

MAJOR SAMUEL STREET WILMOT.

By D. B. Simpson, K.C.



Benjamin Wilmot was born in 1589, emigrated with his wife from England to New Haven, Connecticut in 1640, and in 1648 took the oath of fidelity to the colony. He died in 1669. His direct descendants to the subject of this sketch are as follows: William, son of Benjamin, 1632-1689; Thomas, son of William, born 1679; Ezekiel, son of Thomas, 1708-1746; Lemuel, son of Ezekiel, born 1743, and married one Elizabeth Street; Samuel Street Wilmot, son of Lemuel, and the subject of this sketch, was born in 1774, and died in 1856.

In the Revolutionary War, Lemuel Wilmot raised a company of soldiers of the King, known as the Loyal American Regiment, of which he was Captain. The Regiment was commanded by Beverly Robinson, whose descendants became prominent in York, afterward Toronto. Lemuel Wilmot probably resided at that time at a place known as Nine Partners, in New York State, as his son, Samuel Street Wilmot was born there.

At the conclusion of the war, Lemuel Wilmot removed to New Brunswick, and settled in the County of Sunbury, on the banks of the River St. John. In 1796 S. S. Wilmot came to Upper Canada and made his home near Richmond Hill. He studied land surveying with John Stegmann (See Annual Report of O. L. Surveyors for 1920, p. 90), and in 1798 married Mary, the eldest daughter of Mr. Stegmann. He was appointed a Deputy Surveyor on November 6th, 1804, only a few weeks after Mr. Stegmann's tragic death, when on the historically noted Schooner Speedy. He was busily employed on

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surveys for the Government until the war of 1812, when he volunteered for service, and won his rank of Major on the field. He served at the battle of York when it was captured by the Americans in 1813.

Mr. Wilmot performed the following surveys for the Provincial Government:—

Township of Uxbridge, 1804; Mississauga Purchase in Township of Toronto and Townships of East and North Gwillimbury, 1806; Township of Scott, part of Camden and Lots in Kingston, 1807; Road from Kempenfeldt Bay to Penetang and residue of Camden and Portland, 1808; Township of Reach, 1809; Road York Easterly, Residue of Dorchester and Dereham, Re-survey Brenbrook, 1810; part Etobicoke, Village of Gwillimbury, Lots on Penetang Road, 1811; Town Penetang, 1812; Townships Cartwright and Manvers, 1815; Town plot Belleville, 1816; Townships of Cavan and Monaghan, Lot 4, Con. 2, ThurLOW, addition to Kingston, 1817; Townships Emily and Smith, 1818.

The Township of Wilmot, in Waterloo County, was named after him but was surveyed by John Goesman.

He was absent from home months at a time on survey work, his sole helpers and companions being Christianized Indians. It is on record that occasionally he would return home with his Indians and the available inhabitants would congregate on such occasions to hear the hymn singing of the Indians.

In April, 1816, Mr. Wilmot purchased lots 31 and 32 in the township of Clarke, County of Durham, 400 acres, and erected thereon a residence and named the same Belmont, which became noted far and wide for its charming hospitality. He continued to live in said home during the remainder of his eventful life.

Probably about the year 1819, under instructions from the Government, he surveyed the Kingston Road, from York to Kingston, 165 miles. This road was constructed by an American contractor named Capt. Asa Danforth. Although laid out four rods wide, it was "grubbed" for two rods only. For some years it was impassable in wet weather. The first mail service over this road was by mule pack, the postie walking, the schedule being fortnightly.

Mr. Wilmot acquired eventually 1,700 acres, which, with the 400 acres referred to, was in one block, and they are now of the most valuable lands in Clarke township, and held same at his death absolutely unencumbered.

He represented the old Newcastle District in the Provincial Parliament, and was selected by the Government to value Crown and Clergy lands.

He died in 1856, at the age of 82, and his wife died in 1866, also at the age of 82. They were buried in a graveyard, a part of a Church holding created by him on his lands, a part of lot 35, concession 2, in Clarke Township.

