized by his election to the Royal Society of Canada and by the awarding of honorary doctorates by two universities. Kingsford died September 29, 1898 in Ottawa.

JAMES DYSON SLATER Section 48, Lot 1

James Dyson Slater was born in Manchester, England on September 10, 1813 and came to Canada with his parents in 1830 or 1831. They settled a few miles from Niagara Falls. He studied engineering and was appointed assistant engineer in charge of the location and construction of the Welland Canal from Port Dalhousie to Thorold (1841 to 1845). Slater moved to Bytown in 1845, following his appointment as assistant engineer on the Ottawa River improvement works, which included such construction projects as dams, timber slides, bridges and roads. In the spring of 1849,

Slater was appointed a provincial land surveyor and carried on in this profession until 1858, when he was appointed superintendent of the Rideau Canal, a position he held until 1872. In 1847, Slater married Esther Sparks, the youngest daughter of Nicholas and Sarah Sparks. Although this relationship may explain why an important Ottawa street was named for him, Slater's service as chairman of the public school board from 1863 to 1870 shows that he was a civic-minded citizen deserving of such commemoration. Slater passed away on October 24, 1876.

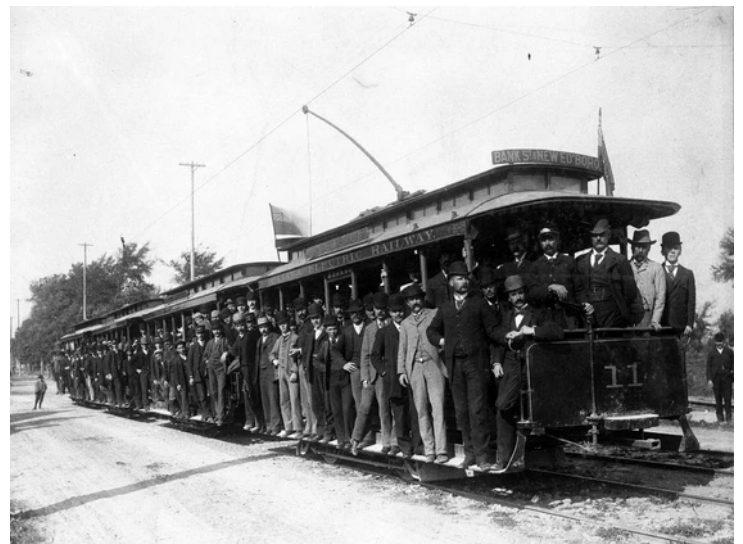
THOMAS AHEARN Section 50, Lot 123

Born in LeBreton Flats in June 1855, Thomas Ahearn was the son of an Irish blacksmith on the Rideau Canal maintenance crew. At age 14 or 15, Ahearn got his first job in a branch telegraph office tucked away in the mills near his home. He worked for barter, running messages in exchange for lessons in keying. He became an operator and worked in the telegraph office at the House of Commons, sending parliamentary decisions down the wire to their relevant victims. After a stint with Western Union of New York, Ahearn came back to LeBreton Flats and at age 25 and became the manager of a local telephone company.

Two years later, he formed an electrical equipment firm with Warren Y. Soper, the manager of a rival telephone firm and another former operator. Together, Ahearn and Soper obtained a contract to rig up telegraph equipment from ocean to ocean for the Canadian Pacific Railway. They then moved into the field of invention, with a particular interest in electricity. In 1887, Ahearn rounded up investors and started an electric company that lit the first light bulbs and street lamps in Ottawa.



The Beechwood Way



Thomas Ahearn, Mayor Thomas Birkett, city council members and other guests take the first street car to Ottawa's Exhibition Grounds, 1891. City of Ottawa Archives, CA00151

Next, Ahearn tackled transportation. In 1891, he inaugurated Ottawa's electric streetcar service. In response to winter weather, he equipped the trolleys with large rotating brushes to push away snow, and used electricity drawn from the overhead supply instead of wood stoves to heat the interiors of the cars. His company also produced streetcars for other cities. By pursuing these varied interests,

Ahearn became the first Ottawa millionaire who made his money in something other than timber. He was a utilities mogul: in addition to his electricity and urban transport enterprises, he snapped up the Ottawa Gas Company, creating the Ottawa, Light, Heat and Power Company. He was also an innovator, reputedly inventing the electric cooking range that was installed in the Windsor Hotel. And in 1899, he drove the first automobile in Ottawa – an electric model, of course.

Rich by 1900, Ahearn became a director of the Bank of Canada and other leading institutions, as well as a prominent local philanthropist. Chairman of the Ottawa Improvement Commission (later the National Capital Commission) from 1926 to 1932, he established Ottawa's parkway system and personally financed the Champlain Bridge over the Ottawa River in 1928. That same year he was appointed to the Privy Council. As time went on, Ahearn continued to play a role in the development and spread of new inventions. He made the first telephone call between Canada and England in 1926, as well as the first national radio broadcast a year later, establishing a continental chain of radio masts.

