



"The Greatest Possible Good to the Greatest Possible Number."

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Biographical Sketch of Francis A. Gemmill, President of the O.B.K.A.

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MR. GEMMILL is a Scotch Canadian by birth, 46 years of age, his parents having settled in the County of Lanark, where they resided until they moved to Sarnia, County of Lambton, in 1854. In 1863, at the age of 17, he became an enthusiast in apiculture, the result of his visits to an uncle, residing in the same place. Box hives were the order of the day at that time, and "Quinby's Mysteries of Bee-Keeping" his principal text book. In February, of 1864, he secured a copy of the third edition of "Langstroth, on the Hive and Honey Bee," and as the Italian bee had been commanding considerable attention as well as the movable comb hive, he resolved to give both a trial. Accordingly, in June, of that year, he had a swarm of native bees placed in one of the Langstroth observing hives, which, by the way, still remains in his Apiary. In the latter part of October he secured from Mr. Langstroth, by express, an Italian queen, paying the then modest sum of \$10 for her, same having been sold the fore part of the season for \$15 and \$20 each. She was accordingly introduced, as per the instructions sent, but the result of said introduction was not known until the spring following, when he had the satisfaction of seeing young Italians disporting themselves on fine days in April. The subject of our sketch has not been what is now termed an extensive apiarist, never having owned more than 75 colonies at any one

time. Neither has he always kept bees from 1863 until the present time, as circumstances prevented his remaining always in the one locality; still he never lost his old time interest or enthusiasm for the pursuit, and was preparing himself to extend his sphere in this line, and establish a permanent out-apiary, when Foul Brood, the scourge of the Apiarist, slightly manifested itself in his Apiary, in the fall of '79; hence his action combined with a few others at the meeting of the O.B.K.A., held in Belleville, January, '90, urging the necessity of securing Legislation in regard to this disease with good results, and also took a prominent part in the Act preventing the spraying of fruit trees while in bloom, now in force in Ontario. Mr. Gemmill has used almost exclusively the eight-frame Langstroth, and latterly the new Heddon hive; and has wintered with fair success both outdoors and in the cellar. He thinks both methods have much to commend them. Cellar-wintered bees, in his estimation, should be protected in spring with packing, in order to secure the best results. His present location, although an average one, is, he finds, over-stocked, there being within the city limits (Stratford), about 250 colonies. Notwithstanding this, he secures fair crops, but nevertheless is in the habit of moving his apiary some miles distant in order to secure the benefit of a fall flow, which so far has been successful as to the amount of honey gathered, but he is not sure about the colony being benefited in the end; experience rather tending to show better results in wintering from colonies that have gathered no fall honey—buckwheat, however, is not included in list of fall flowers. Besides having done considerable at queen-rearing, he is a great lover of producing comb honey, but the late poor seasons have turned his attention