

FRANK LEVER BLAKE

By A. P. Walker

Frank Lever Blake, O.L.S., was born on June 20th, 1853 in England, the eldest son of the well-known cricketer, Richard Blake, who owned and operated the Toronto Cricket field at the corner of College and McCaul streets for many years.

Frank Lever Blake came to Toronto with his parents when five years old. Educated at the Model School, and by private tutors, he later studied surveying and was articled to the firm of Wadsworth and Unwin the well-known Toronto surveyors. While still a pupil he assisted in the laying out of the Woodbine race track. Upon receiving his certificate as a provincial land surveyor on April 13th, 1875, he was employed for several years in the work of his profession in Ontario, particularly in the townships north and west of Toronto. Qualifying as a Dominion land surveyor on March 28th, 1882, he was employed on Northwest surveys in Assiniboia to about 1885,

and in partnership with the late William Pierce of Calgary, laid out the town site of Moose Jaw in 1883. He was also in partnership in these Northwest surveys with the late Harry Selby, P.L.S., whose unfortunate death by drowning while conducting a survey in the Peace River district will be recalled by many members of the profession.

While still engaged in survey work Mr. Blake was employed in the winter by the Meteorological Service of Canada, and was accorded the opportunity of furthering his studies in astronomy by the late Professor Carpmael, M.A. (Cantab.), then director of the service. This led ultimately to his abandoning regular surveying and receiving the permanent appointment of Astronomer to the Meteorological Service. In 1891



on account of the shortage of Dominion land surveyors for Northwest work, he was granted leave of absence from his new duties to lay out the townsite of the now populous city of Saskatoon. During the war years Mr. Blake instructed many Air Force Cadets in the astronomy required for night flying.

The late Mr. Blake was regarded as one of the leading practical astronomers in Canada, and was the first to prepare a simplified Ephemeris of Stars in the Vertical of Polaris, that was of real use to surveyors in the field. He made a specialty of the telescope, and during his long connection with Toronto Observatory, from whose service he retired in 1923, showed countless parties of visitors, from all over the world, the glories of the heavens.

Mr. Blake was married in 1882 to Marion Maria, the eldest daughter of the late Mr. Charles Pitt-Weston of Toronto. Mrs. Blake, who predeceased her husband by only a year and a half, was a sister-in-law of the late Canon T. W. Powell, a former president of King's College, Windsor, Nova Scotia, and for some time rector of the Church of the Holy Trinity, Toronto.

Mr. Blake was an Anglican and a member of the Church of the Epiphany, Toronto, also a member of the Canadian Order of Foresters, the Royal Astronomical Society, and other scientific bodies.

He is survived by two daughters, Mrs. F. B. Roberts, and Mrs. George H. Pepper, one son, Harry M. Blake, and two grandchildren, all of Toronto; three sisters, Mrs. J. C. Kirby, Niagara-on-the-Lake; Mrs. T. Broadwood of Blenheim; Miss Lavina Blake and a brother, F. C. Blake, both of Toronto.

He died at his home in Toronto on May 7th, 1935, in his 82nd year.