He died on June 28, 1938.



JOHN BURROWS (HONEY) Section 50, Lots 6 SW

A gravestone in Ottawa's Beechwood Cemetery is inscribed with a tribute to the one buried beneath it,

"HONORED GENTLEMAN, CIVIC AND RELIGIOUS LEADER, ROYAL ENGINEER, AND SUPERINTENDENT OF THE RIDEAU CANAL. CAME TO THE WILDERNESS OF UPPER CANADA IN 1816, FROM ENGLAND."

The tribute's subject, John Burrows, died in 1848 and was buried in a cemetery in Hull, but in 1882 was given a new grave in Beechwood Cemetery. Its records give no reason for the transfer, but by it Burrows returned to the community in which he had lived, and played an important part, during its early years when it was known as Bytown.

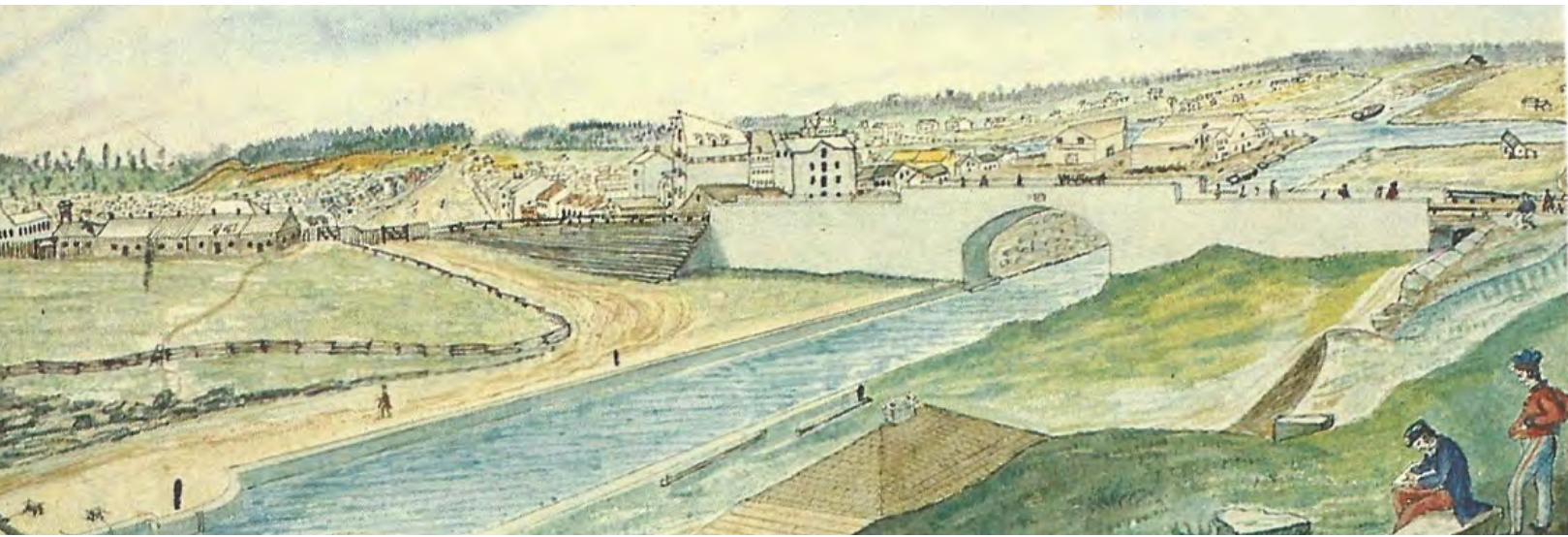


The decision of John Burrows to leave England for a life in wilderness, which was his destination, that area of Upper Canada at the junction of the Rideau and Ottawa Rivers, is puzzling, also his use of his middle name (his mother's surname) as his surname, for when he was born near Plymouth, England, on May 1, 1789, he was named John Burrows Honey. It has been suggested that his association with a radical political group made it advisable for him to leave England and to take another name. Burrows was a civil engineer in England, also a member of the militia, both of which may account for his skill in sketching as well as water colour painting.

He left for Upper Canada in 1816, settled briefly in Nepean Township which fronts the Ottawa River west of the Rideau, but soon went back to England. In 1818 he returned with his wife and brother and bought land in the township while his brother acquired property on the other side of the Rideau. His training in engineering enabled Burrows to work as a surveyor, and when construction of the Rideau Canal was undertaken he was employed by the British Army's Royal Engineers, the builders of the canal. The Rideau Canal had been planned soon after the War of 1812-14 ended. The American invasion of Canada in that war demonstrated the need, in the event of another invasion, for a waterway in addition to the St. Lawrence River for travel between Montreal and Kingston.

Preliminary plans called for it to follow rivers and lakes between Kingston and the junction of the Rideau and Ottawa Rivers, the latter providing passage from there to Montreal. The many rapids and falls along the waterway's length of about 150 miles (240 km) required the construction of dams, canals, and 47 locks to raise and lower ships. In 1826 Lieutenant Colonel John By of the Royal Engineers arrived in the area where the Rideau meets the Ottawa to start construction of the canal.

