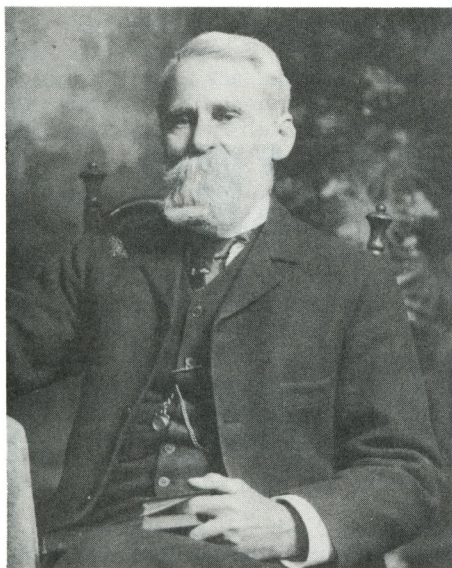


Surveyors of The Past

— BY CHARLES FAIRHALL —



CHARLES UNWIN

Charles Unwin, son of James Browne Unwin and Ann (Parsons) Unwin, was born December 30, 1829, at Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, England, receiving his earlier education at the Royal Grammar School at that place. Coming to Canada in 1843, he lived with his uncle Mr. Charles Unwin, at one time deputy registrar of the County of York and until 1847 attended Upper Canada College, subsequently serving his time, at surveying, with Colonel J. S. Dennis, of Weston, afterwards Surveyor-General of the Dominion. He received his diploma "in and for Upper Canada" under date of April 12, 1852.

During the last year of Mr. Unwin's apprenticeship and his first year as a P. L. S., he assisted Colonel Dennis in the survey of parts of the Townships of Bentinck and Glenelg, and of Indian Reserves on the north shore of Lake Huron.

His own work for the Provincial and Dominion Governments was considerable. Taken from a list furnished by himself, his surveys were part of the Township of Rama, in 1855; the Muskoka Road Line from Atherley to South Falls of the Muskoka River and from Orillia to the same place in 1856; the Townships of Esten, Spragge and Salter, 1860; the Township of Lutterworth, 1858; the Islands in the River St. Lawrence from Brockville to Gananoque (The Thousand Islands); and Townships numbers 18, Ranges 16 and 18, West Manitoba in 1880 and 1881. He was also Inspector of Surveys in Manitoba in 1881.

In Municipal work he surveyed the First and Second Meridional Concession in the Township of Etobicoke, 1869, the line between York and Vaughan, 1869, the Base Line of Willoughby 1870 and Yonge Street from the side Road between Lots 110 and 111 to its Northern termination in 1885.

He was appointed Secretary of the Board of Examiners of Provincial Land Surveyors on January 6, 1860, holding this office till January 6, 1868.

His surveying practice was principally in Toronto, where he was in partnership successively with John Ross Jack, Edward M. Miles, V. B. Wadsworth, H. J. Browne, R. H. Coleman, R. M. Bonfellow, Villiers Sankey, F. L. Foster, H. B. Proudfoot, C. J. Murphy and H. L. Esten, and also during the oil excitement in 1866 for a short time with F. W. Dyas at Bothwell and during the gold excitement in the year 1867 with William Murdock and James Hales Reed at Madoc.

His various partnerships were known as Unwin & Jack; Unwin & Miles; Wadsworth & Unwin; Wadsworth, Unwin & Browne; Unwin, Browne & Sankey; Unwin, Foster & Proudfoot; Unwin, Foster, Murphy & Esten, and the present firm of Unwin, Murphy & Esten.

Mr. Unwin was for some thirty-two years an assessor for the City of Toronto, which post, for most of that period, only occupied a part of his time, enabling him to still continue the practice of his profession. In 1896 a permanent board of assessors being appointed, he was given a position thereon, retiring from surveying until 1905, when his former partner Villiers Sankey, having resigned from the City Surveyorship, it was offered to and accepted by him; this office he retained until 1910 when he retired to become consulting City Surveyor, which post he occupied at the date of his death.

During his long career, many surveyors studied under him, the following having been his pupils: A. B. Scott, C. E. Roberts, A. C. Thompson, F. L. Foster, W. G. Bellairs, A. P. Walker and H. L. Esten. Many also served with the firms with which he was connected: With Wadsworth & Unwin; W. Pearce; Tom Kains; Arthur Crickmore; H. C. Denny; F. W. Armstrong; R. H. Coleman; R. Coad; H. J. & W. A. Browne; F. L.

Blake; George Ross; Walter Crow; H. W. Selby; H. R. McEvoy; D. Thomson; R. M. Bonfellow and Villiers Sankey; with Unwin & Miles; C. F. Miles; with Unwin, Browne & Sankey; C. J. Murphy; J. A. Wilde and G. W. McFarlane.

Mr. Unwin was at one time a member of the Synod of the Diocese of Toronto, and had been a church warden of All Saints' Church. He was one of the first committee for the setting off of that parish some forty-three years ago, and attended the church continuously from that time till the Christmas immediately before his death, which occurred on Thursday, January 3, 1918, at the advanced age of eighty-eight years and four days. The funeral service was held at All Saints' Church, Toronto, and was attended by a congregation which was eloquent of the esteem in which he was held by his friends. His own profession was represented by some seventeen members, being practically all of the Toronto Surveyors.

He was never married and his immediate family predeceased him. His nearest living relatives at the time of his death were Mr. Charles J. Agar, Toronto; Mrs. Cortez Fessenden, Peterborough, Ont.; and Mrs. James Patton Reynolds, of St. Louis, Mo., U.S.A.. Lieut.-Col. John Hampden Fessenden, D.S.O., "Crown of Italy" and "White Eagle of Serbia," of the Imperial Army and Lieut. Charles Vivian Fessenden of the 48th Highlanders, Toronto, (First Contingent) are grand-nephews.

On several occasions he contributed interesting papers to the Annual Meeting, being mostly reminiscences of his work which have been printed from time to time in the Reports of the Association. That of 1910 contains an autobiographical sketch, which is full of interest and mentions among many other things his assisting Sir Sandford Fleming in the preparation of a map of Toronto, during his apprenticeship. He also surveyed the "Marsh," and retraced the Windmill line for the City of Toronto.

Of a very retiring nature, Mr. Unwin took little active part in the discussions at the Meetings of the Association, but had not his aversion to prominence been well-known, he would, without doubt, have been one of the early presidents. The only public functions, connected with the profession, at which he could be prevailed upon to take a leading part, were the veterans' luncheons of 1916 and 1917 at which he presided, much to the pleasure of all. Mr. Charles Unwin was always held in the highest esteem by the members of the profession, and the public generally. ●