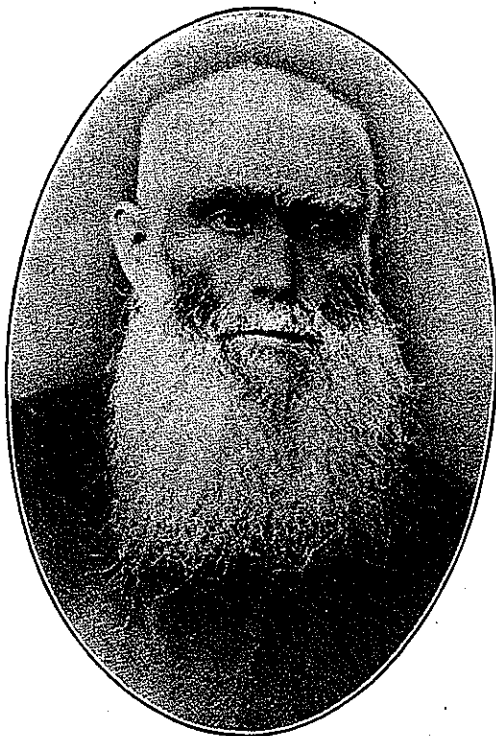


## JOHN SHIER

Compiled by A. P. Walker

The late John Shier, P.L.S., whose name must be pronounced, in the old Scotch method, "Sheer," and not according to the Irish custom "Shire," was a prominent figure in the public life of the County of Ontario 70 years ago. As County



Engineer he, at various times, also occupied the positions of County Clerk and Clerk of the Board of Education. He was remarkable for reliability and punctuality, and the story is told how he and the late Henry Creswicke, Sr., P.L.S. of Barrie, the Engineer of the adjoining County of Simcoe, arranged to meet once a year at the long Narrows bridge at Atherley for joint inspection. This bridge, which was originally constructed about the year 1852, has a swing span in the centre to permit the passage of boats. When the watchman stepped out of his cabin at the swing span, at the appointed hour, he would invariably see Mr. Shier approaching from the East and Mr. Creswicke from the West.

John Shier was born in the Parish of Peter-Culter, Aberdeenshire, Scotland, on 16th August, 1808. He was the son of Thomas Shier, a Land Surveyor and Civil Engineer of that place, and his mother's maiden name was Beatrice Sleigh. John went to school in Aberdeen, studied Surveying and Engineering with his father, and received his diploma in Aberdeen. In 1829, at the age of 21, he came to New York alone, and afterwards worked at Newburgh, N.Y., and Cleveland, Ohio. At the latter place he was appointed City Engineer in 1834, and also met his future wife, Miss Clara S. Slade, whom he married on 6th October, 1836. During the

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depression of 1842 he came to Canada with his wife and family and settled in Whitby, Ontario, where he resided, with the exception of two years in Oshawa, for forty years, until his death in 1882. He qualified as a Deputy Provincial Land Surveyor 25th April, 1844, and practised in the County of Ontario and in the adjoining Counties from this time forward. He made a great many Municipal Surveys under Government authority, the first of which we have any record being the boundary line between the Townships of East Gwillimbury and Scott, under instructions dated 20th June, 1851. In the list of Municipal Surveys published in our "Manual of Instructions" the name of "John Shier" appears about 90 times as the Surveyor in charge of such surveys. On 1st January, 1854, the County of Ontario was separated from the County of York and John Shier was appointed County Engineer at the first meeting of the County Council on 23rd January, 1854. At this time conditions in Whitby were "booming." New County buildings were being erected, the Grand Trunk Railway was being constructed, and land was being sold at exorbitant figures. The Port Whitby and Lake Huron Railway Company was incorporated in 1853, of which John Shier was Engineer, to build a line of railway from Whitby to Georgian Bay via Atherley Narrows, but dissensions arose and the line was never built. Some years later a line covering the northerly part of this route was constructed from Port Hope. Mr. Shier was present in his official capacity at the great reception to the Prince of Wales (afterwards Edward VII) on the 7th September, 1860, at Whitby.

In 1871 Mr. Shier was also appointed County Clerk, which position he held for several years. He was President of the South Ontario County Agricultural Society, which he was instrumental in forming, and on resigning the Presidency in 1868, he was presented with a handsome gold watch, which is still in the possession of his daughter Mary, who has kindly furnished most of the information for this sketch.

As stated, John Shier married Clara S. Slade at Cleveland, Ohio, and they had seven children, of whom the first three died in infancy. Two daughters, Clara E. Shier and Mary B. Shier lived together for many years in Toronto, where Mary B., the youngest of the family, taught in Public Schools, and is now living retired. Edward S. Shier, a son, also lived in Toronto and practised as an accountant. Another son, James J. Shier, was Editor of the Port Jervis (N.Y.) Gazette. All these children, except Mary, have now passed away. Mrs.

John Shier, the mother, died 27th March, 1881, and John Shier himself died one year later on 14th May, 1882, very suddenly. They were members of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, and are buried in the Union Cemetery at Whitby. A photograph of Mr. Shier is published herewith.

### ANGUS CATTANACH

Was born in 1796 and came to this country from Laggan, Glengarry, Inverneshire, Scotland, as a young man. He attended school at Perth and had taken up surveying before arrival here.



His father, John C. Cattanach, born 1769, and his mother also came to Canada at a later date, and died at Dalhousie Mills July 5th, 1862, aged 93 years and 9 months. And in 1826, Donald Cattanach, another brother, and uncle of Angus, arrived from Scotland. He was born September, 1799, and died in Winnipeg on May 29th, 1883.

Angus was appointed a land surveyor on April 11th, 1820.

He was twice married. His first wife being Margaret McDonald, a Roman Catholic, and a resident of the township of Kenyon, in the county of Glengarry. Five children were born to them: (1) Margaret, married Dr. Ferguson;

(2) Isabella, married Walter Colquhon; (3) Ann; (4) Rev. J. C. Cattanach. His second wife was Ann Hutcheson, a native of Scotland. Two children were born to them: (1) Dr. McKenzie Cattanach, killed in auto accident; (2) Dr. W. C. Cattanach, who is a bachelor now residing in the old three-