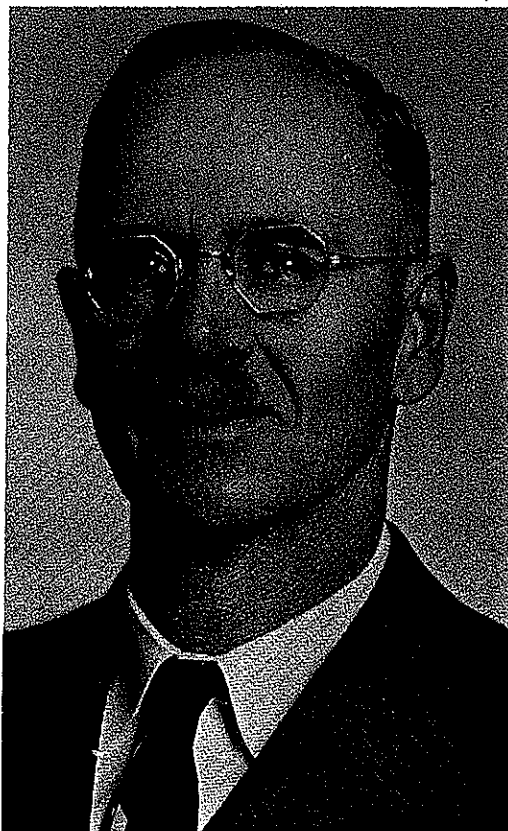


ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO LAND SURVEYORS



WILLIAM D. COLBY II
1893-1974

by H. H. Todgham

The Colby family were very early settlers in Southwestern Ontario, coming to the area when it was still heavily forested and the roads were merely tracks through the bush. William D. Colby II was born in 1893 at Zion, in Harwich Township, Kent County, the son of W. D. Colby I and Grace Oldershaw.

Following his early education in the Chatham schools, Bill attended Queen's University, graduating in Engineering in 1917. He then returned to Chatham where he entered into articles with the late W.G. McGeorge, O.L.S., being admitted to practice as an Ontario Land Surveyor in February 1922. In addition, Bill became qualified as a Dominion Land Surveyor.

In 1924 Bill was appointed Road Superintendent and Engineer for the County of Kent which is a post he held until his retirement in 1964. During his 40 years in this position he did much to develop the road system of the County from one that was suitable for the horse and buggy

REPORT OF THE BIOGRAPHY COMMITTEE

to one that could accomodate modern, high speed traffic as well as the agricultural equipment required to service one of the most productive farming areas in the Province.

The City in which he spent most of his life benefited greatly from Bill's enthusiasm and ability. In addition to serving as alderman for several years, Bill was mayor of the City of Chatham in 1936 and 1937, and, more recently, he acted on the City Planning Board both as a member and as its Chairman, for several years. He was also active in service work, being a member of the Chatham Rotary Club for 47 years and acting as its President in 1934-35.

Bill Colby was probably best known throughout the Province for the part he played in promoting the improvement of the road system. From very early in its history, he did much to assist in the development of the Ontario Good Roads Association. He was a Director of that organization for many years and its President in 1937. To many of his friends across the Country he was known as "Mr. Good Roads".

Following his retirement as County Engineer in 1964, Bill entered the private practice of Engineering and Surveying in Chatham with his son William D. Colby III. Although this "Retirement" gave him somewhat more time to enjoy his favourite hobbies of hunting and fishing, his services were still much in demand right up until the time of his death.

Following a short period of poor health, Bill was hospitalized in Burlington while visiting a son there and it was at Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital in Burlington that he passed away on May 17, 1974. Following funeral services on Tuesday, May 21, he was buried in Maple Leaf Cemetery Chatham.

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