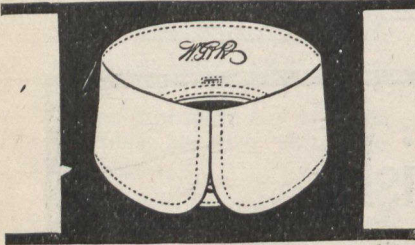


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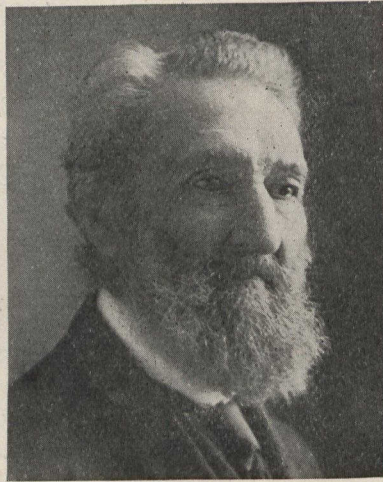
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A Typical Ontario Pioneer

THE late Samuel Day of St. Thomas was a type of the Ontario pioneer—a type that will never be duplicated and which is now fast disappearing. These men found this fair province, a vast forest; they transformed it into a smiling garden. They were physically and intellectually strong men; never softened or weakened by the luxuries of modern civilization; always fighting with the most difficult situation which ever faced a nation of pioneers.

Sixty-one years ago a fond Devonshire mother accompanied her eighteen-year-old boy from their home near Exeter to Plymouth, where she had engaged passage for the lad right through to Port Stanley, on the shores of Lake Erie, where some Devonshire friends had located. It proved to be a final separation, for mother and son never saw each other again, the latter having never since crossed the Atlantic. The voyage to the new world, by sailing vessel, occupied full seven weeks, and was a decidedly rough passage.

Landing at Port Stanley, the young



The late Ald. Samuel Day,
of St. Thomas.

pioneer paid a teamster half a dollar to convey him and his belongings to the then hamlet of St. Thomas, where he stopped at a hotel in what was known as Blackwood's Hollow. Having served some time as apprentice to the blacksmithing trade, young Samuel Day engaged in the same line of work with William Barrett, afterwards his brother-in-law. His wages in England had been two shillings per week, so that the sum of eight dollars per month for the first year in his Canadian situation, increasing to \$12, \$16 and \$19 each year successively, seemed excellent pay.

Later Mr. Day established a blacksmithing and carriage-making business at Talbotville, where he prospered. On December 28, 1855, he took unto himself a helpmeet, Eliza Fitzsimmons, whose home adjoined the town of St. Thomas. For fifty-five years they prosperously sailed the matrimonial main together, and were as hale and well-preserved a couple as could be found the length and breadth of Canada.

Returning to St. Thomas, Mr. Day established a waggon and carriage-making business, and for years his products in this line enjoyed a widespread reputation for substantial excellence. Later he established the first lumber yard in St. Thomas, and built the first white brick house in St. Thomas, and the fifth brick house of any kind to be built in the town. The material for this house, which still stands and is occupied, was teamed from London. Taking, as he did, considerable live stock in the way of trade, Mr. Day found it advisable to purchase a fifty-acre farm not far

from the city, which was the first exclusively stock farm, perhaps, in the province.

Another business enterprise which occupied Mr. Day for some years was the buying and shipping of oak timber to England, for shipbuilding, and of hickory, which he shipped to Germany.

While prosecuting his business affairs with native shrewdness and ability, Mr. Day found time to take an active and energetic interest in municipal and national affairs. It is a notable fact that half a century ago Mr. Day was a member of the Town Council of St. Thomas, even as he was the other day an alderman of the same place, grown to a city of 15,000 inhabitants, elected for the second time handrunning at the head of the polls, and polling in 1908 the largest vote ever cast for any municipal candidate in that city.

In later years Mr. Day purchased an excellent farm not far from the city limits, in Yarmouth township, and it was while an agriculturist he was invested with all the offices in the gift of the township and county. While school trustee of Yarmouth he built the school-house which is still occupied on the Gravel Road. For seven years he filled the office of Reeve of Yarmouth, and sat one year in the chair of Warden of Elgin County. At the expiration of that term the ratepayers of the township, in recognition of Mr. Day's long and efficient services, presented him with a handsome and beautifully engraved gold watch, bearing within the case an inscription of appreciation and the date, "January 1st, 1878." This time-piece Alderman Day carried to the day of his death.

It was during his term as Warden of the county that Mr. Day was instrumental, in the face of much opposition, in purchasing the present poor farm, and establishing the Elgin House of Industry, which at that time was the second institution of the kind to be established in Canada. The wisdom of that action has since never been questioned, the House of Industry having proved a haven of refuge for many a poor soul stranded on the shores of adversity.

Shortly after retiring from the duties of Warden of the county Mr. Day was induced to enter the field for Parliamentary honours in the riding of East Elgin. The representing member, William Harvey, had served only one term when the Government of Sir John A. Macdonald resigned. Mr. Day ran in the Conservative interests but was defeated.

While Warden of Elgin he also actively supported the granting of a \$200,000 bonus from the county for the building of the Michigan Central Railway through this district.

Renting his farm for a period of three years, Mr. Day enjoyed a well-earned respite from the serious cares of life, spending some time in the Canadian Northwest, where one of his sons had located. Subsequently he resumed farming for a time, but several years ago purchased a property in St. Thomas. Throughout his long career Alderman Day's motto had been to do unto others as he would be done by, and his only regret was, he said shortly before his death, that he never again saw his mother after parting from her on the quays of Plymouth.

A SAD STATE.

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