

Biography

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June 10

1821

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DR. BRADFORD PATTERSON.

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The subject of this article was born on the 10th of June, 1821, in the Township of Whitchurch, Ontario. The family first located in the Township of Leeds, near the now flourishing Town of Brockville. While lifting some heavy machinery in connection with a mill which he commenced to build immediately on his arrival in that neighborhood, my grandfather burst a blood-vessel and died shortly afterwards. The blow was a serious one to the family of boys, and shortly afterwards they left the scene of their recent sorrow, and my father, with his brothers Andrew and David, moved to Little York, now Toronto. The neighborhood was then a dense forest, and my father was employed by the Government to survey the adjoining sections. For months at a time no white people would

be seen by the surveying party, and while engaged in this work the three young men located farms for themselves on the eighth and ninth concessions of the Township of Whitchurch. The Village of Stouffville has since sprung into existence within two miles of the farms selected by the three brothers. History repeated itself, so far as hardships were concerned, and the privations endured by them during this trying interval were many. Their principal diet was bread and potatoes, and quite frequently the latter had to be eaten without salt. Cracked corn mixed in a mortar was an occasional luxury. The educational advantages were then very inferior to the present system, as teachers were hard to obtain and, even when their services were procured, their qualifications had not reached the high standard now demanded.

Up to the age of seventeen, I worked on the farm with my father and brothers, when the inclination to "paddle my own canoe" asserted itself, and I made the suggestion to my parents that I should be allowed to attend school in order to fit myself for that career of usefulness which I have since followed, ~~with~~ distinction.

I then went to the Starkey College in New York, and from the early age of seventeen have fulfilled my early ambitions and "paddled my own canoe." About the year 1841 I returned to my native township and taught school on the seventh concession between Whitchurch and Markham. The struggle to keep above water was a trying one, and demanded an

amount of courage that few would devote to the accomplishment of their aims. The indomitable courage displayed by the boy of seventeen, still burned in the man of twenty-one, and I successfully overcame the many difficulties which beset my path, and commenced the study of medicine. During my subsequent practice, extending over half a century, I have succeeded in effecting a number of cures, as I have made the work a life study. My medical practice has been conducted in the following places, in each of which I had a lucrative business, viz., one year in Cobourg with Dr. Clark; in Colbourne, five years; Bowmanville, twenty years; Whitby, four years; Collingwood, four years; Markham, four years; and Barrie, twenty-one years, up to June, 1903.

Religion, to my mind, appears not only as a living reality and a powerful influence in every-day life, but as a great factor in the control of nations.

In 1812 my father was in Little York, when the Americans came over with thirteen schooners and took the little village called "Muddy York," now Toronto. After landing they took possession of a few stores that were there at that time; after scattering the dry-goods, such as cottons and prints, letting everyone have them freely, they then went to the magazine and blew that up. My father was present and saw it done. Soon after this they took their departure without hurting anyone.

How different the feeling is now between

the Americans and Canadians. Thousands of Americans come to Canada every year, holding Christian conventions and other conventions; thus a friendly feeling is increasing, and may it ever continue.

In 1814 my father took a contract from the Government to carry supplies to Penetanguishene, which is the oldest French Fort in Canada; it took two weeks at that time to go and return with loads from Toronto, in the summer by wagon, and in the winter by sleigh. Ox teams were then used instead of horses and it was necessary to build floating bridges in order to cross streams.

After being at Starkey College for three weeks, a by-law was passed compelling every student, male or female, to meet in the lecture room and either read a piece of poetry, prose, or make a speech. I intimated to my Professor that it was impossible for me to make a speech as I had never made a speech in my life, but, after due consideration, I concluded to try to make one. I then said: "People of the United States, I have come among you to seek an education, and you will not think it strange if I am confused upon rising before so much talent and experience as I see before me, but my motto is 'perseverance,' and I hope to accomplish the end for which I came among you."

Another interesting feature of my life was when I accepted the invitation of the faculty of my old college to visit them, three years ago. The reception I received was most flattering

and I remained the guest of President Summerbell for three days.

