

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF ALEXANDER NIVEN,
D. L. S., O. L. S.

Alexander Niven, D.L.S., O.L.S., one of Ontario's veteran land surveyors, died on May 7th, 1911, at the age of 75, in Victoria Hospital, Isabella Street, Toronto.

No surveyor in Ontario had a wider experience in this Province since 1859, when he became a Provincial Land Surveyor. He has been largely employed by the Government in exploring and running survey lines through the wilderness parts of Ontario. As an authority on the district along the height-of-land and the region of the James Bay slope, he ranked among the very first. He it was who ran the first meridian line to James Bay, passing through the Porcupine district, close to the now famous mines. It was on that trip in 1898 the first report of gold in that region was made.

Alexander Niven was noted among surveyors for his management of men, being famed for getting more line cut in a season than any other surveyor in the Province. Of late years his health had been failing, but he, nevertheless, continued upon strenuous survey trips in New Ontario for the Government every summer. He said that his health and strength improved each year on returning to the bush.

The inter-provincial boundaries of Ontario, Manitoba and Quebec were surveyed by Mr. Niven, while many of the "base" lines throughout New Ontario are those established by him.

A quiet, dry, slow-talking man, Alexander Niven was a remarkable example of the men who accomplish things without show. A member of the Ontario Land Surveyors' Association, he acted as President at the Meeting of their Association some years ago, without making an unnecessary speech or wasting a word. A wave of his hand or a motion of his head conveyed his meaning with quite sufficient clearness to the attentive explorers and land surveyors for whom his directions were intended.

Born at Niagara-on-the-Lake in 1836, Mr. Niven had for many years been a resident of Haliburton, Ontario, during such times of the year as he was not away at his work.

Here at different periods he was appointed stipendiary magistrate, warden of the county, and reeve of the township of Despard. He was a Liberal and a Presbyterian. A widow and two daughters survive him—Mrs. Paul Vine, of London, England, and Mrs. James Ketrick, of Toronto.