Late that year Lord Dalhousie, the Governor, officiated at a ceremony marking the commencement of the project. Barracks for the soldiers and a house for Colonel By were built on a hill overlooking the site of a series of locks that would join the canal to the Ottawa River.



The hill became known as Barracks Hill, but the name was changed three decades later to Parliament Hill. Colonel By was given many powers to carry out the project, including making surveys and expropriating property. He established streets and lots, with rents from the lots used for general improvements such as drainage, bridge-building and the provision of wharves.

A road laid out to the east and west of the canal's locks, now Wellington and Rideau Streets, soon had buildings along it and a community was started which in 1827 took the name Bytown, named after the colonel. That part of Bytown west of the canal became Upper Bytown, to the east, Lower Bytown. In 1823 Burrows had purchased the land on which the locks and canal were built but sold it before the locks' location had been decided, which made the new owner, Nicholas Sparks, wealthy from the land's greatly increased value.

One of Colonel By's projects was the construction of a series of bridges over the Chaudière Falls of the Ottawa River to link Bytown with a settlement founded in 1806 by Philemon Wright. He sent rafts of timber to Quebec by way of the Ottawa River and the St. Lawrence, the timber then sent to England.

A drawing of one of the bridges, dated 1827 was signed by Burrows and other drawings of it, dated 1828 and 1830 bear the names of Burrows and Colonel By. Another project in which Burrows was involved was the improvement of the passage of timber on the Ottawa River. His drawing, titled "Plan of improvements in timber channel at Chaudiere Falls," was dated 1829. His name was followed by the title "Overseer of Works."

In the course of the canal's construction Burrows took part in several surveys and explorations of the route. Measurements were made of the depth of water along rivers and lakes, and determinations made of the availability and quality of stone required for masonry work, as well as the suitability of stone for making lime for mortar. Since the route passed through areas of wilderness axe-men cleared the way for others.

On his second such trip, in July, 1827, Burrows travelled with three army officers, masonry contractor Thomas MacKay, and John Mactaggart, a Scottish engineer appointed by Colonel By to be the project's Clerk of Works.

At night there was no relief “from the suffering sting of the muskeetoos (sic) and flies.” John Mactaggart took ill on the trip, suffering inflammation of the skin, and his work on the canal greatly affected his health. When the party reached Kingston, Burrows described the place where he stayed there as “nothing was of the best yet every thing seemed a luxury after coming from the Bush.” On several of his trips on the waterway Burrows made sketches and water colour paintings of scenery and canal structures, which undoubted

He made many water colour paintings in the 1840s, mostly scenes of the locks at various places along the waterway. His painting of Smith’s Falls shows the canal, a sailboat, the locks, and about 20 houses. His paintings of locks included Old Slys, Merrick’s Mills, Burritt’s Rapids, Long Island, Hogs Back and Hartwells Locks. In addition to his drawings, sketches and paintings, Burrows prepared several maps of Bytown, one of them, showing proposed fortifications near the locks and canal, reflecting the military nature of the canal. One of Burrows’ drawings of the Chaudière bridges became an illustration in books about Canada.

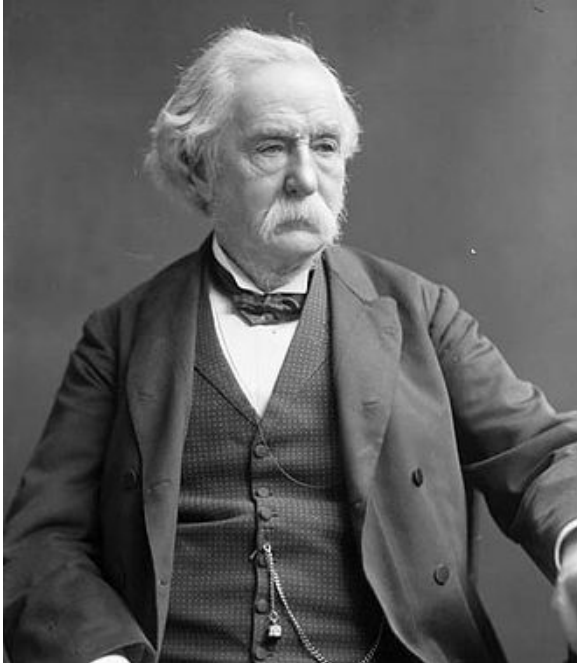
When John Mactaggart, his associate in the early stages of the canal’s construction, left Canada in 1828 suffering from the effects of swamp fever, he published a two-volume book on his Canadian experiences (“Three Years in Canada ...”), using the Chaudière drawing as an illustration. Another author, Joseph Bouchette, also used it, in his book “The British Dominion in North America,” published in London in 1831. John Mactaggart died in 1830, soon after his book was published. The Rideau Canal was an important factor in the settlement and development of the areas along its route. John Burrows remained, after its completion, in the British department that operated the canal, eventually becoming superintendent. The costs of the canal’s operation consistently exceeded the income from its tariffs and as Canada entered the railway age the canal suffered from the competition.

