

Medical Memoirs  
of Bytown

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By

Dr. G. Beaumont Small

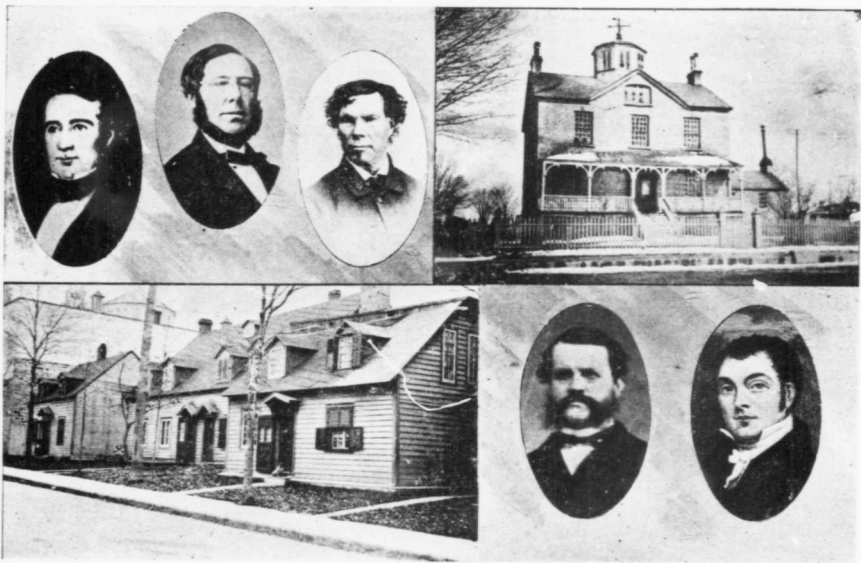


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OLD BYTOWN DOCTORS.

Dr. Thos. F. McQueen.      Dr. Hamnett P. Hill.      First Protestant Hospital.  
    Dr. Edw. Van Courtlandt.      Dr. S. C. Sewell.      Dr. A. J. Christie.

## MEDICAL MEMOIRS OF BYTOWN.\*

BY

H. BEAUMONT SMALL, M.D.

GENTLEMEN:—I have to thank you—briefly, but not the less sincerely—for having selected me as President for the ensuing year. I can assure you that your confidence is fully appreciated. My first thought will be for the welfare of the society and I feel certain that our united efforts will make its meetings a success.

We must also congratulate ourselves upon this resuscitation of the Ottawa Medico-Chirurgical Society, and our reunion as one body. No matter what arguments may be advanced, or from whatever standpoint this may be viewed, there is above all the one great necessity—a representative Medical Society. So long as the profession was divided, just so long were we devoid of the dignity and power which is an attribute of our profession, and without which we cannot command respect. I trust that we may continue the honorable records of the first years of the Society, and transmit to our successors, added honors and traditions.

During the past few years much attention has been directed to the study of medical history, particularly that which partakes of a local character. In England, United States, and many parts of Canada, the story of "olden times" is being told, and much of interest being recalled from the past. The medical history of our own city has never been written. Although less than a hundred years old, the happenings of the early days are almost unknown to us, sources of information are becoming less, and our opportunities passing away.

With a desire to contribute to this attractive by-path of our work, I have taken the early days of Ottawa as the subject for an address, and have strung together some sketches of By-town, its epidemics, its hospitals, and its medical practitioners.

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\*President's address, delivered before the Ottawa Medico-Chirurgical Society, Nov. 5, 1903, and printed by order of the Society.

Our city was known as Bytown from its foundation in 1826 until 1854, which affords a very suitable period for consideration. It embraces a generation that has passed away. It was the era of what we know as the "Old School"; the days of the boius and lancet; the days prior to chloroform; the days of heroic methods, and, I think I may say, the days of heroic men.

Prior to 1826, the site of Bytown was occupied by two or three settlers. In that year Colonel By commenced the construction of the Rideau Canal, and within twelve months there was a population of over two thousand. The land was swampy and wet. Dow's Swamp was much more extensive than at present, and extended from the Rideau to the Ottawa River, by what is now Preston Street; the land around Patterson's Creek, as far as Concession Street, was a swamp; Slater and Maria Streets were a swamp; what is now the Canal Basin was a wet beaver meadow, and from it, extending across lower town to the Rideau River, was low, wet land.