The children of S. S. Wilmot comprised four sons and one daughter, as follows: (1) Allen W., born in 1804, died in 1893, a Colonel in the Militia which supported the Government in the Rebellion in 1837; (2) Lewis W., born in 1806, died in —; (3) John W., born in 1820, died in 1899, a prominent banker in New York City. He was educated at Upper Canada College; (4) Samuel W., born in 1822, died in 1899; (5) Elizabeth W., who was born in 1814, married the Hon. Asa A. Burnham, a Senator from the Cobourg District, and died in 1896. They had 13 children—5 sons and 8 daughters—who grew to manhood and womanhood and filled their niche among the peoples.

Samuel, the youngest of the four sons, was a prominent man in the community. He was on military duty when a youth in 1837-38, and afterward was Captain of Militia. He was educated in Upper Canada College, and in 1852 married Helen M. Clarke, a sister of the late Judge Clarke. He was elected warden of Northumberland and Durham. He was a pioneer in the science of fish culture, and eventually became an authority in this important industry. For many years he was Commissioner of Fisheries for Canada, and was awarded a gold medal in connection with fisheries in 1879. He died in 1899, more than much respected, leaving four sons and three daughters, as follows: (1) Helen, born 1853, who married one Charles E. Thorne, of Toronto, and died in 1916, leaving two daughters and one son; (2) Charles, born 1855, who died 1914, leaving a widow, two daughters and one son; (3) John, born 1857, living in Chicago, has three daughters; (4) Minnie, born 1859, who married D. J. Galbraith, and is living in Newcastle, has two daughters; (5) Olive, born 1864, who married Henry Sanford, President of the Adams Express Company of New York City, and died in 1903, no children; (6) George Clarke, born 1866, residing in San Francisco, Cal., died 1921, a widower and childless; (7) Seymour Street, born 1873, still living, not married.

William Wilmot, an elder brother of S. S. Wilmot, served in the Revolutionary War and emigrated to New Brunswick,

where he married Hannah, daughter of Hon. Daniel Bliss, of Massachusetts, another Loyalist. Their son, Lemuel Allan Wilmot, born in 1809, became one of the most prominent public men in New Brunswick. He was a member of the Provincial House for sixteen years and the greatly distinguished leader of the movement for Responsible Government, which he practically single-handed, forced the adoption of. Lemuel A. Wilmot became Attorney-General in 1848. In the dispute respecting the boundary between New Brunswick and the State of Maine in 1839 he volunteered, and as Major of a company of rifles went to the front to face an army of the United States in defence of the believed rights of the New Brunswickers. The dispute was, however, amicably settled in 1842 by Baron Ashburton, by diplomacy, in the famous Treaty which bears his name. He was appointed a Justice of the Supreme Court in 1850, and Lieut. Governor of the Province in 1868. He was the first who was not a member of the Church of England to hold any of these positions in the Province of New Brunswick. He died in 1878.

The Wilmots came from the best New England stock, and their connections were highly respectable and even distinguished. They were proud of this descent, and claimed the usual ancestor from among the passengers of the Mayflower who landed at Plymouth in 1620. If this claim be correct the descent from the Pilgrim Fathers must have been through the female line, and no record of it has been preserved. The matter is not of much consequence at the present day, for the Wilmots have made a record far more distinguished than that which they won in New England, for they have given to New Brunswick five Members of the Legislature, a Senator and a Member of the House of Commons of Canada, two Members of the Executive of New Brunswick, and one of the Privy Council of Canada, an Attorney General and a Provincial Secretary of New Brunswick, and two Lieutenant Governors. (See *Makers of Canada*, Parkman Edn., Vol. 17, p. 4).

The greater part of the information for this sketch and the portrait copied from a painting destroyed by fire, were furnished by Mrs. Simpson, the wife of D. B. Simpson, K. C., of Bowmanville. Mrs. Simpson was a daughter of Helen Thorne, and a grand-daughter of Samuel Wilmot, and a great-grand-daughter of Samuel Street Wilmot, the subject of the foregoing sketch.