

## J. M. O. CROMWELL

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In the published Proceedings, 1898, appeared a short sketch of Joseph Miller Oliver Cromwell of Perth, but without a portrait. His only son has furnished the Committee with a photograph and information for the following sketch, which has been slightly revised:

J. M. O. Cromwell was born at Road, Somersetshire, England, on January 1st, 1819, where his parents who were respected and prosperous citizens then resided. Upon their death, the two children, J.M.O. and his sister Ann, were well provided for, but the estate was left to the management of an uncle who decided to emigrate to Canada with his two wards. He settled at or near Perth, Upper Canada, which settlement had been founded by officers and soldiers, disbanded at the close of the War of 1812-1814.



The uncle indentured his Nephew to a farmer, appropriated the patrimony, and left for the United States. Ann, who was some years older, had in the meantime married a settler named Glenn.

Young Cromwell, who was a frail boy physically, was so brutally treated by the rough pioneer farmer, that he ran away, taking refuge with his married sister. He attended school and was so apt in mathematics that his teacher advised him to study for land surveying, which advice he decided to follow. He frequently related, in subsequent years, that he worked and studied eighteen hours per day, and could demonstrate the six books of Euclid, when standing on one foot. (This is probably a figure of speech not now fully understood.)

After a year's schooling, no doubt under a proficient teacher, he presented himself before the Board of Examiners for preliminary examination, then to a greater degree than at present, conducted orally.

He articulated himself to Josias Richey (see Report 1922) and qualified as a Deputy Provincial Surveyor on October 1st, 1846. He immediately began private practice at Perth, and was acknowledged as one of the prominent surveyors in the eastern part of the Province.

The Counties of Lanark and Carleton were then largely virgin forest, but the greater part had been surveyed into Townships, and Concessions and lots posted in advance of settlement. As, however, a large number of soldiers were disbanded in a very short time, the surveys had been performed by contract, one Surveyor employing several unqualified assistants, the result being that many inaccuracies occurred and disputes followed. As the farms became cleared and wealth accumulated, the farmers required that the boundaries of their farms be correctly determined as some had fenced and claimed more land than their deeds specified.

The lawyers and Surveyors profited by these disputes and the lawsuits that followed. For years the sessions of courts were cluttered up with boundary dispute cases. Litigants occasionally became beggared with the costs.

Mr. Cromwell became noted for the accuracy of his field work, and disputants frequently agreed to abide by his survey instead of appealing to the courts. Whatever might be the result of a case at court, a feud between families frequently followed.

When the Hon. Alex. Morris was a member of Government he offered Mr. Cromwell the position of Surveyor General of Canada, which, however, he declined. As he stated, he never asked for a position or favor in his life, nor did he ever hold a salaried position.

Mr. Cromwell continued in general practice, retracting old lines, running side lines, making subdivisions, etc., prosecuted field work in winter as well as summer, until seventy-seven years of age. It is reported that his evidence in respect to boundaries was never controverted, also that his surveyed lines were not disputed. He had in an unusual degree the confidence not only of the public but of the judges.

He died at Perth on October 19th, 1898, from a malady that had been neglected.

He married Miss Mary Watson, a daughter of a pioneer settler of Perth. There were five children, one son, M. J. M. Cromwell, now of Ottawa, unmarried; and four daughters, one now living, Mrs. Nell Riddell of Carleton Place.

During his busy career as a Surveyor he accumulated a considerable competence which he bequeathed to his family.

The following Surveyors served their apprenticeship with Mr. Cromwell:—John A. Snow, 1847, Ottawa; John McLatchie, 1864; A. W. Kippen, 1877 and W. R. Burke, 1878. Mr. Kippen was killed in action at Batoche in 1885.

The greater part of the information for this sketch and the photograph, were furnished by his son, Mr. J. M. Cromwell, now of Ottawa.

Four surveys were made in this Province under Government instructions by Mr. Cromwell:—

Lots 1 to 12, Concession 2, Bathurst .....	1850
Part 10th Concession North Elmsley .....	1855
Broken front Concession A, North Gower .....	1857
Part Concession line 2nd Concession Nepean .....	