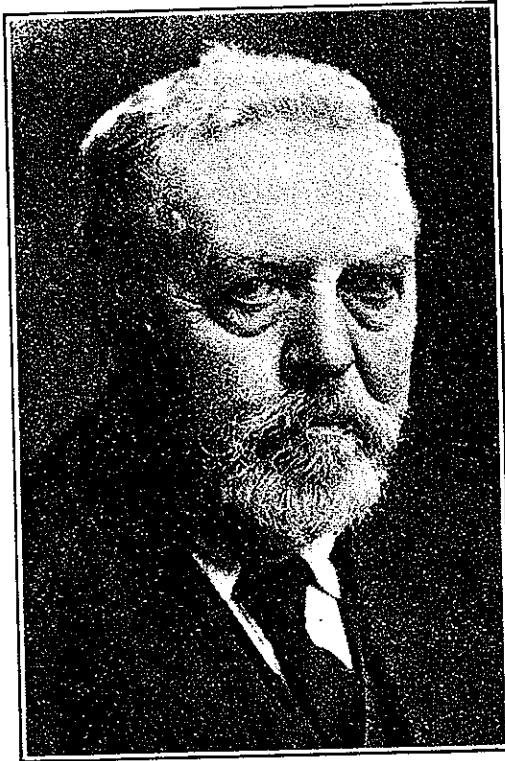


WILLIAM PEARCE

Became an Ontario Land Surveyor on October 12th, 1872, having studied surveying under Messrs. Wadsworth and Unwin, in Toronto.

He was born in the Township of Dunwich, in the County of Elgin, Ont., on February 1st, 1848, and died in Calgary, Alberta, on March 3rd, 1930, and buried there, Dean Robinson officiating at the funeral.



He was educated in the County Grammar School, St. Thomas, Ont., and at Toronto University.

He was a son of John Pearce, who was born in the Township of Dunwich, Elgin Co., and Elizabeth Moorehead, born in Ireland. His grandparents were John Pearce, born in Rhode Island, U.S.A., and the family originally came from England. The grandfather married Francis Patterson, who was born in Ireland.

John Pearce, the grandfather, was one of four who landed in a small boat, on the north shore of Lake Erie, in 1809. It is probable that they landed at the then existing Port of Tyrconnel. The port passed out of existence many years ago. The Post Office was about half a mile from the old port which was approximately at the mouth of a creek which flowed into Lake Erie, about immediately south of the town of Wallacetown. It was here that these settlers carved their farms out of the bush, though there had been some small clearing made by some prior settler, the place chosen by John Pearce, which was about one-half mile from the Port of Tyrconnel. Port Stanley and Port Talbot sprang up afterwards and became the important ones, the latter being named after the historic Col. Talbot.

The brothers of William Pearce were John S.; Thomas L. and Joseph, all married and now all deceased. And his sisters were Francis M. and Jane E. both unmarried and deceased.

On September 21st, 1881, William Pearce married Miss Margaret A. Meyer, a daughter of A. G. Meyer, who was a prominent resident of Seaforth, Ont. By this union five children were born: 1st, Miss Francis Pearce; 2nd, Mr. William Pearce, both unmarried; 3rd, Mrs. A. T. Tassie, Vernon, B.C., who has two children, named William J. and Peter; 4th, Mr. H. J. L. Pearce, Vancouver, B.C., who has one child, named William G. Pearce; 5th, S. K. Pearce, of Pearce's Limited—Investments—Herald Building, Calgary, who has one child, named W. T. S. Pearce.

Mr. William Pearce was a Dominion Land Surveyor, Ontario Land Surveyor, Manitoba and Alberta Land Surveyor, member of the Engineering Institute of Canada, Life Member of the Association of Alberta Professional Engineers, Fellow of Royal Geographical Society, a member of Anglican Church and a Conservative in politics, a member of the Manitoba Club, in Winnipeg, and a member of the Ranchman's Club of Calgary.

Travel afforded him his chief recreation, and he was a director of the Royalite Oil Company from its formation.

Before going West Mr. Pearce surveyed the Thousand Islands for Wadsworth and Unwin. And it was through the energetic skill practised by him on that survey that commended him for the higher honours to come to him. He went to Western Canada as far back as 1874 in charge of Dominion Lands Survey parties, operating in Manitoba and the North West Territories.

