

COMMITTEE ON BIOGRAPHY

are graduates of the University of Toronto may remember him as a lecturer in Accountancy. The older members will remember him as a practising surveyor in Toronto. Now I think that's all. Except for one duty that I have still to perform, before we adjourn, and that is to remind you of the Stag Dinner, and you'll find the place and the time on your programs. According to our custom in this Association, this dinner tonight is presided over by the incoming Vice-President, Mr. Harry Williams. I should have introduced Mr. Williams, but perhaps he needs no introduction. I'm not sure he is even here. However, he will be here tonight. I wish you all a very pleasant year in 1956, and I'd like to remind the gentlemen who've been appointed Chairmen of Committees, to make their appointments as soon as possible, and to inform the secretary who their members are. I'm trying to recollect the by-law restrictions. I believe the limited number on a committee is eight. I think it would help a lot if they would get organized as soon as possible. Now that is all the business we have for the moment, and we shall entertain a motion to adjourn.

MR. NASH: I so move.

MR. PRESIDENT: Moved by Mr. Nash, seconded by?

MR. ARMSTRONG: Seconded by Maurice Armstrong that the meeting now adjourn and reassemble in Room ten. Thank you.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON BIOGRAPHY

H. M. ANDERSON, *Chairman*

The Report of the Committee on Biography includes sketches on the following recently deceased members of this Association: N. A. Burwash, J. R. Gill, J. M. Watson and in addition some further data relative to certain deceased members, mentioned in "Lost Trails" on page 164, in the Association's 1954 report.

The thanks of the committee is extended to Sydney G. Smith, O.L.S., for supplying information relative to O.L.S. Fitzgerald, and to Robert B. McKay, O.L.S. for information about O.L.S. Van Skiver. To date these are the only data received in response to the request made with regard to "Lost Trails."

Once again your committee requests members to take it upon themselves as a duty to notify the Association's secretary of the demise of any O.L.S. in his locality (either active or retired).

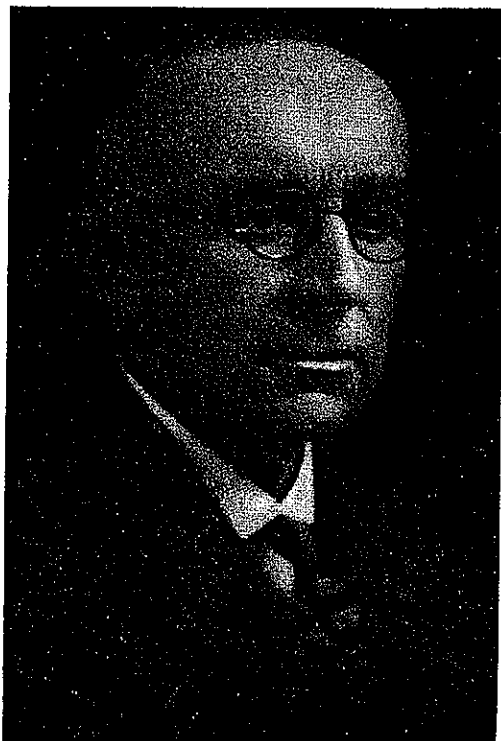
NATHANIEL ALFRED BURWASH

O.L.S., D.L.S., B.A.Sc. (Toronto)

While on a visit to Western Canada with his wife, Mr. Burwash died in Holy Cross Hospital in Calgary, Alberta, on Easter Sunday, April 1st, 1956, and on the

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the succeeding April 6th interment took place in Lakeview Cemetery at Sarnia, Ontario. So, at the age of 77, closed a life that had well served Canada and particularly Ontario.



The Burwash's were very well known and highly respected early Ontario pioneers, and Alf's branch was living in Cobourg, Ontario, at the time of his birth on September 28th, 1879. Our subject was a brilliant student as had been his father before him and as also his two brothers, both of whom were geologists. The father had ranked high in the affairs of Trinity College and Burwash Hall (Toronto University) is so named in his honour. A brother, Laughlin, met a tragic death in a plane accident while on a far northern geological survey.

