

AUGUSTUS JONES



Every Land Surveyor who has practised in Toronto, Hamilton and the Niagara Peninsula during the last hundred years has had occasion to refer to the field notes and plans of Augustus Jones. He came to Upper Canada before it was set apart as a separate Province, performed surveys for the Government for years and continuously resided in the vicinity of his labours, throughout his long and busy life. No surveyor in his time did more work of an important character than he. Notwithstanding the prominent position he held in the community, and his wide experience no attempt has apparently been

made to prepare a sketch of his career. For years a diligent search has been made for a portrait of Augustus Jones, but without success. It appears impossible to now unravel some of the contradicting statements collected from different sources.

The Jones' family is doubtless of Welsh descent. They were settled in Duchess County, New York State, when the Revolution occurred, and being Loyalists, they removed to Upper Canada after the War.

The date of birth of Augustus Jones has not yet been definitely ascertained, but it was probably about 1763.

The late Judge Stephen Jones of Brantford stated that Augustus arrived in Canada a year or two before his brother Stephen, who was the Judge's grandfather. As Augustus was then unmarried, it is probable that he was sent in advance

to select lands. Stephen's family comprised himself and wife, three sons, David, Ebenezer and Peter, also one daughter, Betsey. Another son, Stephen, the father of the late Judge Stephen, was born in Canada in 1790. They settled at Stoney Creek about seven miles to the East of the City of Hamilton. Quite recently the old house built by the pioneer was standing.

The father of Augustus and Stephen probably came to Upper Canada with Stephen, as Augustus states that his father's death occurred in October, 1791.

Augustus secured about 300 acres of land on the South shore of Lake Ontario and immediately West of Stoney Creek. The names Ebenezer Jones and Joseph Jones also appear on early maps of the Township of Saltfleet.

Mary Jones, sister of Augustus Jones, married John Gage, a Royalist officer, who lost his life in the War. She and her two children, James (b. 1774) and Elizabeth (b. 1776) made their way to Stoney Creek by canoe via the Mohawk and Oswego Rivers. Upon the farm of James Gage, the battle of Stoney Creek was fought in 1813.

Those who had supported the Royalist cause in the Revolution were treated harshly by the victors. As a rule their lands were confiscated and they were subjected to such indignities they desired to emigrate and start life again. Great Britain generously offered free lands to those who chose to come to Canada, and as a result thousands crossed into Upper Canada, Lower Canada and the Maritime Provinces between 1783 and 1792, all seeking lands upon which to make homes for themselves and families.

Settlers pressed on beyond the surveyed townships to select lands and no doubt the surveyors, the government officials and the military authorities experienced a busy and exasperating period from 1783 to 1792. Surveyors were rushed here and there as demands arose and disputes between claimants had to be settled.

Upper Canada had not at that time been separated from the Lower Province. Quebec was the capital, and from there Surveyor General Holland directed the surveys that were made after 1764. It would appear, however, that the military officers exercised the power of appointing deputy surveyors to meet the requirements of the situation. The U. E. Loyalists were granted lands as shown on a projected plan and the military authorities undertook to locate them. Many

officers were appointed as Deputy Surveyors: Stegmann, two Macdonells, Frey, Chewitt, DePencier, Fortune, Grant, Ridout and many others. Generally they had served in the war as officers in the Engineers, or in the Navy, but some few were surveyors before the war.

In 1784 Wm. Chewitt, Patrick McNiff, Jas. Macdonell, Hugh Macdonell and Alex. Aitkin were making surveys along the Upper St. Lawrence and the Lower Ottawa, and Philip R. Frey was sent to Niagara and Detroit. A few years later we find Chewitt in charge at Williamsburg, Frey at Detroit and Aitkin at Kingston. McNiff was transferred to Detroit in 1789.

In 1789 a Land Board was formed for each of the four districts of Lunenburgh, Mecklenburgh, Nassau and Hesse. Johnstown was the most important point in Lunenburgh; Kingston in Mecklenburgh; Newark (afterwards Niagara) in Nassau and Detroit in Hesse. These Land Boards had control of the surveying operations and the locating of the settlers. When Upper Canada became a separate Province, the names of the four districts were changed to Eastern, Midland, Home and Western, and the Land Boards continued until 1794, when they were abolished.

