

**SILAS JAMES.**

By His Son, D. D. James, O.L.S.

Silas James was born on Lot 24, Con. 2, west of Yonge Street, Township of York, on the 19th of June, 1834.

His father was William James, who was Reeve of York Township for many years. His mother was Rebecca Johnston, whose parents were both of United Empire Loyalist stock.

The mother of Rebecca Johnston was a Dennis. John Stoughton Dennis, P.L.S., was of this family, and Mount Dennis, between Weston and West Toronto Junction, was named after the same family.

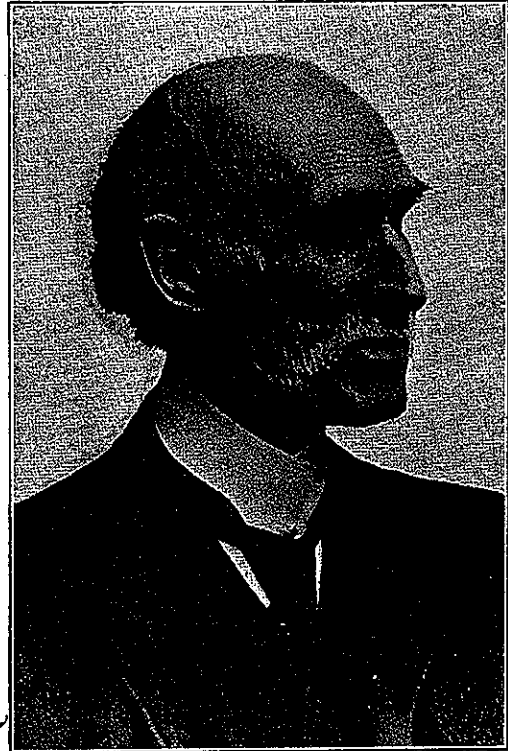
Silas James was brought up on the farm, where he was born, went to the nearest Public School, and later to the Grammar School at Newmarket. In 1855 he was apprenticed to John Stoughton Dennis, and served his time with the firm of Dennis & Boulton, at Toronto. Among those apprenticed about this time to the same firm were James H. Esten, Henry Lawe, H. J. Cambie, John J. Francis, and Edward M. Miles.

In 1857 Mr. Boulton withdrew from the partnership and Mr. Gossage became a partner with Mr. Dennis.

Silas James, during his apprenticeship, attended lectures at the Normal School and studied Mineralogy and Geology under Prof. E. J. Chapman at Toronto University. On July 19th, 1858, he was sworn in as a P.L.S.

In 1859, wearying of slack times, he went to Victoria, B.C., via Panama, taking 45 days to accomplish the journey. After taking part in an exploring expedition on the east coast of Vancouver Island, he left for New Westminster and the interior.

Foster's Bar, on the Fraser, 25 miles above Lytton, offered an opportunity for placer mining. In his diary we read that after putting 100 buckets through the rocker he obtained \$1.00 worth of gold. He called this, in his diary, "Hard times on the Fraser." In contrast, the next day, after putting 200 buckets through, and obtaining \$3.12, he wrote, "Rather looking up on the Fraser



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River." Labor was worth \$4 per day, flour \$7 to \$12 per 100 lbs., pork 50c per lb., beans 25c per lb.

Later he, with some others, went into mining by sluicing, at some forty miles further up the river, at Lillooet. He realized about \$30 per week.

Early in 1861, in partnership with some millwrights, Mr. James built, at Lillooet, a sawmill, with power obtained from a 30-foot overshot wheel. This wheel was the wonder of the Indians in the neighborhood. The Sawmill Company proved to be a good venture, but was short lived.

In 1863 Silas James made numerous placer mine surveys in the Cariboo. He had to send for his theodolite, which came to him from New Westminster, the express charges being \$132, a sum equalling the original cost of the instrument. He records that Sergeant McCall borrowed this instrument to lay out the town of Barkerville, Cariboo.

After staking out a valuable placer for himself, and associates in business, Silas James returned to Toronto, thus being away from "Canada" about four years.

In 1864, under instructions from the Crown Lands Department at Quebec, Mr. James ran two base lines in Muskoka and Parry Sound Districts, and made a traverse of the Magnetawan River. The following years were spent in private practice around Toronto, but was as far west as Petrolia during the oil boom.

When engaged on these surveys in Western Ontario he became acquainted with Jane Sully, daughter of Richard Sully of London, Ontario, whom he married in 1867.

From 1867 to 1872, Mr. James was Superintendent of York Roads.

Following this he was in private practice in Toronto under the following partnership names: James & Fowler, James & Connolly, James, Mallory & Mallory, James & Speight, Silas James & Son.

He was employed by the Ontario Government on the following surveys:—

1873—Exploratory line in Muskoka, starting near Huntsville.

1877—Subdivision of the Townships of Galbraith and Haughton.

1881—Subdivision of the Townships of Cobden and Patton.

1884—Subdivision of the Township of Grant.

In 1883 Mr. James laid out Yorkton, Saskatchewan, for an incorporated Company.

From 1886 to 1893, during the summer months, he was employed as assessor for the City of Toronto.

In 1903 he subdivided for the Dominion Government, Townships 38, 39, 40 and 41, Ranges 17 and 18, Townships 39, 40, 41 and 42, Range 19, Townships 35, 36, 37 and 38, Range 21, all west of the third principal meridian, being situated a few miles south of Battleford.

In 1904 Mrs. James died.

Until 1908 Mr. James engaged in private practice. About then, on account of poor eyesight and hearing, he gave up survey work and attended to a few business interests and to his garden, of which he was very fond.

He was a member of the York Pioneers and of the Ontario Historical Society.

He belonged in early life to the Methodist Church. After marriage he attended the Northern Congregational Church. About 1890 he acquired an interest in a prohibition newspaper and became involved financially through its deficits and only recovered from its effects twenty years later.

He was born a Liberal in politics, and followed that party until middle life. His death occurred October 11th, 1915. His family consisted of: Oscar Sully James, Darrell Denman James, O.L.S., and Alma Alberta, now Mrs. Vail, all of whom are now living.