As a result, efforts were made to have it closed and filled in, fortunately not carried out. The canal continues in service after almost two centuries of use, as a recreational waterway, and a memorial to a great engineering undertaking, constructed with skill under the most adverse of conditions. The considerable contributions that Burrows made to the canal’s construction and operation were matched by his contributions to the community of Bytown. Appointed by Colonel By to be a town councillor, he also served as a Justice of the Peace. His strong religious beliefs led him to pay for the building of Bytown’s first church, a Methodist chapel, and when it burned down his house became a chapel until a new one was built.

Although in poor health, John Burrows continued to work at the canal until his death on July 27, 1848 in Kingston. Bytown’s newspaper “The Packet” in its notice of his death, described him as “one of the earliest inhabitants of Bytown and much regretted by numerous friends and acquaintances.” It announced the date of his funeral, stating that “The inhabitants generally are respectfully invited to attend.”

[Bio written by Bryan Cook]

THOMAS COLTRIN KEEFER Section 62, Lot 65



Thomas Coltrin Keefer was born in Thorold, Upper Canada in 1821, the son of a United Empire Loyalist and grandson of an Alsatian Huguenot. Keefer's father, George Kiefer (later changed to Keefer), left the United States following the War of Independence, moving to the Niagara Peninsula of Upper Canada where he and others founded the community of Thorold.

He became a mill owner, merchant and the president of the company that constructed the Welland Canal to provide ship passage between Lakes Erie and Ontario, the falls and rapids of the Niagara River preventing the use of that route. Keefer attended Upper Canada College, and upon graduating in 1838 at age 17, he left Canada to begin his career in engineering by taking part in the construction of the Erie Canal, joining Lake Erie to the Hudson River.

On the completion of the Erie Canal, Keefer returned to Canada to work on an enlargement of the Welland Canal, and at age 24 he was appointed chief engineer for improvements to the Ottawa River's canals and timber slides. One of Keefer's many papers and reports, *The Philosophy of Railways*, published in 1849, drew attention to the important part that railways would play in Canada's development, and in 1851 he became the chief engineer of a company building a railway from Montreal to Kingston.

Keefer's many projects also included municipal waterworks, initially considered necessary because of the devastating fires that swept through cities and towns. Much of the systems he designed for Ottawa, Montreal and Hamilton are still in use today. In the course of his career Keefer strove to have engineering recognized as a profession and was influential in establishing the Canadian Society of Civil Engineers in 1887.

He was the society's first president and also served as president of the American Society of Civil Engineers. Other achievements included the organization of Canada's presentations at world's fairs, his contributions to the Paris exposition of 1878 earning for him from Queen Victoria the title GMC, and from the French government membership in the Legion of Honour.

He was made a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada in 1890. Keefer was the son-in-law of Thomas MacKay, the contractor for the construction of the Rideau Canal at Bytown, who amassed a large tract of land where the Rideau River joins the Ottawa (formerly known as Junction Gore).

On MacKay's death his estate came under Keefer's management, with a part of the land sold to Beechwood Cemetery. After an engineering contract in Mexico, Keefer came back to Rockcliffe Park and named several streets, such as Buena Vista, Mariposa and Acacia. He died in his Rockcliffe home on January 7, 1915, at the age of 94.

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 St. Bartholomew's and St. Andrew's churches. 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 1837 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.

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.

The Ottawa Locks of the Rideau Canal in 1869, showing part of the quarry on the east side where Mackay was able to extract superior seams of limestone. — William Notman, McCord Museum I-38066.



Public Service

FREDERICK HARRIS D. VIETH Section A, Range 17, Grave 19

Born in 1840 in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Vieth was a soldier and an author. In 1855, while visiting the British Isles, he was commissioned to the 63rd Regiment and he served throughout the later stages of the Crimean War. After the war, he remained with the regiment for several years, when he was stationed in the Maritime Provinces.

After he left the army, he served as captain of the 11th Halifax Regiment of the Nova Scotia militia. In his later years, he was a clerk in the Department of Railways and Canals in Ottawa. He was also the author of *Recollections of the Crimean Campaign* and *the Expedition to Kinburn in 1855, Including also Sporting and Dramatic Incidents in Connection with Garrison Life in the Canadian Lower Provinces* (1907). Vieth died in Ottawa on May 30, 1909.

ALFRED M. EDMONDS Section C, Range 12, Grave 17

Alfred M. Edmonds was born in 1821 at Bishopstone, Berkshire, England. Very little is known about his early life, but by the 1860s he was living in the Ottawa area – in 1863, he had won an award for drawings of Ottawa Valley lumbering while he worked as a teacher and draughtsman in Burnstown, Ontario. His drawings of the Haycock Iron Mine, to be found on line at Library and Archives Canada, are some of the earliest representations of the rural Outaouais region. Oddly, Edmonds never appeared in any Canadian census.