In the Autumn of 1792, John Graves Simcoe as Lt.-Governor of the New Province of Upper Canada, arrived at Niagara. He decided to make this place the capital of the Province and named it Newark. He assembled there the First Provincial Parliament and there were located the government offices, including that of the Surveyor General, Mr. D. W. Smith, a man of wealth and influence, but with no qualifications as a surveyor. Wm. Chewitt had charge of the office. (See Report 1894 for sketch of D. W. Smith).

Augustus Jones acted as chainbearer on surveys being made along the Niagara frontier and may have made certain surveys, but it was not until 1788 that he was appointed a Deputy Surveyor by the military officer commanding the Upper Posts. The letter of appointment reads as follows:—

Niagara, 15th January, 1788.

Sir:—

In consequence of a discretionary power given me by the Commander-in-chief and upon your representation that Messrs. Jesse Pawling and Augustus Jones are properly qualified to assist in surveying the tps. of the settlement under

your inspection, I do appoint them to that service from this date at the salary of two shillings and sixpence sterling per day, and without any other expense whatever being incurred from this apptmt.

I am Sir,

Yours, &c.,

JAMES WATSON,

Capt. Commdg. Upper Posts.

Mr. Philip Frey,

D. Surveyor.

Augustus Jones, as the leading surveyor in the district, was immediately consulted by the new Governor and it would appear that Jones gained his entire confidence, as during his term of office, Jones was constantly employed on the many works that this energetic Governor undertook for the development of the Province.

Jones knew the country, the settlers and the Indians and became, at once, the Governor's right-hand-man. It was he who surveyed Dundas Street that connected Lake Ontario with the Detroit frontier; Yonge St. from Lake Ontario to Lake Simcoe; and the Townsite of York. He also explored the Thames and the Grand Rivers.

From the records in the Crown Lands Office, we find that instructions were given to Augustus Jones for the following surveys:

In Dec., 1792, to survey Dundas St., and to explore the sources of the Thames.

1793—Townships of Flamborough, Beverley, Ancaster, York.

1794—Yonge St., Flamborough, Glanford, Binbrook, Delaware, Oxford, Dorchester, Burford, Grimsby, Windham.

1795—Ancaster, Thorold, Grantham, Beverley, Southwold, Whitby, York, Scarboro, Pickering, Capt. Brant's land, Lake Simcoe.

1796—Newark, Flamborough, Grimsby, Saltfleet, Beverley, Town of York, Coots Paradise.

1797—Pickering, Glanford, Oxford, Blenheim.

1798—Burford, Lake Shore Road, Humber to head Lake, Grand River, Uxbridge, Gwillumbury, Yonge St. lots for French Immigrants.

1799—Examined settlements in Hope and Haldimand. Surveyed Humber Mill Reserve, Yarmouth, Gore, Newark and Stamford.

After the Fort at Niagara had been surrendered to the Americans, Governor Simcoe decided that Newark was not a safe site for the capital of the Province. At first he favored the Forks of the Thames, where London now stands, but eventually decided on York, to which place he removed the capital in 1794.

Jones made Newark his headquarters when the Government offices were located there, but moved to York with the government. He was, however, the greater part of the time out in the bush with his men, many of whom were Indians.

In a letter from Augustus Jones to Thomas Ridout, dated January 20th, 1825, Mr. Jones gives a summary of the surveys performed by him prior to 1792, as follows:—

Townships of Niagara and Stamford in 1787; Thorold, Pelham, Saltfleet and parts of Clinton, Grimsby and Bertie in 1788. If these Townships were "all run out into 100 acre lots" as stated by Mr. Jones, he must have had a busy season in 1788. In this same year D. Hazen surveyed Grantham, and J. Pawling surveyed Louth. Jones surveyed Barton in 1789.