Although malarial fever is unknown to us, we are not surprised to learn that ague in its most severe form became prevalent, and that the laborers engaged in excavating the canal were soon attacked by this disease.

John McTaggart, an engineer upon the canal, in a book describing the years 1826-27-28 in Canada, furnishes us with a description of the disease as it then prevailed. He says:—"This is the most prevalent disorder; sometimes it proves fatal, but not generally so. It leaves, however, dregs of various kinds. In the summer of 1828, this sickness, in Upper Canada, raged like a plague. . . . . At the Rideau Canal few could work with fever and ague; doctors and all were down together."

He suffered from an attack himself, and the following description leaves no doubt as to its character. He says:—"It generally comes on with an attack of bilious fever, dreadful vomiting, pain in the back and loins, general debility, loss of appetite (so that one cannot even take tea, a thing that can be endured by the stomach in England when nothing else can be suffered). After being in this state for eight or ten days, the yellow jaundice is like to ensue, and then fits of trembling. They come on in the afternoon, mostly, with all. For two or three hours before they arrive we feel so cold

that nothing will warm us; the greatest heat that can be applied is perfectly unfelt; the skin gets dry, and then the shaking begins. Our very bones ache, teeth chatter, and the ribs are sore, continuing thus for about an hour and a half; we then commonly have a vomit, the trembling ends, and a profuse sweat ensues, which lasts for two hours longer. This over, we find the malady has run one of its rounds, and start out of bed in a feeble state, sometimes unable to stand."

Ague remained endemic until the sixties, especially throughout Lower Town and the Chaudiere, each year lessening in extent and severity.

In 1832 Bytown suffered from an epidemic of Asiatic cholera. This was the year of the first invasion of Canada by this fearful disease. It ravaged Quebec, Montreal, Toronto and nearly all places along the St. Lawrence and Ottawa rivers, which were then the highways of travel. Its onset was sudden and severe. On June 3rd an emigrant vessel arrived at Grosse Isle quarantine station and reported forty-four deaths "from some unknown disease." The emigrants continued their course to their destination, throughout Canada, carrying with them the disease and death. Cholera appeared in Quebec on the 7th; in Montreal on the 10th; Lachine the 11th; Cornwall on the 13th; Prescott the 16th; at Kingston on the 20th, and at Toronto on the 21st. It must have reached Bytown about this latter date, as there is a military order, dated June 19, directing Dr. Tuthill, the surgeon in charge of the troops here, to proceed from Bytown to Grenville for duty, as cholera had appeared among the men working on the Grenville Canal. The rapidity with which it increased, and its fatality, were appalling. At the Quebec Hospital on the 8th there were three cases and two deaths; on the 9th, 16 cases and 8 deaths; on the 10th, 26 cases and 19 deaths; on the 11th, 39 cases and 30 deaths; on the 12th, 66 cases and 43 deaths; on the 15th, 299 cases and 161 deaths. During the three weeks of June there were buried at Quebec 1,421 persons who had died of the disease. This continued into July and gradually declined. In Bytown it was most severe during the month of July, but I cannot find any details nor any definite facts in regard to the disease itself. It, however, continued here for three months, as on the 22nd September there is an official report of Dr. Stratford—who replaced Dr. Tuthill in charge of the military hospital—

stating that the disease had disappeared, and asking for a new building for an hospital. The late Mr. W. P. Lett, in his "Recollections of Bytown," refers to this epidemic as follows:—

" July, 1832.

That was the fatal month and year  
When cholera was rampant here:  
Malignant Asiatic type,  
Which from the book of life did wipe  
The name of many a sturdy one  
Twixt rise and setting of the sun.  
Dread terror brooded o'er the land  
While the destroying angel's hand  
Smote here and there each deadly blow  
Which laid in dust, the proudest low!"

Cholera again invaded Canada in 1834, 1849 and 1854, but failed to reach Bytown a second time.