By 1880, Edmonds was living in Ottawa, where he worked as a cartographer for the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Department of Railroads and Canals. During this time, Edmonds also worked as an assistant to Sir Sandford Flemming, then-head of the Canadian Intercontinental Railway. Several of his maps and book illustrations survive at Library and Archives Canada, and he was commissioned by the Governor General, Lord Dufferin. He continued this work in Ottawa until 1890, living in various rooming houses.

Sadly, Edmonds' life did not end well. According to the *Ottawa Journal*, he was arrested on February 27, 1893 – the paper describes him as “a pale, delicate-looking man, who it is thought was insane.”

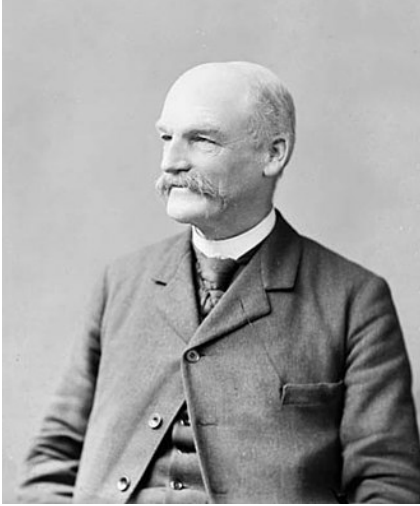


The magistrate instructed that he be sent to hospital, but for reasons unknown, Edmonds was sent to jail on April 6th of that same year. He died at the Ottawa Protestant Hospital on November 23, 1893 of natural causes, but his passing sparked an inquest.

Apparently, there were some efforts to secure him a place in an asylum in Toronto, but he was refused admittance.

The inquest concluded that while Edmonds died of natural causes, he should never have been detained in a jail.

SIR COLLINGWOOD SCHREIBER Section 21, Lot 12 S



Born in Bradwell-on-Sea, Essex, England on December 14, 1831, Schreiber came to Canada in 1852. Shortly after his arrival, he secured a position with the engineering staff of the Hamilton and Toronto Railway Company. He continued with the company until the railway was completed in 1856, at which time he opened a private business in Toronto. In 1860 he was employed by the Northern Railway Company of Canada, where he worked restoring and repairing lines.

He went on to work for the Nova Scotia government as a division engineer for the Pictou Railway until 1867. Having built a strong reputation for himself, in 1868 Schreiber was tasked with supervising the surveying of the route for the new, Intercolonial Railway through Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

In 1873, he became chief engineer of the government railways, and in 1880 he succeeded Sir Sandford Fleming as chief engineer of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Schreiber held these positions until 1892, when he was appointed chief engineer of the Department of Railways and Canals. In 1893, Schreiber was made a Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George. In 1905, he became general consulting engineer to the Dominion government; 11 years later, he was knighted for his public services. He continued in government employ until his death on March 23, 1918.

Despite living at a time that was rife with corruption, Schreiber always paid more attention to engineering than political concerns. He found a job for Prime Minister John A. Macdonald's nephew, but flatly refused to promote people with influence unless their performance merited it. He repeatedly clashed with political "meddlers," and was disliked by various ministers in the Macdonald and Laurier administrations he served under.

DANIEL ALEXANDER McLAUGHLIN Section 28, Lot 19 SE

Daniel McLaughlin was born in Quebec City on 16 February 1865, the son of Samuel McLaughlin and Mary Jane Fitch. Samuel McLaughlin was a photographer with the Board of Works, later known as the Department of Public Works, since the fall of 1859. He retained this position until the mid-1890s when he was succeeded by his son.

As a young man, McLaughlin was in the photo engraving business in Ottawa, but often assisted his father with his photographic work. In October 1896, he was appointed the official government photographer for the departments of Public Works and Railways and Canals in place of his father who had retired.

And like his father before him, McLaughlin was responsible for creating a photographic record of new federal government construction, including buildings, railways, canals and other public works.

McLaughlin married Sarah O'Donnell in 1895, but he was a widower with seven children when she died unexpectedly on 20 May 1917.

WILLIAM PITTMAN LETT Section 34, Lot 28 NW



In 1820, a young family of a veteran Irish soldier, Lieutenant Andrews Lett, landed in the British North American Colony with a babe-in-arms. The child, William Pittman Lett, was destined to experience tumultuous changes in his fortunes and those of Bytown, Canada and the world on his long journey through the 19th century.

For 73 years, spanning most of the century from 1819 to 1892, William witnessed British North America and Bytown evolve rapidly through to Confederation of the Dominion and Ottawa as the nation's capital. After a classical education, he became a radical journalist espousing the anti-Catholic Orange cause and pioneering theatre in Bytown.

As Ottawa's first and longest serving civic clerk for 36 years, he became more circumspect. He lobbied for Queen Victoria to designate it the capital of the Province and then Dominion of Canada.

