



**ALEXANDER MATHESON**

**Ontario Land Surveyor, Dominion Land Surveyor, Civil Engineer, Professional Engineer (Ont.)**

(Submitted by Chas. R. Morgan, O.L.S.)

"ALEX" MATHESON was born on a farm in the County of Bruce near the Town of Kincardine on October 6th, 1882. He was the second son of Donald Matheson and Mary Munro Matheson, who were descendants of Highland Scottish settlers who migrated to Canada at the time the area known as the "Huron Tract" was being opened for settlement.

His early education was obtained at the nearby country school, at the High School in the Town of Kincardine, and at the Kincardine Model School or Teacher's College where he graduated in 1904. The following three years he spent teaching public school in the vicinity of his birthplace.

In 1907 he went to Alberta, taking along his savings from the three years of teaching with the idea of investing same in a manner that would develop a stake sufficient to see him through a University course in a hitherto undecided profession in Medicine or Science. His savings, although duly invested (and the securities auspiciously held) did not produce expected returns. He temporarily gave up the idea of a University Degree and for a while taught school at Olds, Alberta, worked for a real estate agent in Calgary, and ranged down the west coast of the U.S.A. in his quest for a suitable vocation or employment.

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After four years of such pursuits and "knocking around" he happened to meet J. R. Akins, D.L.S., who, at that time, was organizing a party to survey the north boundary of the "far away" Peace River Block. He joined the party, liked the work, and with the help of Mr. Akins, who was a good teacher and later a very good patron, he passed the preliminary examinations for a Dominion Land Surveyor in the Spring of 1913. He then articulated with his older brother Hugh Matheson, O.L.S., D.L.S., B.Sc., M.E., C.E., P.Eng. (Ont.) whose obituary appears in the 1959 issue of the Ontario Land Surveyor's Annual Report. His brother Hugh at that time was engaged by the Department of the Interior on Topographical Surveys in Jasper Park and on the survey of the original Townsite of Jasper. Upon completion of this two year work period with his brother Hugh, he again worked for Mr. Akins and successively with G. H. Blanchet and A. M. Narraway on baseline and meridian work. In 1917 he qualified as a Dominion Land Surveyor and joined F. H. Plunkett in the survey of the Manitoba-Saskatchewan boundary, and in 1918 transferred to the staff of the Flin Flon Mine (now the Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting Company, then in its embryo stage).

The mining environment and all that went with it appealed to him and he moved east to the Creighton Mines in Sudbury, and later to the Gold Mining area and the Hollinger Gold Mines Limited in Timmins.

From Hollinger he transferred his services to Ontario Land Surveyor Charles V. Gallagher of nearby South Porcupine. Mr. Gallagher, like Mr. Akins, was also a good teacher and patron, and along with acquiring a rudimentary knowledge of survey practice, he qualified as an Ontario Land Surveyor in 1920. He spent another year with Mr. Gallagher and then went to Swastika, the Gateway of Kirkland Lake, and other mining camps, and started his own private survey practise.

The privilege of having served forty years on the same stand, progressively opening a new country, unstintingly dispensing time, talent and sound advice to any who sought it, was his full reward. A source of great satisfaction was his experience in the fact that in forty years of work, no lawsuit, litigation or serious argument ever emanated from any of the surveys which he performed.

His traits of character were many and peculiar. He was a life member of the Masonic Order. He read the works of Charles Dickens and Mark Twain many times. He practised the philosophy expressed by "Robbie" Burns in his "To a Mouse". Believed Coca-Cola as a drink was demoralizing; preferred hard liquor to any presently dispensed in bottles. Was absolutely unemotional in politics, patriotism and religion. Seldom trusted a Scotsman, but looked upon Irishmen as the nicest

## BIOGRAPHIES

people in the world. Did not work well in hand with others, being naturally inclined to dominate the situation. He never married.

His immediate surviving relatives are his brother, John and his family and his brother Hugh's family.

He died at Kirkland District Hospital September 27th, 1961 and his burial took place in the family plot in the Kincardine Cemetery at Kincardine, Ont. on Friday, September 29th, 1961 at 2:00 P.M.