

WILLIAM MAHLON DAVIS



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Lieut. Colonel William Mahlon Davis was the son of Joel W. Davis, of Aylmer, Ont., of U. E. Loyalist stock. He was educated at Woodstock College and the Royal Military College, Kingston, being one of the old Eighteen. Graduating in 1880, he was engaged in Railway work in Iowa for one year, afterwards becoming assistant engineer of the Kansas City, St. Joseph and Council Bluff Railway. He left this position on account of climate and health and became articled in 1884 to Jas. A. Bell, P.L.S., who was then City Engineer of St. Thomas, with whom he remained for a short time. He passed his final examination as a P.L.S. on April 11th, 1885, and shortly afterwards was appointed City Engineer of Woodstock, which position he filled for fifteen years.

In 1891-92 he designed and installed the present system of waterworks and during his residence in Woodstock, carried on a general Engineering and Surveying practice, and after leaving Woodstock, acted as Consulting Engineer and designed the present trunk sewers and disposal works.

In 1898 Mr. Davis was appointed City Engineer at Berlin, Ont., now Kitchener, where he remained twelve years. The town increased in population from 9,000 in 1898 to 14,600 in 1910. The most important of the works constructed at Berlin during his term of office were the Sewage Disposal Works, built in 1904-5. These comprised 14 acres of filters, also, sewage pumping station and sedimentation tanks. The effluent from these works cannot be distinguished from clear spring water, and they remain to-day probably the best example of intermittent sewage filtration in the Province.

In 1903 he designed a system of waterworks for Listowel and in 1904 was Engineer in charge of construction of Berlin and Preston Electric tramway. In 1905 he entered into part-

nership with Herbert Johnston and under the firm name of Davis & Johnston, they were in charge of construction of Galt Sewerage System, Preston Waterworks System and Preston Sewerage System and Disposal Works, Hespeler Waterworks, Waterloo Sewerage Disposal Improvements and new Water Supply, Guelph.

In 1910 he was appointed City Engineer at Prince Rupert, B.C., where he remained two years designing and superintending various municipal works. He then entered into partnership with R. F. Leslie, the firm being known as Davis & Leslie, consulting Engineers with headquarters at Vancouver. They were appointed Harbour Engineers for the North arm of the Fraser River, also, engineers for the City of Port Moody, B.C., where waterworks, sewers, roadways, pavements, etc., were constructed.

For the Provincial Government, Colonel Davis subdivided the following Townships:—

Scadding and Crerar in 1891; McWilliams in 1894; McNish in 1895; Hendrie in 1897.

Two land surveyors served under articles to Mr. Davis—W. F. VanBuskirk and W. B. Ford.

At the outbreak of the war Colonel Davis offered his services but was not accepted until 1915, when he was given his commission to organize the 54th Kootenay Battalion which he recruited to full strength and trained to great efficiency. He was then asked by the Government to organize the 2nd Pioneers Battalion, which was urgently needed. He did this recruiting from Halifax to Toronto, taking his Battalion to England in about three months. On January 17th, 1916, Col. Davis met with a serious accident being thrown from his horse, which prevented him taking his Battalion to France. In 1917 he was appointed to the command of the Western Ontario Regimental Depot at Bramshott, but returned to Canada in July, 1918. He died on October 8th, 1918, in the Protestant General Hospital, Ottawa, his death being the result of his accident.

On 15th, October, 1889, Col. Davis married Scobie McKay, of Woodstock. He is survived by his widow and two children, one daughter and Lieut. Donald Davis of Canadian Engineers on Active Service.