Lett witnessed the building of the Rideau Canal and was personally active in the evolution of Ottawa and its infrastructure from its humble beginnings as Colonel By's construction headquarters. A further moderating influence on his life came when William married twenty-one year old Maria Hinton on 22 October 1849.

She was born on 29 October 1828, the second daughter of Jessie and Joseph Hinton (1798-1884) of Hintonburgh, the Warden of Carleton County. Their love was such that they eloped to be married in the Methodist chapel in Huntley and were temporarily ostracized from family and friends. Their growing family of nine children suffered the common anguish of losing young children to infectious disease.

A passionately patriot and militiaman, Lett engaged in public debates over the choice of national flag, annexation, slavery, temperance, poverty, and the politics of the British connection and Imperial wars. He was a highly moral person who came to acknowledge the evolving role of women through the century.

Lett delivered his messages though public oratory, the newspapers and local societies. His media were prose, speech, poetry and the power of holding the civic pen. He was Ottawa's official chronicler and the City's de facto poet laureate with a considerable lifetime production of poetry. Lett was also a socialite - he rubbed shoulders with the vice-regal, the political and the powerful, and was a friend of Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald.

A devout Methodist, Lett mellowed his antiCatholic views as the century progressed. Passionate about the natural beauty of the local waterfalls and forests, he wrote monographs on wildlife. He enjoyed fishing and hunting fowl and deer.

On September 3, 1881, Lett suffered the terrible tragedy of losing his true love, Maria, in a railway accident at a crossing near their home on Dalhousie Street. Lett survived her by more than a decade, and on August 15, 1892 he died, a much loved and highly respected member of Ottawa society. He was, undoubtedly, Ottawa's renaissance clerk and an important public commentator spanning the 19th century in verse and pros.



REVEREND WILLIAM DURIE Section 37, Lot 69

William Durie was born in Glasgow in 1804. He, as well as his two brothers, was educated at the University of Edinburgh. Durie was ordained as a minister to the Relief Church at Earlston, Scotland in 1834.

The Relief Church was a Scottish Presbyterian denomination founded in 1761 by Thomas Gillespie. The word “relief” reflects its separation from state control and patronage rife in the Church of Scotland at the time. Durie left the Relief Church in 1843 during a schism, known as the “Disruption of 1843,” over whether the state which provided church funding should control the appointment of ministers.



He went on to join the Free Church of Scotland when it was formed in 1847 by uniting the United Secession Church and the Relief Church. The Free Church was active in colonial missions and in late 1846 appointed Durie to St Andrew’s Church in Bytown.

Aged 42, he arrived in Bytown in December 1846 and settled into the manse behind the church. Durie was reunited with his younger brother John, who had come to Bytown in 1832 and now had a thriving general store in New Edinburgh. Unfortunately, Durie’s ministry was not going to be an easy one. In the heat of the summer of 1847, 90,000 Irish emigrants landed in Canada as human ballast in empty timber trade ships to escape the potato famine.

The Grosse Île quarantine station to Montreal was not perfect in controlling the rampant ship fever: typhus. At Kingston, 3,000 emigrants were packed into barges in June and July, and towed up the Rideau Canal by tugboats to Bytown, where the first typhus case – a young girl – was diagnosed on June 5th. The subsequent epidemic overwhelmed the Sisters of Charity who had hastily constructed a typhus hospital. The very ill lay on the ground in quickly-built fever sheds or under upturned boats along the canal and river banks. Bytown largely closed down; those who could leave did so.

On August 2nd, the Rideau Canal closed to emigrant traffic; it took 3 months more for the epidemic to run its course. The Sisters and volunteers fell ill themselves and the Catholic and Protestant clergy, Father Molloy and Rev. Durie, sustained the aid effort. When Father Molloy took ill and was sent away to recover, Durie and others maintained their work in the fever sheds.

The strain proved too much; Durie was stricken and died a bachelor on Sept. 12th, 1847. He begged the people comforting him to build a hospital for the sick and the poor; they would do so. The Ottawa Advocate carried a long and passionate obituary which William Pittman Lett, as Editor, could well have written. His funeral service was conducted in St. Andrew’s, “a large concourse of people of all creeds followed Durie’s remains” to the cemetery in Sandy Hill and all public business closed. He now rests in a table tomb beside the large Durie memorial stone in Beechwood cemetery.

ROBERT MURDOCK MacLEOD Section 39, Lot 61 NE

Robert Murdoch MacLeod was born in Baddeck, Nova Scotia on October 11, 1861. He was a journalist and Editor for the Ottawa Free Press from 1882 to 1887. In 1890, he served as a parliamentary reporter for the Ottawa Citizen, becoming President of the Parliamentary Press Gallery in Ottawa in 1896. Between 1891 and 1910, MacLeod was also a correspondent for several Canadian and American newspapers, including the New York Herald. Starting in 1894, MacLeod also served as the Canadian representative of Reuter's Telegram Company of London, England. MacLeod was something of an adventurer.