In 1847 Bytown suffered from its second severe epidemic, that of typhus fever, generally known as the emigrant or ship fever. The severity of this disease is attested to by the monument at Grosse Isle, erected over the graves of 4,532 dead, and another at Montreal, which marked, at Point. St. Charles, the burying-place of about 6,000. Bytown again escaped the intensity of the epidemic, but during the six weeks that it prevailed here, from the middle of June to the end of August, there were 314 deaths. During that summer 3,100 emigrants reached Bytown. When we remember that each death represented a large number of cases of fever, sometimes of weeks in duration, we can form some idea of the demands made for medical attendance, and the enormous task of providing accommodation and caring for the sick. The travel was by means of open boats and barges into which these unfortunates were crowded for several days. The landing place and emigrant sheds were at the canal basin, where Bate's and Birkett's warehouses now stand. The papers of that date refer to the helplessness and misery of the new arrivals, and call attention to the buildings, dirty and damp from leaking roofs. The approach to the sheds is described as "knee deep in mud and filth." The sheds could not provide accommodation, and many had only such shelter as tents, upturned boats and "improvised buildings" could afford.

The first patients were conveyed to the General Hospital and cared for by the nursing sisters. Later, part of the emigrant

sheds were utilized as a hospital, with Dr. Hill in charge. This was quickly found to be inadequate, and the citizens generally, both Catholic and Protestant, united to erect large hospital buildings upon the property in which the General Hospital has since been erected. The onset of the epidemic was sudden, as the first public report on the 19th shows that there were nine cases in the hospital, with 50 cases in the sheds and in the city, and that six deaths had taken place. From that time until September the fever raged unceasingly, and the demand upon the medical attendants and nurses was unremitting. Fortunately no deaths took place among either. Among the doctors many were attacked by the fever, and there is in the "Packet" of August 28th a reference to the serious and almost hopeless condition of Dr. Hill.

It is at this point that we find the first record of a Board of Health. As Bytown was not incorporated, its formation had to come from the Government. On the 10th July there is a proclamation by the Governor-in-Council appointing a Board of Health for Bytown, as follows:—

Rev. S. S. Strong, Rev. Wm. Davie, Rev. Thos. Wardrobe, Rev. Wm. Telmon, Simon Fraser, Christopher Armstrong, Daniel O'Connor, Joseph Aumond, Edward Smith, John Burrows, Dr. Hill, Dr. Morson, Dr. Van Courtlandt, Dr. Barry, Andrew Drummond, Mr. Bowles, Geo. Paterson, John Sumner. Sheriff Fraser, chairman; Rev. S. S. Strong, secretary.

It will have been noticed that Bytown was favoured by the presence of hospitals from its foundation. Upon the arrival of Colonel By with his little army of soldiers and workmen, a military hospital was at once erected upon Barrack Hill, near the present site of the Western Block. It was a substantial stone building, and continued in use, as a military hospital, as long as the British troops were stationed here.

"The old Hospital, which stood  
Unscathed by tempest, fire, or flood,  
For fifty years, to be downcast  
By chance, or carelessness, at last."

It contained at least 20 beds, as I find in the preparation of the building a requisition by Colonel By, upon the ordnance department, for that number, with furnishings. This hospital



was not restricted to the care of the soldiers, nor was it solely for the military surgeons, as I noticed in a diary of the late Dr. Hill, reference to an amputation of a leg performed by himself upon a private patient.

In 1845 the General Hospital was established by the Grey Nuns, a number of the members of this sisterhood coming from the Hotel-Dieu, Montreal, for this purpose. The first hospital was a frame building on the north side of St. Patrick Street, near Sussex Street. This building is still to be seen as Nos. 163, 165, 167 and 169. It was occupied until 1847, when the epidemic of typhus fever necessitated greater accommodation. A new building was then erected on the property of the present hospital on Water Street. This consisted of large frame buildings, which were situated near the present hospital. They were occupied until 1862, when part of the present stone building was erected, that part which we have known as the hospital until the recent large wing was added. No regular staff was organized until 1859. Dr. Van Courtlandt was in charge until 1850; he was succeeded by a Dr. Robichaud; then followed in 1851 Dr. Lacroix, in 1852 Dr. Lang, and later in the same year Dr. Beaubien. The first regular staff was organized a year or two later, and consisted of Dr. H. Hill, consulting physician, and Drs. Beaubien and Dr. St. Jean, attending physicians.

