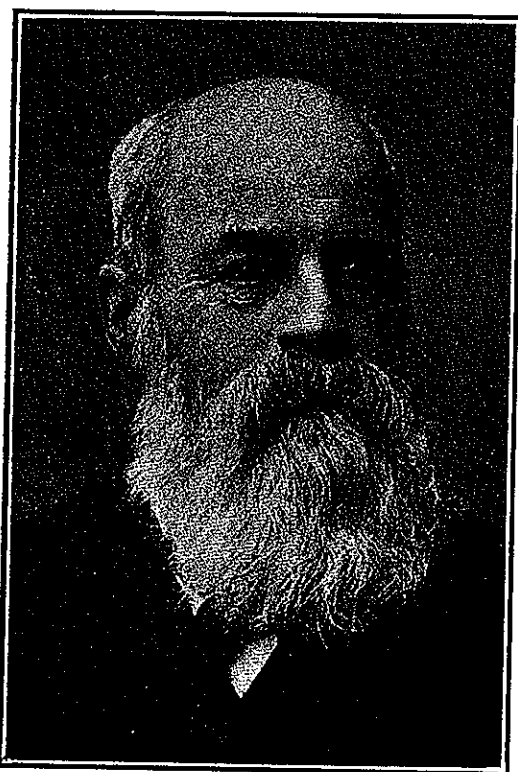


ISAAC L. BOWMAN**By Hervey M. Bowman**

Isaac Lucius Bowman was a son of John Baer Bowman (1800-1850) and Nancy Bechtel (1808-1855). He was born in Waterloo Township May 30, 1830, on a farm which his



father began to clear in 1824, and bought in 1826, west of the Grand River near the place now called Freeport, in Waterloo County, Ontario. This farm was part of a larger tract purchased in 1806 by Mr. Bowman's paternal grandfather while still residing in the United States. The grandparents, Rev. Joseph Bowman (1766-1849) and Mary Baer (1772-1842), came to Canada in 1816 from Berks County, Pennsylvania, and settled with seven sons and five daughters at Blair, three miles south of Freeport. These people were all either themselves Mennonites or of immediate Mennonite origin. They sprang from the German-Swiss, who in the 18th century settled in Pennsyl-

vania, and hence were commonly called Pennsylvania Germans. The original spelling of the name was Baumann, the first settler of the family in America being Wendel Baumann, who landed at Philadelphia from the canton Bern (Switzerland) in 1709. He was one of the ten original Pequea colonists, so called because in 1710-1711 they bought and settled on 10,000 acres on Pequea Creek, sixty miles west of Philadelphia. This was the first white settlement within the present bounds of Lancaster County, and the first interior white settlement in the Province of Pennsylvania.

Mr. Bowman attended the common schools of his home neighborhood at Centreville and Freeport. From his sixteenth year he worked as a carpenter for four years, studying at the

same time privately, and also attending school, so far as his calling permitted, especially in winter. At the age of twenty he went to Rockwood Academy, a boarding school at the village of that name, seven miles east of Guelph. This institution was one of the earliest and best of its kind in this part of Upper Canada. William Wetherald, the founder and principal, was a Quaker of the finest Christian character and exceptional teaching gifts, who attracted students from neighboring counties and elsewhere in the Western Peninsula. Some of his pupils attained prominence in later life, notably the railway magnate James J. Hill and the Hon. Arthur S. Hardy, Premier of Ontario.

Mr. Bowman, after two years at Rockwood (1850-1851), studied for four years (1852-1856) at Oberlin College, Ohio. Oberlin was then the largest higher institution of learning west of the Alleghanies. It was not organized as a denominational college, but it had Congregationalist leaders. The president was Charles G. Finney, whose activity and fame as an evangelist drew many students from the Eastern States, New England, Canada, and even from the British Isles. Intense religious interest was characteristic of life at Oberlin, both in town and college. The only professional school was the theological seminary. Mr. Bowman's instructors suggested that he should enter the seminary and prepare for the Christian ministry; but from this he refrained, his bent being towards mathematics rather than theology.

From Oberlin Mr. Bowman returned to his native county and taught the common schools at Elmira from 1857 to 1860 and at Blair in 1861. At the turn of the year 1861-1862 he was selected as Local Superintendent of Schools for the Township of Waterloo. This position he held till the abolition of township superintendencies by amendment to the Provincial School Law in 1871. In 1865 he was appointed treasurer of the Township of Waterloo, which office he held till 1891. In 1867 Mr. Bowman became the first principal of a school in his native vicinity, which was organized into an academy and boarding school in 1868 by the Freeport Educational Society. While at the head of this school, in 1871, Mr. Bowman, without solicitation or fee, was given the honorary degree of M.A. by Otterbein University (Westerville, Ohio), the principal institution of learning of the United Brethren in Christ.

Mr. Bowman resigned the principalship of Freeport Academy in 1872. Withdrawing from further educational activity, he moved at this time to Berlin, where he took up the

business of land surveying. He articulated himself to the late James Pollock, P.L.S., of Galt; but this relation was largely nominal and advisory. Mr. Bowman from the beginning conducted his own office and practice as a Surveyor in Berlin. His commission as a Provincial Land Surveyor was issued October 7, 1876. Thenceforth he followed this calling up to his last illness, which overtook him in May, 1892.

Although his practice was chiefly local, he with the assistance of his sons, performed the following surveys for the Ontario Government:—

- 1883—Township of Snider.
- 1884—Township of Rayside.
- 1886—Township of Dill.
- 1888—Township of Hess.
- 1890—Township of Gladman.

The first, second and fourth are in Algoma and the third and fifth in Nipissing.

Mr. Bowman was married in 1862 to Elizabeth Meyer, daughter of John Meyer, for many years reeve of the township of Woolwich. Mrs. Bowman, who was born May 17, 1844, survived her husband and still lives in Kitchener (formerly Berlin) in her 81st year. The issue of this marriage was four sons, of whom the three elder were licensed as Surveyors in Ontario, and followed in some form the practice of engineering: Leander (deceased in Toronto in 1895); Arthur (Diploma, School of Practical Science, 1886; C.E., University of Toronto, 1895), Architectural Engineer, Pittsburg, Pa.; and Franklin (Diploma, S.P.S., 1890, C.E., University of Toronto, 1893), Vice-President, Blaw-Knox Company, Pittsburg, Pa.

Both at Rockwood and at Oberlin Mr. Bowman was fortunate in his instructors. At Rockwood much stress was laid on the formation of character; and the religious impress of Oberlin on Mr. Bowman endured and deepened in after years. As a student he joined the Congregationalist Church; but this body not being represented at his later places of residence, he transferred his membership in 1871 to the United Brethren in Christ. In this church he was ordained a minister in 1873. He served in that capacity, in a non-professional way, as a local minister. He died at Berlin on February 3, 1893, and was buried at Blair.