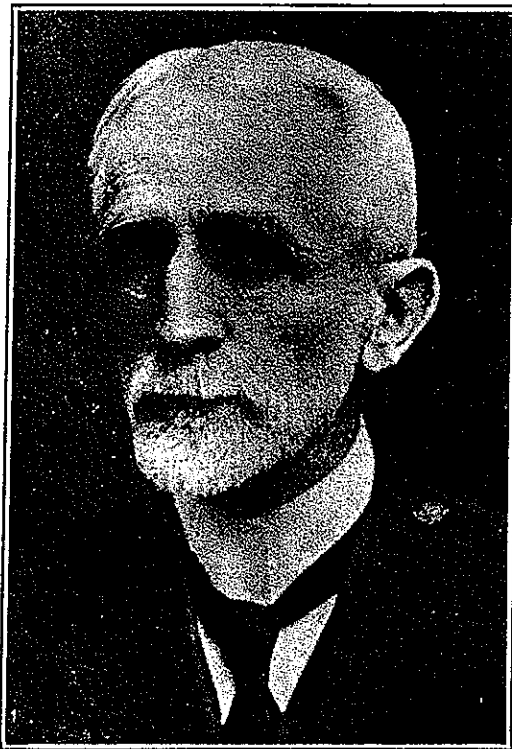


R. H. COLEMAN

Between 1785 and 1790, three Coleman brothers came to Canada from Washington County, State of New York, and settled in the County of Leeds. The eldest, Abel (1st) took up 400 acres of land in Elizabethtown, about six miles west



of what is now the Town of Brockville. Upon his land was a water fall which he developed to meet the demands of the settlers. His grist mill was probably one of the earliest erected in the district. He also conducted a tannery. He was twice married and one of his wives, Hannah Elliott, was the daughter of a United Empire Loyalist. He died at "Coleman's Corners" April 25th, 1810, aged about 60 years, and his widow in 1853, aged 81 years. He had ten children. Richard (2nd), John, Stephen, Henry Abel (2nd), David (2nd), Ann, born 1791, died 1856, married George Gardiner, Phoebe, Hannah, Catharine and Lucy.

David (1st) brother of Abel, settled in the vicinity of what afterwards became the Village of Farmersville. There is no record of what became of Richard, (1st), second oldest of the three brothers who came to Canada, nor of the children of Richard (1st) or David (1st).

John had six children, five sons and one daughter. Stephen and Henry were childless. Abel (2nd) had five daughters and David (2nd) had five children.

Phoebe, born 1797, died 1856, married Ira Lewis of Addison, and Catharine married Samuel Pennock of Brockville. Richard (2nd), eldest son of Abel, succeeded to his father's business, and extended it materially.

A sole leather factory, shoe factory, last factory, and woollen factory were eventually erected and Coleman's Corners became a hive of industry. The large flour mill was built in 1860. About 1857 the name of the place was changed to Lyn.

For some years the business was conducted under the firm name of Richard Coleman and Co. The three sons of Richard (2nd), James, Billa, and Richard (3rd), comprised the company. They conceived the idea of increasing the water power by constructing a canal to divert water from Temperance Lake and Centre Lake, in another watershed, to Lyn, via East Lake, now Lee's Pond—the surplus water flowing to Charleston Lake via McIntosh's Mills. This expensive undertaking was carried out, but costly litigation followed. During the Civil War there was a scarcity of hides and the Coleman firm, with assets of about £80,000, failed, this failure being due largely to overhead expenses.

Of the many mills erected at Lyn by the Colemans only one remains, the grist mill owned and operated by James Cumming, for many years, and now by his son, Gordon C. Cumming. Tottering stone walls, tall brick chimneys, and charred timbers bear evidence of a departed glory. In Leavitt's History of the County, the following couplet appears:

What Lyn was, the Colemans made it.

What Lyn is, must be ascribed to their loss.