Between his work for the Ottawa Free Press and the Ottawa Citizen, MacLeod travelled abroad. In 1887, he sailed to the South Pacific Islands and spent two years travelling around Southern and Central America. During this period, in 1888, he found employment on the construction of the Panama Canal under Count Ferdinand De Lesseps. The Honourable Col Samuel Hughes, Member of Parliament for Victoria, Minister of Militia and Veteran of the Second Boer War, was quoted as saying that MacLeod was "known and respected on all sides." He died on February 6, 1949.

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 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 the 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.

ANDREW GEORGE BLAIR Section 41, Lot 75 N

Born in Fredericton, New Brunswick on March 7, 1844, Blair was called to the bar of New Brunswick in 1866. He sat in the legislative assembly of New Brunswick for York County from 1878 to 1896.

In 1879, he was elected leader of the Liberal opposition in the assembly and in 1883 became premier of New Brunswick. He retained this position until 1896, when he resigned in order to accept the portfolio of railways and canals in the Laurier administration in Ottawa where he was later elected to the Canadian House of Commons. In 1904, he was appointed chairman of the Board of Railway Commissioners for Canada. He passed away on January 25, 1907.

FREDERICK AUGUSTUS DIXON Section 48, Lot 38 S

Born in England on May 7, 1843, Dixon came to Canada in 1870. He was a journalist for the Toronto Mail before entering the civil service in 1878, in the Department of Railways and Canals. He was also a playwright and had several of his plays presented at Rideau Hall in Ottawa. These included Little Nobody, Fifine the Fisher Maid and a masque, Canada's Welcome. He died in Ottawa on January 12, 1919.

Station to protect the canal

Captain James Forsyth Section 29, Lot 50

Born in Aberdeen Scotland on June 25, 1806, little is known about James Forsyth's early life. His listed profession was labourer before he joined the Royal Artillery Regiment on November 30, 1822 at the age of 17. He remained in service with the Regiment, at the rank of Company Sergeant, until March 31, 1846. During this time he served for 14 years abroad, almost 8 of them in Canada, including a stint in Montreal, QC in 1841. Forsyth was married to Mary Macpherson, (born in England in 1812) in 1837 in Lewisham, London, and the couple had at least 6 children, all born in Canada. By 1851, after resigning from the military, the family was living in Bytown and Forsyth was, by all accounts, successful – he was working as a bailiff and the family lived in a one-story frame house and had a horse, a cow and two pigs.

By 1855, Forsyth had found employment as a clerk with the Board of Ordnance. The Militia Act passed that year, and Colonel John Baillie Turner took up the task of creating an Ottawa unit, which would become the Ottawa Field Battery. Turner personally recommended Forsyth for the position of the permanent Sergeant Major of the unit, calling him “a very respectable man.” The unit was installed in the Commissariat Building beside the Rideau Canal, which required extensive repairs before the 100 or so men and 70 horses could be accommodated.

The Commissariat Building no longer exists today – it was located at the very head of the Rideau Canal in what is now downtown Ottawa, opposite the present Bytown Museum. During his time with the Ottawa Field Battery, Forsyth received his commission and was appointed Adjutant, after other officers resigned or were transferred to other units. The unit saw action during the Fenian Raids, when it was stationed at Cornwall in 1866 (then under threat of attack), by which time Forsyth had been promoted to Captain.

Captain Forsyth died in Ottawa on September 2, 1872. As with many of the earliest Beechwood burials, Forsyth was interred in Sandy Hill cemetery for a year before being relocated to Beechwood's Section 29, along with two of his sons, George and William, who had predeceased him.

The Forsyth monument was the first one erected in Beechwood, and was paid for by members of the 2nd Ottawa Field Battery in the 1870s. The monument is quite impressive, consisting of a sculptured sandstone statue which is dedicated to the memory of Captain Forsyth.



Captain John Baillie Turner Section 29, Lot 50 NW

John Baillie Turner was born in Devizes, Wiltshire in England around 1807. Few records remain of his early life, but he claimed to have served in the Devonshire Yeomanry, and eventually fought with a mercenary brigade in the Spanish Carlist Wars in the 1830s. Turner is believed to have arrived in Canada around 1842, possibly working as a veterinary surgeon with the 7th Hussars stationed at St. Jean, QC.

He moved to Montreal some time after, where he founded and briefly ran a newspaper, the Morning Chronicle. While still living in Montreal, Turner secured a commission in the Montreal Dragoons, and also briefly served as Deputy Grand Master of the Montreal Lodge, Orange Order. However, indicative of Turner's somewhat eventful and interesting life, he was expelled from the organization on 26 March of 1846 after being accused of embezzling Lodge funds (some- thing Turner vehemently denied).

Fortunately for him, the potential scandal didn't appear to harm his career. Turner resigned his commission from the Dragoons in January of 1850; an act of protest and solidarity after the government revoked the commissions of militia officers who had signed the Annexation Manifesto. The Manifesto was a political document created in 1849 in Montreal and supported by English-speaking Tories.