The following September edition of the Starkey Seminary Monthly contained the following reference to myself: "At this point the President arose and read a biographical sketch of one of the first students of the Seminary, who, as a young man, arrived from Canada before the completion of the first building, and who was present in the first class that ever assembled. It was an interesting paper, but the interest culminated when the President introduced the venerable gentleman, who had been seated at his right during the exercises, as Starkey's most venerable student, Dr. B. Patterson, of Barrie, Ontario. Dr. Patterson responded in a humorous, changing into a serious vein. It was a touching moment, the sight of this veteran student, counting himself still one with the young men on the point of graduation. The welcome tendered the Doctor was sincere, and it is hoped that he will find it possible to visit us again and again."

During the American War I was urged to join the army, as the following extract from a letter written to me by Captain Charles S. Morrow of General Nelson's division shows. The division was then at Nashville, Tenn. The letter reads :

"Nashville, Tenn., March 9, 1862.

Dr. Patterson,—Our regiment has been in Nashville about two weeks. We are in Gener-

al Nelson's division and in Col. Hazens' brigade. Our assistant surgeon has resigned, and our surgeon is very unpopular and will soon follow suit. He is a 'quack' in every sense of the word and has lost about fifty by death through neglect and incompetency. I have no doubt you could get the appointment. I want you to come immediately for I would like to put myself under your care. I am suffering from a complaint of long standing, and unless I get proper medical attendance soon, I will be compelled to resign my position in the army, and I do not want to leave the service until the war is closed. We will not leave here for the South for several months at least. There is not, and will not be for some time, provisions sufficient to justify an advance, besides General Buel is reorganizing the entire army. You can come to Nashville without a pass, and if we have left Nashville you can get a pass from the Provost-Marshal. Come Doctor, and by your superior knowledge and skill save the lives of patriotic men who have left their homes and families and the luxuries of comfortable dwellings to endure the hardships and privations of a soldier's life, for the purpose of sustaining one of the best governments on the face of the earth. As soon as you receive this, write and let me know if you can come. I shall anxiously await your reply

"Yours, etc.,

"CHARLES S. MORROW."

I did not accept the offer so temptingly made, and Captain Morrow subsequently came

to Whitby with his sister, where I treated him successfully. In parts of the winter of 1862 and 1863 I spent some months practising my profession of physician and surgeon in connection with the regiment to which Captain Morrow was attached, the "Bloody 9th, of Indiana."

In 1888 I built the brick residence on the north side of Dunlop Street, where I am now residing, and where I still practise my chosen profession, so far as office work is concerned. I have practised medicine over 59 years, and am now one of the oldest practitioners in Canada. I have always taken a keen delight in hunting, and for 50 years in succession never missed spending a few days in the woods during the hunting season, and never returned without my full share of deer, except on one or two occasions.

Some of the older residents with whom I have been acquainted are Thomas Fox Davies, who was the first printer in Barrie, and who is now 85 years of age and still setting type. The first physician in Barrie was Dr. Pass, and the second was Dr. Crookshanks, both of whom are dead; and also John Laird, who arrived here in 1840, and who is also dead; and Wm. Hewson, also deceased, who arrived here in 1820 and resided in this locality until the beginning of the present year. Mr. Charles Partridge came to this neighborhood in 1819, and settled on lots 16 and 17 in the first concession of Oro. Eugene Smith is another of the oldest men now living in Barrie, having reached his 94th year.

Andrew Graham arrived in 1832 and died in 1902, in his 93rd year. Richard Williams, of the Penetang road, was also one of the first settlers. Peter White came to the neighborhood in 1819, and is still allive.

I am deeply grateful for the many blessings which I have enjoyed at the hands of Providence, as I have been able to effect a number of cures while practising in my profession.

DR. BRADFORD PATTERSON,
Aged 82 years.

Dated at Barrie, 24th April, 1903.

Barrie
July 7th / 00. *

Compliments of Dr. Patterson
Have now passed into my
85th year. and can still a
Pleasantly on Lake Simcoe
as well as I could 40 years ago -