

## FREDERICK PRESTON RUBIDGE

Compiled by A. P. Walker

Frederick Preston Rubidge was born in London, England, on 10th March, 1806, being the youngest, but one, of five sons of Robert Henry Rubidge of that city. At least three of these sons settled in Canada, the second son, Captain Charles



Rubidge, R.N., after a distinguished career in the British Navy, came to Canada in 1819, and took up land in the Township of Otonabee, about nine miles from the present City of Peterboro', being the first settler in this Township. He had a great deal to do with locating the two thousand Irish immigrants who were brought out by Hon. Peter Robinson, five years later in 1825 and settled in the vicinity of Peterboro'. These immigrants were brought by water to the present Town of Cobourg, then taken over a bush road to Gore's Landing on Rice Lake, and then by boats across the lake and up the River Otonabee to the head of navigation at Peterboro'.

Many of these immigrants remained in Peterboro' itself, which was laid out by D.P.S. Richard Birdsall in 1825. Up to that time the place had been known as "Scott's Plains", from the fact that Adam Scott had built a small sawmill there in 1821. The name Peterboro' was derived from the name of Hon. Peter Robinson, its founder. Mr. W. F. B. Rubidge, O.L.S., whose biography appears in our Annual Report for 1930, was a great-grandson of this Captain Charles Rubidge.

It is not known definitely when the subject of this sketch, Frederick P. Rubidge, came out from England, but he probably came out with his younger brother, Alfred, about the year 1825, when he would be about 19 years old. Their intention

evidently was to join their elder brother, the Captain, at Peterboro', but they appear to have decided to settle in Cobourg, then just coming into prominence, where Alfred took up the study of law, and practised for many years, while Frederick studied surveying, probably under Major Samuel Wilmot, D.P.S., who, at this time, was a very prominent surveyor in the Newcastle district. Frederick P. Rubidge qualified as a Deputy Provincial Surveyor on 31st January, 1831, and during the next six years made many surveys for the Government, notably Howe Island in the St. Lawrence River in 1833, the town plot of Trenton in 1834 (then known as Trentport), the town plot of Clarkville (adjoining Napanee), the Indian Reserve of Aluwick, and Point Ann in the Township of Thurlow. After the year 1837 he did very little land surveying, but confined himself to engineering works, first on the Welland Canal Surveys, and afterwards as a permanent official of the Board of Works. This Board of Works later became the Public Works Department of Canada, and had jurisdiction over the St. Lawrence waterway as well as over all public buildings in Canada. Mr. Rubidge served first as a draftsman at Kingston, under H. H. Killaly and Samuel Keefer, and rose to the position of Assistant Chief Engineer and Architect of the Public Works Department at Ottawa. He made numerous reports on improving the navigation of the St. Lawrence, but it was as an architect and artist that he distinguished himself most. He designed many of the public buildings erected during these years, and had much to do with determining the style, design and construction of the Parliament Buildings built at Ottawa in 1861, and which were erected under the jurisdiction of his department.

He had married on 13th February, 1836, Jane Georgina Boswell, daughter of one of the prominent citizens of Cobourg, and by whom he had six daughters and two sons as follows:

- (1) Jane, married Eustace Scott Wilson of Toronto. Died 22nd July, 1919, and whose descendants are still living in the city.
- (2) Eleanor Anne, married Dr. Harrison Ross, of Quebec.
- (3) Anne Elizabeth, married Mr. Duck of Montreal.
- (4) Frederick Hillary, drowned at Montmorency Falls, Que.
- (5) William Renwick, died in infancy.
- (6) Fannie Maria, married the late H. C. Hammond (of

Osler and Hammond, stockbrokers) of Toronto, and is still living in Montreal.

(7) Mary Eleanor, married Alexander Crombie of Montreal.

(8) Evaline Jane, married William McCullough, and still resides in Rockwood, Ontario.

Frederick P. Rubidge retired on a Government pension in 1872, and removed from Ottawa to Montreal, where he continued to reside for many years, dying early in 1898 at the ripe old age of 92. A portrait of this gentleman in later life accompanies this sketch.

Thos. Stafford Rubidge whose biography appears in our Report for the year 1915 was a nephew, and came from England to join his uncle in 1841.

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