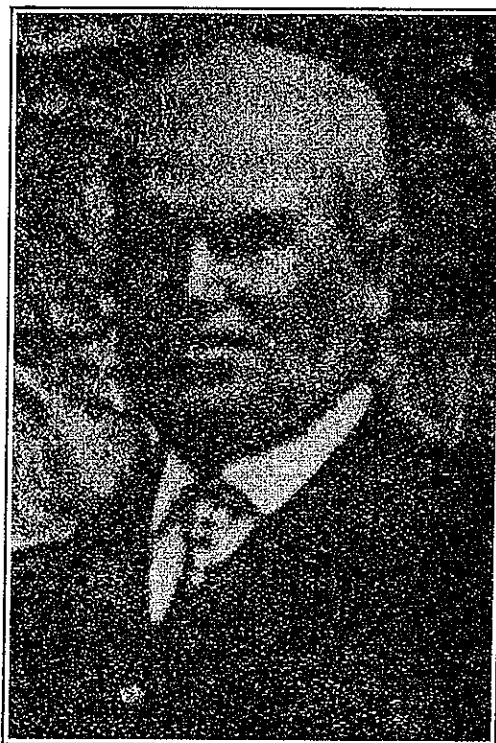


ALEXANDER BAIRD

Born September 11, 1855—Died February 16, 1931

In the passing of Alexander Baird, Ontario Land Surveyor, Leamington, Ontario, on February 16, 1931, a pioneer surveyor and drainage expert of Western Ontario has been called away from his activities. The last four years of his life were spent in retirement at his home in Point Pelee, nine miles from Leamington, on the shore of Lake Erie, and here he received his friends with the hospitality for which the Baird home was noted.



Alexander Baird was born in New York City, September 11, 1855, and was the only son of Alexander Baird, Gertsherrie, Scotland, and Elizabeth Smith of London, England. They had come to America to make their home but the untimely death by drowning of the home maker left the mother alone in a strange land with her two children, Alexander and Helen. They started out from New York by train to reach her husband's relatives in Bruce County, Ontario, the mother died of grief on the way, her burial taking place at Binghamton, New York. The children were there met by their father's uncles and the journey to Bruce County was then undertaken by the parentless children. Of this trip, a clear memory remained with the eight-year-old boy throughout his life.

Alexander Baird was educated in the Public and Grammar schools of Kincardine, and on graduation he went to Toronto and wrote his preliminary O.L.S. examination and was then articled to W. G. McGregor, O.L.S., of Chatham. On

completion of these articles, he wrote and passed his final examination July 7, 1877.

An office was then established in Leamington and Windsor later closing the Windsor office and remaining at Leamington throughout his lifetime excepting for three years spent in association in Sarnia with his son, who had followed his father's profession. Many of his summers for years were spent in Northern Ontario Government Surveys and in 1900 he had charge of Exploratory Party Number 4 with the territory lying north of the Canadian Pacific towards James Bay. He also was appointed by the Government to re-establish parts of the townships in the County of Essex and Kent.

He built the Pere Marquette Railway from Leamington to Wheatley and the Michigan Central from Leamington to Comber and also was the engineer in charge of laying out the waterworks system of Leamington. At Pelee Island, he laid out and superintended all the drainage and reclamation work up to 1927 turning thousands of acres of marsh into garden land.

He also laid out and supervised a large proportion of the Government drains in Essex County and reclaimed the Point Pelee marsh of several thousand acres as well as the 7,500-acre tract called the Holland marsh north of Toronto on the Yonge Street Highway.

He was called on as an expert witness in nearly all the drainage litigation in Western Ontario for the past 50 years, and he numbered among his friends many of the legal profession who appreciated his friendship and strong personality.

He was married in 1881 to Elizabeth Ainslie of Leamington and had seven children: Alexander Wallace, Point Pelee; Helen Beatrice, Superintendent of the Christian R. Holmes Memorial Hospital, Cincinnati, Ohio; John Ainslie, O.L.S., Sarnia; Mrs. Alexander Young, London; Dr. Douglas Murray, Deckerville, Michigan; Dr. James Abbington, Hustisford, Wisconsin; Thomas Wilkins, Roanoke, Virginia. His sister, Helen, (Mrs. George Bissett), still resides in Kincardine.

Alexander Baird was a jovial friend, a lover of good books, a good joke and a good horse. His powers of raconteur, especially in the Scottish dialect, made him the life of any party. Also, for many years, his singing of the Scottish classics was sought after wherever he chanced to be, and in his

home he was the center of a devoted family and the latch key was ever out to his many friends who accepted his unusual hospitality.

Thus star by star declines,
Till all are passed away,
As morning high, and higher shines,
To pure and perfect day;
Nor sink those stars in empty night;
They hide themselves in heaven's own light.