On June 20th, also Oct. 27th, 1829, Jones wrote to Wm. Chewitt giving a summary of the work done by him in his early career. It would appear that Chewitt could not find the field notes on record of some of the Township surveys made by Jones and had written him about the matter. Jones states in his reply that he was so driven at the time that he could not prepare copies of his notes, but offers to do so, if he were paid for doing the work. He states that he began the survey of the Township of Niagara on June 11th, 1787. This was then Township No. 1. He then mentions having surveyed Stamford No. 2; Bertie; Saltfleet No. 7; Barton No. 8; Thorold; Clinton; the shore of Lake Ontario from Niagara to Burlington Bay and around the circumference of said Bay; shore line Lake Erie from Fort Erie to mouth of Grand River; Indian lands six miles on each side Grand River from Lake Erie to Dundas Street; North shore Lake Ontario, Toronto Old Fort to River Trent; laid out a row of eleven Townships on this lake front; surveyed the first concession lines and extended the side lines of the said Townships from the Lake running back one mile of said concession.

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Jones in another letter of 1829 to Mr. Chewitt states that he made the following surveys under instructions from the Surveyor General's office: Yonge St. from York Bay to the landing on a creek that flowed to Lake Simcoe and down this Creek to the Lake; greater part of the Township of York; new part of the Townsite of York, containing one acre lots; Townships of Scarboro, Pickering, Delaware, Oxford and Yorkmouth, also parts of Vaughan, King, Markham, Whitchurch, Burford, Beverley, Flamborough W., greater part of Ancaster. He surveyed the "Purchase Line" from outlet of Burlington Bay, N. 45° W. for fifty miles, then south-westerly forty-five miles to River Thames near the Upper Forks; River Thames from Delaware to Forks and Grand River main branch to the "Purchase Line." (The "Purchase Line" became the West boundary of Halton and extended from Burlington to Arthur).

The foregoing surveys were made under instructions of the Surveyor General at Quebec, or the commanding officers at Fort Niagara, or the authority of the Land Board.

That Augustus Jones possessed an iron constitution and an uncommon capacity for work is evident from the surveys he performed. He was appointed as Surveyor for the Niagara District, but probably had several assistant surveyors under him, as no man could alone have performed all the surveys credited to Augustus Jones.

From 1787 to 1799 inclusive, no surveyor in Upper Canada surveyed and subdivided as large and important an area of land as Augustus Jones. For some years after 1800 he continued to reside at Stoney Creek, but he made no surveys after 1799 for the Provincial Government. It would be interesting to know the reason for this abrupt change in governmental action, or perhaps Jones preferred to settle down on his farm, make private surveys and give attention to his land interests.

In 1825 he was requested by the Government to resurvey the line of Dundas Street between the Townships of Ancaster and West Flamborough as surveyed originally by him in 1793 and 1795.

No further instructions appear to have been given him after 1825.

The following notice appeared in the Upper Canada Gazette of May 12th, 1798:

proprietor and held the patents for many Township lots throughout the district, but apparently he did not acquire wealth.

The children of Augustus Jones were as follows as given by Dr. D. E. Russell of Brantford, a great-great-grandson of Augustus Jones:

- (1) John—who studied surveying with his father, married Christina, daughter of Jacob Brant, son of Joseph Brant. Sometime after 1826 he removed from the Grand River and assimilated with the whites. Two or three children, names now unknown.
- (2) Peter—born at Saltfleet Jan. 1st, 1802. He was baptized in the Anglican Mohawk Church below Brantford in 1820, but three years later he joined the Methodists and became a Missionary. For some time he appears to have made Port Credit his headquarters. With his knowledge of Indian life and character, he became a powerful influence for good among them. He prepared a spelling book and dictionary, translated hymns and the Scriptures. He also taught an Indian school for some years. He travelled East, West and North in the Province, preaching at the Indian Reserves and became their trusted plenipotentiary in business matters. In 1829 he visited the United States, and in 1831 went to England, returning in 1832. When there he was introduced at Court.