In his very juvenile years this Burwash family moved from Cobourg to Toronto, and so a portion of his public school education was obtained in Cobourg and the balance in Church Street Public School in Toronto. Then followed Upper Canada College, and finally Toronto University, from whence he graduated in 1903 and post-graduated in

1905 with the degree of B.A.Sc. (Civil Engineering).

Meanwhile his O.L.S. apprenticeship had been served partly with Messrs. Speight and Van Nostrand and partly with W. A. McLean, O.L.S. (commissioned in 1892, deceased 21st February, 1898 — see report 1952) and received his Ontario Land Surveyor's commission on May 6th, 1905. Succeeding this he next acquired his commission as a Dominion Land Surveyor and for some years thereafter was engaged on Dominion Land Surveys in the Canadian West — then so fast opening to colonization.

Then in the fall of 1914 came World War I, and Alf promptly enlisted in the 6th Field Company (Royal Canadian Engineers), saw active service in France, and was wounded in action on May 16th, 1916. His soldiering days thus ended, upon convalescence and discharge he returned to Canada and entered the service of the Ontario Government, there to serve until, and indeed after, pension retirement in 1946 at the age of 67.

From 1917 to 1927 he served in the Department of Highways as field engineer in the early days of that Department's upbuilding. In 1927 he transferred to the Department of Lands and Forests (Surveys branch) and there occupied various posts including that of Inspector of Surveys. Subsequent to his retirement in 1946, however, he did spend great effort in research into the history of early surveying in Ontario, and prepared a précis of that history — of very great importance.

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For some years prior to his death, Mr. and Mrs. Burwash, the former Margaret Ada Proctor, had made their home on a farm near Orangeville in the highlands of southern Ontario—the Hockley Valley where the Credit River rises, and there Mrs. Burwash now resides.

Mr. Burwash was an active member of the Anglican Church, was a keen student all through his days. Club life meant little to him but always studying. His service, too, to our Association will long be remembered by those who knew him. In 1941 he was the Association's President.

Note: To this day there is a portion of the boundary between Ontario and Quebec that has never been agreed upon by the two provinces; this is in the reach through Lake St. Francis of the St. Lawrence River. However, during the period Mr. Burwash served as Inspector of Surveys he, as representative of Ontario, together with our good friend and regular annual visitor, Mr. C. C. Lindsay, Q.L.S., representing Quebec, performed a part of the survey in 1930.

JOHN McCORMICK WATSON, O.L.S.

Mr. Watson was born in Georgetown, Ontario, in the year 1870, and, in his early youth, the family moved to Orillia, Ontario, where his father, Daniel C. Watson, became engaged in a retail store business. After public and high school days in Orillia were passed, John joined his father in the store as a clerk, but indoor work seriously affected his health and he was forced to seek outdoor employment.

As this would be about 1889 and as that part of Ontario was really opening up, it was perhaps but natural that he should conceive that land surveying was a healthful and remunerative occupation. Thus he became apprenticed to Peter Burnet, O.L.S. (commissioned 1861, deceased 1910—see report 1917), and on April 13th, 1892, he became, in his own right, an Ontario Land Surveyor. During the succeeding five years he served under Charles E. Filton, O.L.S. (commissioned 1879; deceased 1937—see report 1949).

In 1897 a partnership with Allan G. Cavana, O.L.S. (commissioned 1887, deceased 1946—see report 1954) was formed under the joint names of Cavana and Watson. This partnership continued until the death of Mr. Cavana as above noted. Succeeding this death, Mr. Watson continued in private practice until retirement in 1951 at the age of 81. The partnership was an active one, and extensive surveying of mining claims in Northern Ontario comprised a large portion of the partnership activities. Too, extensive work was done for the Ontario Govern-