The County of Carleton General Protestant Hospital was the outcome of the fever epidemic in 1847. The necessity of providing adequate accommodation for the sick poor had been most evident. Many desired a hospital to be supported by public subscriptions and under the control of the public, and their efforts resulted in the establishment of this hospital. The charter was obtained in 1851, and the hospital was opened in the same year. The incorporators were as follows:—John McKinnon, Geo. Patterson, Wm. Stewart, Hamnet Hill, Arch. Foster, Roderick Ross, Robert Hervey, Jr., Jno. McCracken, Sen., Francis Abbott, Thos. Langrell, Thos. Hunton, Rich. Stethem, Geo. B. Lyon, Wm. Hart Thompson, Hon. Thos. McKay, John Thomson, Ed. Malloch, James Peacock, Geo. Hay, Alex. McP. Grant, Wm. Paton, Henry McCormac, John Forgie, Ed. Armstrong, Jas. Rochester, Carter H. Burpee, Ed. Sherwood, Dawson Kerr, Thos. G. Burns. The old stone building recently occupied for contagious diseases was the original hospital, and was retained until 1875.

The earliest staff consisted of Drs. Hill and Van Courtlandt, to which Dr. Sewell and Dr., now Sir James Grant, were shortly added, and they constituted the staff in the closing days of Bytown.

The doctors of those days—what do we know of them? They, who on foot or on horseback trod the paths we now so comfortably follow, have passed away, and, with the exception of one or two who reached our generation, are long since forgotten.

They were not inferior men, not wastrels driven from larger centres. They were for the most part men of culture and education—men brought up in "the old land" under the most favourable surroundings—men of marked individuality and force of character, who came to share in the future of the new land.

A number who resided here were mere birds of passage. Some military surgeons who came and went with their regiments, others after a few years left for pastures new. A few remained throughout their whole career, and their names are associated with all matters of public welfare.

The first general practitioner was Alexander James Christie. He came with the arrivals in 1826, and lived here until his death in 1843, in his 65th year. He was the first to secure a town lot in upper town, and lived for some years at the north-west corner of Wellington and Victoria Street. This house may still be seen just falling into ruin. Later, he built a large stone house, nearly opposite to Christ Church Cathedral, which still stands in the rear of 399 Sparks Street.

Dr. Christie was born near Aberdeen, Scotland. His father was the Rev. Alexander Christie, dean of Aberdeen, and rector of Fyvie. He graduated Master of Arts at Marechal College, Aberdeen, in 1807, and became a licentiate of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Edinburgh, in 1811. In the war of 1812 he was a naval surgeon, and was wounded in the thigh when on duty, which resulted in a limp for the remainder of his days. He came to Montreal in 1819, and entered upon the practice of his profession. Here he remained until he removed to Bytown. I cannot find any details as to his professional work, but he acquired an extensive practice, and was esteemed as a physician for several years. In McTaggart's work he is frequently referred to in regard to his professional worth. His college note-books also show that he

was a thorough student. Dr. Christie's bent, however, was public life, and he gradually withdrew from medicine to the wider field of journalism, and during his later years he appears to have entirely given up his practice. His literary tastes led him to edit, when in Montreal, *The Canadian Magazine*, a high-class monthly publication, and later, in Bytown, he established *The Bytown Gazette*, the first newspaper published here. He filled many offices, and among them I noticed a reference to him as the "Dean of the Guild," which odd title was difficult to interpret until I met in McTaggart a reference to the earliest attempt at municipal government. He says, "Bytown is regularly incorporated by a charter, according to an act of the inhabitants themselves, sanctioned by a J.P. The officers consist of a provost, two baillies, a dean of guild, a treasurer, ten common councillors, surveyor-clerk, two deacons, and a convener."

