

# Obituary

## Colonel James Walker

During the early morning of March 31, 1936, Colonel James Walker, one of the original members of the North West Mounted Police, died in his ninetieth year at the Holy Cross Hospital, Calgary, Alberta.

Born at Carluke, Wentworth County, Ontario, in April, 1846, Colonel Walker first saw service at the time of the second Fenian Raid in 1870 as an Ensign of the 37th Battalion of Halderman Rifles, subsequently organizing an infantry company at Rockton and assisting in the organization of the 77th Wentworth Battalion, of which he became Major and Adjutant. In 1873 he took a course in Gunnery at the Royal Military College at Kingston, Ontario, and there met Colonel G. A. French, who was shortly afterwards to be appointed the first Commissioner of the Force. Joining the North West Mounted Police the following year as a Sub-Inspector, Colonel Walker took part in the famous march of 1874 and later in 1876 was stationed at Battleford, from where he established detachments at La Corne, Prince Albert, Duck Lake, Carlton and Fort Pitt. For several years Colonel Walker, while serving with the North West Mounted Police, acted as Indian Agent to the Cree Indians at Fort Carlton and rendered valuable service to Canada by his diplomatic handling of their affairs at a period which was a crisis in the history of the West. As a mark of esteem he was subsequently appointed a Chief of the tribe by the Indians, who named him "The Eagle that Protects".

In 1880 Colonel Walker was transferred from Battleford to continue his duties at Fort Walsh, and shortly afterwards resigned his commission of Superintendent in the North West Mounted Police to take up a position as Manager of Senator Cochrane's ranch at Cochrane, Alberta. Later, through his influence, the Cochrane interests established one of the first sawmills in the vicinity of what is now the hamlet of Seebe.

Resigning in 1882 from his appointment as Manager of the Cochrane ranch, Colonel Walker entered the contracting business and erected the Mounted Police Barracks at Calgary when "E" Division Headquarters was first established at that point.

Undoubtedly one of the most famous of Western pioneers, Colonel Walker was also the longest serving Militia Officer in the Dominion. At the age of sixty-eight he served in the Great War, being stationed in England and Scotland as a Forestry Expert; at the time of his death he was Honorary Colonel of the 15th Canadian Light Horse, a unit which he had organized in 1905.

Colonel Walker, from the early years of his first joining the North West Mounted Police, devoted himself to the development of the Prairie lands, which were at that time in the first process of habitation. Following his resignation from the Force, he was very closely associated with the material, political and educational progress of Calgary.

Calgary remembers Colonel Walker as its first Immigration Officer; the owner of its first telephone system; for his work in reserving Victoria Park where the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede is held; as the organizer of Calgary's first school and later the moving genius of its school board for fifteen years. As a lasting monument, the school in Colonel Walker's district was named "The Colonel Walker School".

Colonel Walker's passing will be universally mourned, not only by his many friends in Alberta, but also by the inhabitants of the entire Western Provinces, to whom his name stood as an epitome of the great qualities essential to the early pioneers and to the later successful fulfilment of civic leadership.