In 1882, at the age of thirty-two he was appointed Inspector of Dominion Land Agencies by the Dominion Government, and also a member of the Dominion Lands Board. In this connection it was his duty to investigate, report and make a recommendation on all claims to land, of which the greater part were made by half-breeds, in the district extending from the Red River to the Rocky Mountains, and from the 49th, to the 57th, parallel of latitude. Ninety, and some assert 99% of these claims were settled according to his recommendation. And from 1898 until 1901 he was largely occupied in reporting on the probable resources of many districts in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. Particularly the

drainage of Athabaska and the Peace Rivers. He was the first man to direct attention to irrigation in Canada east of the Rocky Mountains. Since October, 1916, he was statistician to the Department of Colonization and Development of the C. P. Ry. His work represented the highest efficiency in his line. His contribution to the world's work has been of great value, and entitles him to rank among the builders of the great North West. His wide study, his broad experience and comprehensive understanding of Western Canada conditions made him a firm believer in its future. His hobby was a centralized Board of Research to scientifically develop the Western country he so dearly loved, and said was in its infancy.

There were no motor cars or aeroplanes in the pioneering days of William Pearce, much of his travelling being done in Red River carts and dog sledges, and later by buckboard. He was noted as a pedestrian and a long-distance snow shoer. He was a familiar figure on the trails in his buckboard with cayuses.

He never passed by any person, white man or Indian, or half breed, without passing the time of day, and he enjoyed the happy faculty of knowing before they parted, all about that individual, his affairs, whence he came and whither he listeth. And he never forgot the incident, or the exact place where they met.

The writer has merely touched upon the high spots of the professional and business career of this distinguished and unique member of our profession, and he regrets that the limited space at his disposal prevents reciting further details of his civic good citizenship in drawing the attention of the Minister of the Interior, in 1887 to the opportunities for establishing a tannery in Calgary. He was instrumental in establishing the Canadian National Park, and the Banff Park reservation. It is owing to the good offices of William Pearce and his vision, that the citizens of Calgary enjoy the benefits of the group of Islands, known as St. Georges Island, and also the Newata Park. He had land reserved for a General Hospital in Calgary, and many other accomplishments. He built a beautiful home forty-two years ago of Calgary sand stone, and interior trimmings and panelings of Canadian wood. His success with trees and shrubbery was an inspiration to newcomers to Calgary and other parts of Alberta, who longed for trees, flowers and other foliage so often associated with old homes.

No man in Western Canada was more consulted by the high officials of the Canadian Pacific Railway, or in closer touch with the prospective plans of that company than William Pearce. His recognized knowledge of the country, his unquestioned veracity, and even more his sincerity of purpose, made him a great favorite with C.P. Ry. officials, all of whom were full of admiration for his never-ceasing flow of information.

The following is a list of his Dominion Lands Surveys.

- 1874—Survey of outer two miles of the Parishes of St. Francois Xavier and Headingly.
- 1875—Township outlines east of Principal Meridian.
- 1876—Survey of outer two miles in the Parishes of St. Andrews, St. Clements, St. Boniface, Kildonan and St. Paul.
- 1877—Traverse of portion of Winnipeg Lake and river. Survey of Penitentiary Reserve in Tp. 13, R. 3, E.P.M. Tp. outlines, E.P.M.
- 1878—Township outlines, E.P.M.
- 1879—Township outlines, W.P.M. Timber explorations near Lake Winnipegosis.
- 1880—Township outlines, W.P.M. Township subdivision and outlines W. Second Meridian. Survey of 2nd Meridian, Tps. 1 to 6, and Tps. 37 and 38.
- 1881—Tp. outlines, W. 2nd M.
- 1891—Surveys at Lac la Biche, Lake St. Anne and Ganmore.
- 1892—Survey pt. Revelstoke townsite, B.C. Survey of townsite on Flat Creek, Tp. 26-27-5.
- 1897—Correction survey along the Illecillewait River, Tp. 24-26-5.
- 1898—Pt. subdivision Tp. 24-2-6.
- 1901—Examination of Tp. subdivision, W. of 4th M.
- 1902—Chief Inspector of surveys. Examining proposed irrigation on Bow River. Inspecting coal lands at Fernie, B.C.
- 1903—Miscellaneous surveys and examination of township of subdivisions, W. 3rd and 4th Meridians.
- 1907—Resurveys near Calgary.
- 1909—Small miscellaneous surveys near Calgary.