Mr. Lett refers to Dr. Christie as follows:—

"What shall I  
Say of this old celebrity?  
An M.D. of exceeding skill,  
Who dealt in lancet, leech and pill  
Cantharides, and laudanum, too,  
When milder measures would not do;  
A polished scholar and a sage,  
A thinker far beyond his age,  
A writer of sarcastic vein  
And philosophic depth, whose train  
Of thought was comprehensive, deep.  
Peace to his ashes, let him sleep."

James Stewart resided here from 1827 to 1848, the year of his death. His residence was on Rideau Street, near the site of Dr. Grant's recent residence. Dr. Stewart was born in the parish of Ardshan, County Tyrone, Ireland. He was apprenticed in 1806 to Geo. Rogers, surgeon, of Newtown Stewart, in his native parish. In 1810 he went to Dublin, and completed his studies at Trinity College. He entered the army as surgeon, and in 1825 he retired, and came to Canada. He settled near Richmond, and in 1827 moved to Bytown.

Dr. Stewart had a large practice, he apparently being the leading practitioner in Lower Town. We find his name in many prominent offices. He was a member of the Board of Health,

and appointed a coroner, May 19th, 1845. Stewart Street was named after him, by Mr. Besserer, in laying out Sandy Hill. Besserer Street after himself; Daly Avenue after Sir Dominic Daly; Stewart after his doctor, and Wilbrod and Theodore after his two sons. In 1826 Dr. Stewart married the widow of Captain Lett, the father of the late W. P. Lett, and his daughter is the mother of Mr. J. J. McCracken.

“And James Stewart, a medico  
Of the old school of long ago,  
A votary of the potent pill,  
And lancet too for many an ill,  
And not a whit more given to kill  
The patients, say these truthful rhymes,  
Than M. D.'s of more modern times.”

There were others who resided in Bytown prior to 1830, but of whom we have not much information. These were Drs. Tuthill, Rankin, Gillie and McQueen.

Dr. Tuthill, an assistant-ordnance surgeon, came on the staff of Colonel By, in 1826. He remained in charge of the military hospital until 1832, when he was removed to Grenville. In October of that year he returned to England.

Dr. John Edward Rankin, an army surgeon, was evidently in charge of the workmen on the canal. Later he served in the British army during the Crimean War. In 1854 he returned to Canada and settled in Picton, Ont., where he died in 1878, aged 81. He received his M.D., St. Andrews, and M.R.C.S., Edinburgh, in 1825, and the license of the Upper Canada Medical Board in 1829. This latter was granted to “J. E. Rankin of the Rideau Canal.”

Lett describes him:—

“And Dr. Rankin, there he goes,  
With solemn brow, and turned-out toes,  
Upon his mottled, bob-tailed horse,  
Whose canter said the patients worse  
Or better, as the trusty steed  
Did indicate by passing speed.”

Dr. J. D. Gillie, a M.R.C.S., England, lived near the southwest corner of Sparks and Lyon Streets. The building still remains as 342 Sparks Street. He was an intimate friend of Dr.

Christie, and Mr. John Christie has in his possession a quaint old silver-mounted snuff-box, which was presented by Dr. Gillie to his friend Dr. Christie. He resided here and continued in active practice up to the time of his death, which took place late in the thirties, but there is nothing to recall his life and work.

Dr. Thomas Fraser McQueen was born at Edwardsburg, Ont., June 5th, 1805. He was the son of Captain McQueen, of the Nova Scotia Fencibles. He graduated at Glasgow, and obtained a license to practice from the Upper Canada Board in 1827. He commenced practice at Ottawa. During the cholera epidemic he was in charge of the cholera sheds from Cornwall to Brockville along with Dr. Scott, of Prescott. Later he settled in Brockville, when he acquired a large practice, and died June 6th, 1860. He married a daughter of Lt.-Col. Fraser, M.P., of Fraserfield, who survives him and resides in Ottawa.

