

his father, adheres to the Conservative party. Fraternally he is a Mason and an Odd Fellow, connected with the lodges at Kingsville. This family is one of the very old and prominent ones, and its full ancestral history will be found elsewhere.

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WILLIAM ABNER COLBY, now retired from active life, is one of the oldest railroad men in Windsor, and has seen the hamlet grow into a thriving city, and, in his own way, has been one of the factors which have assisted in its growth and prosperity.

Abner Colby, the grandfather of William Abner, was a native of England, and spent his whole life in his own country, his three sons, Edward, William and Joseph, however, finding homes across the seas and becoming valued citizens of the Dominion.

Joseph Colby, the youngest son of Abner, was born in 1818, in England, and there married Margaret Grove. In 1841 they joined the great exodus to Canada, and located at Guelph, where he followed his trade of boat wrecker until his death in 1844. His widow later married Nicholas Nattie.

William Abner Colby was left fatherless at the age of three years. He was born, the only child of his parents, Sept. 14, 1842, on the ocean, and was four years of age when he was brought to Windsor, so that he may almost be said to have grown up with the city. His first efforts at making a living were put forth in the employ of the Great Western Railway Company, which was then in course of construction. The lad, then seven years old, earned ten cents a day as water and whiskey carrier to the laborers employed on the grading. That he was a faithful little worker even in this humble way may be assumed, as he later found no difficulty in obtaining farm work with a Mr. Hall, on the farm now owned by John Davis. During the fall of the year he added to his income by catching fish for Alexander Campeau, of Detroit, who paid him by the hundred. Mr. Colby appears to have sought employment and succeeded in various lines, as we find that while still a youth he was accepted as one of the workmen employed in building the Michigan Central elevator between Second and Third streets, Detroit. It was in 1864 that he secured permanent employment with the Great Western Railway Company, and

for over a year he was on the transfer "Union" as wheelman, and then went on the road as fireman. In 1865 Mr. Colby hauled the first train from the boat to the Canadian shore, an honor which the engineer would have liked to enjoy. As it happened, the latter was enjoying his dinner just at the time the boat arrived at the Windsor slip, and it was the capable and watchful fireman of the train who backed the engine down, and thus secured the distinction of transporting the first train over the Detroit river. Mr. Colby continued as fireman until 1872, when he was given an engine, and in the responsible position of engineer he continued until 1898, when he felt that the time of life had arrived for him to vacate the cab where he had served so long and faithfully, the jar of the engine disturbing his health. During his long period of service he was never fined, suspended or discharged.

On Jan. 11, 1869, Mr. Colby was married to Miss Celina Bincette, a member of one of the early settled families of Windsor. Her grandfather came to Windsor as early as 1800, and built a log house in the forest, not far from Mr. Colby's former residence on Trent street. Here his eight children were born, namely: Andre, Louis, Joseph, Leander, Charles, Ambrose, Therese and Archange. Louis, the second son, and father of Mrs. Colby, was born Sept. 7, 1816, followed an agricultural life, and died in 1881. He married Cesaire Papper, who was born in 1830, and still survives, and they reared the following children: Celina, Mrs. Colby; Rose, wife of Laforet Narcisse, of Cincinnati, Ohio; Annie, wife of Joseph Martin; Henry, of Cleveland, Ohio; Matilda, wife of Elias Curtis; August; Elizabeth, wife of John Martin; and Sarah, wife of William Brown.

A family of six children has been born to Mr. and Mrs. Colby, as follows: Louisa first married Albert Freeman, by whom she had one son, Loyd, and for her second husband married John McGrory; Mary married Thomas Brown, and has one daughter, Gertrude; Albert married Ethel Langlois, and has one son, Marvin; Rose married Ralph Hall; Marguerite and Grace are at home. The religious connection of the family is with the Roman Catholic Church.

Mr. Colby has in his possession a most interesting book, in which he has recorded many incidents of his railroad career, having kept track not only of his regular trips, but also of the extra and night runs which have come in the way of duty during his long career. He finds that on many occasions forty-seven days' work has been