It called for the annexation of Canada by the United States and was created as a response to Britain's abolition of laws that created preferential trade conditions for British colonies. Turner, a Tory by politics, sympathized with the signatories. By 1852 Turner had moved to Bytown (soon to be renamed Ottawa). Turner was closely linked to the professional military as it existed in Bytown, and when word of Militia reforms began to circulate in 1854 he was intrigued. In December of that year he wrote to the Adjutant General, indicating that the locals had been urging him to form an artillery unit.

He outlined what such a unit would require: 94 men, nine-pounder guns and at least 60 draught and riding horses. He, of course, would take command, as he "[knew] all about the form and command of such a unit."

Unfortunately for Turner, between the original letter and the actual passing of the Militia Act in 1855 a new Adjutant General was appointed. Turner wrote to him of course, stating much of the same

He was also prescient enough to note the need for a balance of French and English members of the unit, and submit his suggestions for how the unit should be spread out. On September 14, 1855, Lieutenant-Colonel Roderick Matheson was given command of the newly-created Militia District Number 1 in Upper Canada, which encompassed Ottawa. Subsequently, on September 27 of that year, a Militia General Order authorized the formation of the Volunteer Militia Field Battery of Ottawa, with Turner appointed as its Captain. The Field Battery was put up in the Commissariat Building beside the Rideau Canal, which is still standing today, serving as the home of the Bytown Museum. After some extensive repairs, including new flooring, construction of a proper harness room and small stable and the installation of exterior hitching posts for some 60-plus horses, the building was ready.

Turner's new brass six-pounder guns also arrived fairly quickly, coming in on the train from Montreal on November 12, 1855 (albeit slightly damaged, and perhaps not the cream of the crop, which would have been taken by Quebec and Montreal units who had first crack at the supplies). Other necessary supplies were sorely missed, including sleighs for transporting the guns and hitching equipment for the horses, as well as basic tools and kit for the men.

After dispatching a strongly worded letter about the missing supplies, Turner was pleased to receive all the necessary bits and pieces by the end of that same November. The Field Battery's first test of their heavy guns took place on Christmas Day, 1855, at an improvised range near the Chaudière Falls. Despite the difficulty in moving the guns, Turner was satisfied with the results: of the sixteen rounds fired at the 450 yard targets (dragged onto the Ottawa River ice for this purpose), six rounds hit the target, of which two were perfect bullseyes. By November of 1856, Turner's hard work had been recognized and he was promoted to the rank of Major. He was clearly deeply dedicated to the unit and the military as a whole.

In 1857, Turner founded the Canada Military Gazette (which ran weekly for only 16 issues), and he went so far as to form a brass band, going so far as to attempt to commission a music teacher into the Sedentary Militia so as to secure his services for free!

Turner also worked diligently to keep his unit happy by ensuring its prominence in society – he organized battery parties and outings for officers and men, likely with their families along. By 1860 annual military balls were taking place, with the Field Battery leading the organization efforts. Turner died suddenly on March 23, 1864 and was buried in the Sandy Hill Cemetery.

In 1895 his remains were moved to Beechwood, and he was placed near his former compatriot, James Forsyth in Section 29, Lot 50NW.

About Us

Beechwood is the National Cemetery of Canada and is the home of the National Military Cemetery of the Canadian Forces, the RCMP National Memorial Cemetery, the Ottawa Police Service Memorial Cemetery, the CSIS National Memorial Cemetery and many more organizations and religious groups. Beechwood has been proudly serving our community since 1873.

Take advantage of all the services offered by Beechwood Cemetery, including pre-arrangements, full service funerals, cremation, cemetery services and executor assistance. Beechwood Cemetery can meet whatever wishes you may have from visitations, informal gatherings, life celebrations, memorial services, catered receptions, to a custom monument or memorialization.

Beechwood Cemetery is here to provide you with everything you need to make the right decision for you and your loved ones.

Beechwood, Funeral, Cemetery and Cremation Services is owned by The Beechwood Cemetery Foundation and operates on a not-for-profit basis. Governed by a volunteer Board of Directors, it is the only organization of its kind in Ottawa. In choosing Beechwood, Funeral, Cemetery and Cremation Services, you can take comfort in knowing that all funds are used for the maintenance, preservation and enhancement of this National Historic Site. The Beechwood Cemetery Foundation was created for the purpose of safeguarding Beechwood's future and increasing public awareness of Beechwood, as well as the important historical persons buried within it.

Contact Us

EMAIL

info@beechwoodottawa.ca

PHONE

613-741-9530

WEBSITE

beechwoodottawa.ca

ADDRESS

280 Beechwood Ave
Ottawa, ON K1L 8A6



BEECHWOOD

Funeral, Cemetery and Cremation Services
Services funéraires, cimetière et crémation

Owned by the Beechwood Cemetery Foundation and operated by the Beechwood Cemetery Company.