Samuel John Stratford, M.R.C.S., Eng., received his medical education at St. George's and Westminster Hospitals, London. He became assistant surgeon to the 72nd Regiment Highlanders. In 1831, he retired, and, obtaining a license in Upper Canada, he settled in Lower Town. In 1832 he was placed in charge of the Military Hospital during the cholera epidemic. He remained here until 1836, when he removed to Woodstock and later to Toronto. He became a member of the Upper Canada Medical Board in 1838. He also was editor of the *Upper Canada Journal of Medical, Surgical and Physical Sciences*, Toronto. He lectured in Rolfe's Medical School, and was a professor in Trinity Medical School. He died in New Zealand. His father was an army surgeon, and on retiring practised his profession in Brockville.

Edward Van Courtlandt commenced practice in 1832, and resided here for 43 years. His father was an officer in the Imperial service. He was born in Newfoundland in 1805, but moved, as a child, to Quebec. There he was educated at a private school kept by the Rev. D. Wilkie, and at the age of 14 commenced the study of medicine with a Dr. Hackett. He completed his medical course at London, and passed the examination of the Apothecaries Hall and the Royal College of Surgeons in 1827. He was then appointed librarian to the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society of London, which office he retained for two or three years. He then returned to Canada, and settled at Bytown. He resided in

the large stone house which is now 394 Wellington Street. It was, when erected, much more imposing than the ordinary houses of those days, and was regarded as a mansion, but the quaint old stone steps and other odd architectural designs have been removed during recent years.

Dr. Van, as he was generally known, acquired a large practice, and his reputation spread far and wide. His patients looked upon him as a man of remarkable skill. He was, however, most erratic, and even careless in his care of patients, and many who would not depend upon him as a regular attendant eagerly sought him as a consultant. He was odd and eccentric in his manner and dress—brusque, sharp and even rough in his speech. He had been a student under Abernethy, and was most pleased when likened to that celebrated surgeon. He was impetuous and quick-tempered; ever ready to imagine a slight and equally prepared to resent a fancied grievance. Beneath the rough exterior there was a kind and sympathetic nature, and many instances are recited of his kindness and generosity to the poor. He himself worked hard and long, yet acquired but little of this world's wealth.

He was known to old and young alike, and I doubt if there was any one residing here in his day who was not familiar with the old doctor. My own most distinct recollections are of his rapid and sprightly walk, and his habit of snatching boys' caps as he passed them by. He was called the old doctor, but he never looked old, his clean shaven face and dark hair masking the advance of years.

Dr. Van Courtlandt filled numerous official positions, and took great interest in all that affected his profession. He was the first surgeon to the General Hospital, and had full charge of that institution for many years. He was consulting surgeon to the Protestant Hospital, and held that position at the time of his death. He was goal surgeon, coroner, and surgeon to the Field Battery.

In addition to his professional reputation, he was known as a geologist of marked ability, and contributed many papers and lectures upon this subject. He studied the mineralogy and palæontology of this district, and accumulated a really valuable collection, for which he had fitted up a room in his residence.

He died in May, 1873, and was buried with military honours in the cemetery at Hull.

In Dr. Hamnet Hill, so recently our confrère, we were brought in contact with this past generation. He was one of the earliest doctors of Bytown and a vigorous life brought him to our own times. For fifty-seven years he lived in this city a loyal member of the profession, and one in whom we can find our ideal. Always dignified and in earnest. When in professional duty, there was no levity or frivolity, but when met with socially, no one was gifted with more life and humour. How vividly we can recall his presence during his last years; his vivacity and wit added to an evening's recreation, and I can fancy no better wish than that same light-heartedness may follow us into "the sere and yellow leaf." His time and energies were always at the service of the profession. He was never asked in vain to assist in the affairs of medicine—were it hospital questions, a medical society, or a question of public health—he was ever ready with his advice and experience. Dr. Hill eschewed politics and public life. Once only he stepped into the arena, and at the solicitations of friends was a candidate for the mayoralty—and, I think fortunately, was defeated by a few votes.

He was always a busy man, and his recreation was work in another line. When young his spare hours were devoted to amateur mechanics, his workshop and lathe were his amusements, and many surgical instruments and appliances were of his own make. In later years he amused himself with painting and sketching, and in his seventies he was an earnest pupil at the Art School.