The hardships he had endured brought on illness in England from which he never fully recovered. In 1837 he was in New York City and again left for England, when he saw Queen Victoria. He returned in 1838. He was in England a third time in 1844-1846. In 1847 he removed from Port Credit to the Munsey Reserve below London. In 1849 he removed to Brantford, where he continued to reside until his death on June 29th, 1856.

He married an English lady named Eliza Field about 1833, who after his death married Rev. Carey and lived in Brantford. Dr. Peter E. had nine children, of whom five died in infancy. Those that attained maturity were the following:—

Charles Augustus, born 1839, served in American Civil War. Died June 19th, 1882. No children.

John Frederick, born 1851, died March 18th, 1876. No children.

Peter Edmund, practised medicine at Hagersville until his death. He died on Reserve July 1st, 1910. His widow was living at Vernon, B.C., in 1921. He had a fine collection of curios and relics.

George Dunlop, died about 1885. Two sons—Peter A. F. and Charles A. F. Peter A. F. now living at Brantford.

- (3) Henry—third son of Augustus, had the following children: two daughters and Henry, Jr., who married Clara Ormond and died in 1861.

Henry, Jr., had two sons and two daughters. The widow married Gillespie.

One daughter, Ella M. Benson, is living at Seattle. A. Henry Jones of Port Dalhousie, born 1860, is a son of Henry, Jr.

- (4) Joseph—fourth son of Augustus, had one daughter who survived her father for a few days only.

- (5) Augustus Jr., was born in 1818. He was a carpenter and builder. During his father's life time he acted as his assistant and acquired a knowledge of practical surveying. He inherited his father's instruments and made surveys on the Reserve as required. It is also reported that he used the old compass to locate "bee-trees" and he may have made a professional charge for this service. He died in February, 1892. He had but one child, a daughter, who predeceased him.

This old compass was in existence a few years ago, and unless lost or destroyed subsequently, it should be acquired by the Association and deposited in our Repository with other instruments.

- (6) Mary—There is some confusion respecting the daughters of Augustus, Sen. By one statement Mary married John Doolittle. By another statement, however, she married Jacob Brant, Jr., son of Jacob, Sen., and grandson of Joseph Brant, and there can be no doubt about this. It is possible, however, that she was twice married.

- (7) Katharine—married Archibald Russell. Their children were:— Amos; Lucretia, born about 1831, married D. Jamieson, died 1921; Susan, married Chief Geo. King; Sarah, married Geo. Halbert; Archibald, died 1917; John;

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Katharine, married John Doolittle; Joseph; and William, the youngest, who died about Feb. 7th, 1923, the last of the family.

Dr. D. E. Russell of Brantford, is a son of Archibald, Jr. Geo. Doolittle of Hagersville, is a son of Katharine Russell and John Doolittle.

(8) Lucretia—died without issue.

(9) Sarah or Sally, who died in 1832.

Wilson Jones attended Upper Canada College in 1832, and may possibly have been a son of Augustus, Sen., but it is more probable that he was a nephew.

In 1826 Augustus, Sen., wrote from Cold Springs to his son Peter the following letter, at the same time sending him a horse:—

“Please give our true love to John and Christina and all the rest of our friends at the Credit. We expect to meet you and them at the camp-meeting. I think a good many of our Indians will come down at that time. I will send you Jack, and hope the Lord will preserve both you and the best. He is quiet and hardy. The only fault I know, is he stumbles sometimes, and if you find he does not suit you as a riding horse, you can change him for some other, but always tell your reasons. May the Lord bless you. Pray for your unworthy father, Augustus Jones.”

Augustus, Sen., died at Cold Springs on Wednesday, Nov. 16th, 1836, and was buried there. After the death of his son, Rev. Peter, his body was removed to Greenwood Cemetery, Brantford, and re-interred beside his son. A suitable monument was erected to the memory of Rev. Peter Jones by the Chippewa Indians on the Reserve and there is also a tablet to his memory in the Methodist Church at New Credit. There are headstones and inscriptions to the memory of other members of the family, but the grave of Augustus Jones, the survivor, lies unmarked.

The portrait that accompanies this sketch is that of Augustus Jones, Jr., the youngest son of Augustus, Sen.