Richard (2nd), born 1789, died 1861, married Laura Curtis, born 1786; died 1832, and they had the following children: James, Nancy, Hannah, Billa, born 1812, died 1860, Catharine, and Richard (3rd). Billa had four sons, Edward, Dr. Frank, Albert and Fred.

Richard (3rd), born Sept., 1818, died April 29, 1868, married Catharine McDonald, a daughter of John S. McDonald, D.P.S. They had eight children as follows:

Lucy, who married James Cumming, of Lyn; Caroline, married (1st) Dr. Black, (2nd) Addison, (Seattle); Jennie, (Ottawa), unmarried; Laura, (N.Y.), unmarried; Walter, died 1905; Charles, died 1915; James S. of Newdorp, L.I.; and Richard H. John S. McDonald's wife was Elizabeth Booth.

Richard Herbert Coleman, the subject of this sketch, was the youngest son of Richard (3rd). He was born at Lyn, Ontario, on September 14th, 1856.

In early manhood he came to Toronto and after attendance at Upper Canada College, became articled to Wadsworth, Unwin and Browne, and qualified as a Provincial Land Surveyor on October 6th, 1877. He opened an office at Mitchell, Ont., where he practised Land Surveying and at the same time acted as Drainage Engineer, and Inspector of Lands for the Canada Company. In 1885 the death occurred of one of the Commissioners of the Canada Company, and Mr. Alfred Willson, P.L.S., who had been engineer of the company, was appointed a Commissioner. (See Report 1920.) Mr. Willson's wife was Mary L. Lewis, a first cousin of Mr. R. H. Coleman's father. Mr. Coleman was then appointed engineer for the company, and was transferred to the head office in Toronto in 1885. The late Hon. Geo. W. Allan, and Mr. Willson were then the Commissioners until 1901, when the death occurred of Mr. Allan, and Mr. Coleman was appointed a Commissioner.

In 1880 Mr. Coleman subdivided the Township of Caldwell for the Provincial Government.

On January 25th, 1882, Mr. Coleman married Miss Sarah Awty, of Mitchell, Ont. In 1885, he removed to Toronto, where he resided continuously thereafter. They had five children, as follows: Laura Maud (unmarried, of Toronto); Richard Mowbray, Coppercliff; Royston, died in 1890; Ralph Elsworth, M.D., Vancouver; and Marguerite, married Lt.-Gen. C. W. Spinks of the Imperial Army, Cairo, Egypt.

In June, 1915, Mr. Coleman and his wife went to Western Canada, and while he was at Edmonton, she visited Mr. and Mrs. Jas. P. Thompson of Ardath, Sask. On the evening of the day of her arrival when crossing the ferry at Outlook, Sask., their automobile struck the apron of the scow, which moved out from the shore, and the automobile turned turtle in twenty feet of water. Mr. and Mrs. Thompson, two of their children, aged eight and six, and Mrs. Coleman, were drowned. She was born on August 10th, 1858.

During Mr. Coleman's forty-nine years of service with the Canada Company, hundreds of thousands of acres of land were sold and settled. He discharged his duties with signal capacity and integrity, and built up an enviable reputation as an estate manager and trustee.

He was a sincere and enthusiastic churchman, and was for years associated with St. Ann's parish. In recent years he was a member of St. Paul's, Bloor St. His greatest church

work found expression in the brotherhood of St. Andrew. From 1906 to 1925 he was Chairman of the Dominion Council of the organization.

Mr. Coleman was a charter member of our Association. In 1886 and 1887 his name appears as Drainage Engineer for Canada Co. and in 1888 and 1889 as Engineer for the company.

Although he took no active part in the work of our Association, he did not lose his interest, as he attended some of the Veterans' Luncheons in recent years.

His health began to fail him in 1923, but he continued on duty until he had a paralytic stroke on May 14, 1926.

In June, 1926, he went to Vancouver to visit his son, Dr. Ralph Elswood Coleman, and died there on September 15th, 1926. His burial was at Vancouver.