Dr. Hill was born in London, Eng., December 15th, 1811. His father was John Wilkes Hill, surgeon. His medical studies were pursued at the London Hospital, and he took his M.R.C.S. in 1834. For three years he practised at Brighton, and in 1837 came to Canada. He lived in March until 1841, when he took up his residence in Bytown. For many years he lived in the stone house, now 425 Wellington Street, and later removed to his late residence in Wellington Street, since destroyed by fire.

He acquired an extensive and lucrative practice, and was much esteemed as a consultant. He prided himself upon his surgical skill, which partook of the boldness and dexterity of pre-anæsthetic days.

Dr. Hill was one of the incorporators of the Protestant Hospital, and for some years after its foundation was attending physician, and upon the appointment of Dr., now Sir James Grant, he

became consulting surgeon. On the organization of the Medical Board he was elected chairman, and retained this office until 1879, when he resigned on account of a family bereavement. He was also consulting surgeon to the General Hospital and to St. Luke's Hospital, which he assisted to establish. He was the first president of this Society on its formation in 1874, and was re-elected in 1875. I also find that he was gazetted surgeon to the Battalion, Carleton, in 1847.

Dr. Alfred Morson was educated at Guy's Hospital, and became M.R.C.S., Eng., in 1834. He came to Bytown in 1836, and was appointed to the medical charge of the garrison at Bytown, which position he retained up to 1852. He removed to Montreal, and then to Hamilton and Toronto.

Dr. Frederick Morson was a brother to Alfred, and came to Bytown in 1839, remaining in practice here for five or six years. He then moved to Montreal, and finally settled in Niagara.

Dr. Stephen Charles Sewell came to Bytown in 1852, and remained here until his death in 1865. He was appointed consulting surgeon to the General Hospital and to the Protestant Hospital. He was a son of Stephen Sewell, of Quebec, Solicitor-General for Canada. He studied at Edinburgh, and obtained the M.D. of the University of Edinburgh and M.R.C.S., Edin. In 1836 he commenced practice in Montreal, and was appointed lecturer at McGill on *Materia Medica*, and later on clinical medicine, and attending physician to the Montreal General Hospital. On account of ill-health, he resigned these positions and removed to Ottawa. He resided in the house formerly occupied by Dr. Hill on Wellington Street, next to the Perley Home for Incurables.

There were many others of whom there is little to be learned. Among the earlier were Drs. Barry, Robinson, O'Hare and Holmes; later, Lecroix, Robichaud and Beaubien. Of Edward Barry, Lett says:—

“Edward Barry,  
Who in his person did combine  
The medicine and legal line,  
Exhibiting as his degree  
Upon his card, J.P., M.D.  
He gave to Bytown's sporting men  
Such fox hunting as we'er again  
Shall see. . . . .  
That hunt the public health to save  
Was the best prescription e'er he gave.”



Gentlemen, I trust that these fragmentary sketches have not proved wearisome. Possibly they have not proved as interesting to you as to myself. It might have been better had I selected a single person, or an isolated event, and treated it fully, but this must be left for the future. The field is new, and the records of these days are scattered far and wide. My purpose has been to prepare a foundation to which others may add. Once begun, other sources of information will appear, and much stronger light will be thrown upon incidents and people of those days. Our Society should be the repository for such matters. We have not yet our faculty building, nor even our meeting room, but it is not too soon to begin a collection of likenesses of those that have passed away. I should like to see on our walls, alongside Christie and Van Courtlandt and Hill, the faces of Wright, Church and Klock.

We cannot but respect and think kindly of all who have worked before us. Medical knowledge is advancing year by year, and great changes take place in the treatment of disease; but the old practitioner visited daily as we do—he brought life into the world and watched it depart—his patients came and his patients went—he won their thanks or gained their frowns. Some were successful, others failed, and the same old story is repeated generation after generation.

“The same old work, the same old skoff, the same old dust  
and sun;  
The same old chance that laid us out, or winked an’ let us  
through;  
The same old life, the same old death. Good-bye, good luck  
to you.”

