



*SKETCH OF THE LIFE*

*OF THE LATE*

*LT.-COL. WILLIAM EDWARD O'BRIEN, LL.B.,*

*BARRISTER-AT-LAW.*

*(Taken from the Canada Law Journal, February, 1915.)*

A notable Canadian passed from the scene when William Edward O'Brien died at his residence "The Woods," Shanty Bay, Lake Simcoe, on December 22nd, 1914, in his 84th year. By his death the country lost an able statesman, the profession of law a keen legal writer, the militia an active upholder and efficient soldier, and the Empire an ardent Imperialist and a devoted citizen.

Mr. O'Brien was the eldest son of a retired naval and military officer, Col. E. G. O'Brien; his mother being a daughter of Rev. Edmund Gapper, Rector of Charlineh, Somersetshire, England. He was born near Thornhill on March 10th, 1831. About that time his father was placed in charge of a settlement of half-pay officers and others on the shores of Lake Simcoe; afterwards being Chairman of the Quarter Sessions, and Colonel of the Simcoe militia, leading them to Toronto at the time of the Rebellion of 1836-7.

In the winter of 1831 Colonel E. G. O'Brien, with his wife and child, one year old, took up his grant of land on the north shore of Lake Simcoe, crossing the lake on the ice with a party of axemen, who, before night, cleared a sufficient space for and erected three shanties to house the party. This gave the name to the settlement. Under such stern and unusual circumstances W. E. O'Brien began his career. The other members of the family consisted of his brothers, Lucius Richard O'Brien, first President of the Royal Canadian Academy, Henry O'Brien, K.C., of Toronto, and three sisters. His wife, daughter of the late Col. Loring, and his only child, Mrs. Verner Wilson, survive him.

There being no educational advantages in Simcoe in those days Colonel E. G. O'Brien moved to Toronto with his family; and W. E. O'Brien was educated at Upper Canada College. He