

Henry Strange, O.L.S No. 1. Why No. 1?

By John Quinsey, O.L.S (Retired)
Member of the Archives Committee

Last November, Mr. James Page donated a large wall portrait of Henry Strange to the Association. It needs repairs to the frame and is presently in the possession of the Archives and Historical Committee. Some members of our Association may not be aware of why Henry Strange is the first name in our numerical listing of Ontario Land Surveyors. Here is the explanation.

Wilmot J. Baird (known as Major Baird) took over the duties of Secretary of the Association on 15 November 1957, following the death of H. (Herb) M. Anderson.

If not a continuation of the work of Mr. Anderson, then Mr. Baird immediately began the work of preparing a list of all Land Surveyors of Ontario in chronological order by date of their appointments. The arrangement of all previous lists had been more or less alphabetical. The list that he prepared is now filed in a three-ring loose leaf binder. The title, given on the spine, is "Archival Official Roll". The list is hand-written in ink. It includes Deputy, Provincial, and Ontario Land Surveyors, beginning with Samuel Holland who was appointed on 6 March 1764. Dates of death (when he had the information), and year of the annual report containing a biography, are given.

Our published *"Research Index of the Early Days of Land Surveying in Canada, Volume 2"* lists 843 land surveyors who had been appointed prior to 1892.

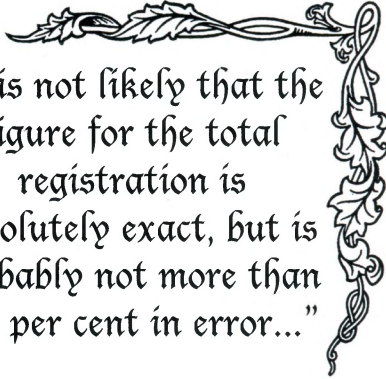
...he was able to continue in land surveying until he was 90 years old. That was just before he died in 1906.

Provincial Land Surveyors were entitled, and encouraged, to join the new Association of Ontario Land Surveyors incorporated in 1892. In fact they had to join in order to legally continue in active practice. The annual fee for membership in the Provincial Land Surveyors Association had been \$3. By the Ontario Land



Provincial Land Surveyors were entitled, and encouraged, to join the new Association of Ontario Land Surveyors incorporated in 1892. ...the fee for active, or full, membership was an annual fee of \$4, and an initial registration fee of \$1.

Surveyors' Act of 1892, the fee for active, or full, membership was an annual fee of \$4, and an initial registration fee of \$1. The Act also permitted the Association to exempt from annual fees qualified surveyors who had been in practice for 35 or more years. The Association also determined that qualified surveyors could be honorary members, registered but withdrawn from practice, for the initial registration fee of \$1. The secretary-treasurer, A. J. VanNostrand, in his report dated 27 Feb. 1893, advised that there were 173



"It is not likely that the figure for the total registration is absolutely exact, but is probably not more than one per cent in error..."

active, or full, members, and that there were 52 others who applied for registration, paying a fee of just \$1, making a total of 225 Provincial Land Surveyors who were entered on the rolls of the new association (227 are listed in the annual report for 1893).

Of all the surveyors listed in that 1893 report, Henry Strange had the earliest date of appointment. Born 16 September 1815, he had been appointed on 30 November 1838. The Association of Provincial Land Surveyors of Ontario had been organized in 1885. In 1889, a circular and promotional letter was sent by Willis Chipman, Secretary-Treasurer, to all P.L.S.'s who were in active practice, but who were not members of that Association. Henry Strange, P.L.S. of Rockwood replied to that letter, confirming that he was in active practice, and that he was not a member of the Association.

Just a few years later Henry Strange changed his mind about membership. He is entered on the roll for the 1893 annual report as one of the members granted exemption of annual fees by reason of his having been in active practice for 35 years. As indicated in the biographical sketch of his life, he was able to continue in land surveying until he was 90 years old. That was just a year before he died in 1906.

A. J. VanNostrand, in that 1893 report, advised that in addition to the 225 surveyors who were entered on the rolls of the new association, there were about 136 others who had not applied. We do not know the names of the 136 others. As a matter of interest, it is possible that one might have

been Arthur Rankin, appointed on 6 April 1836 - two and a half years ahead of Henry Strange.

Arthur Rankin had many interests in addition to land surveying. These included the Militia in which he had the rank of Colonel, enterprises in which he was the promoter, and politics. He was elected M.P. of Essex in 1854. For a fee of just \$1 he could have entered his name on the rolls of the new association. (If that had occurred, we would all be one number higher!) But land surveying may not have been one of Arthur Rankin's interests near the end of his life. He died on March 13, 1893 at the age of 77 years.

Thomas C. Keefer, appointed 14 August 1840 and who died 7 January 1915, was ranked O.L.S. No. 2.

The case of Thomas Fraser Gibbs, appointed 31 May 1841 and who died 17 April 1893, may be of some interest. Since 1864 he had been a member of the Board of Examiners. He had not been a member of the Association of Provincial Land Surveyors, and his name is omitted from the List of Members in the 1893 annual report. But the obituary for him, given in that 1893 report, stated; *"Mr. Gibbs was a registered member of the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors, and about two months before his death addressed a letter to the Association, expressing hearty approval of the aims and objects of that body, and regretting the fact that he was unable through physical disability to take part in the annual meeting. Arrangements were being made whereby his name would have appeared in the honorary list of those who were granted exemption under the Ontario Land Surveyors' Act, but these were terminated by the news of his death."*

It is evident that Major Baird accepted that statement. He listed Thomas Fraser Gibbs as O.L.S. No. 3.

Major Baird, in the conclusion of his report of 1 February 1958, stated: *"It is not likely that the figure for the total registration is absolutely exact, but is probably not more than one per cent in error. One source of difficulty is the number of cases in which two or more members have the same or very similar names. To help overcome this difficulty in the future, each member has been given a number for administrative purposes."*

There are many Ontario Land Surveyors, approximately 514 including Henry Strange (O.L.S. No. 1), who would never know that, in 1958, they

would be "given a number for administrative purposes". The approximation is obtained as follows:

The first publication of members' numbers occurred in the List (alphabetical) of Registered Land Surveyors, 1958. The highest number on that list is No. 964 for Donald F. Yates, admitted by the Board on 8 January 1958. There is a total of 450 names of surveyors on that list. Thus there are 514 names of Ontario Land Surveyors that are omitted from that list. That number is the approximation.

Wilmot J. Baird died 26 September 1963. A veteran of both world wars, past President of the Association (1956), and member of the Board of Examiners for 12 years, he had served the Association very well. But omitted from his biographical sketch is the fact that he was responsible for the numbering of Ontario Land Surveyors.

As we now know, at least one very practical advantage has resulted from numbering. The marking of survey monuments with the surveyors identification number has been an effective method, assisting us

in the research that is essential for every legal survey. Credit is due to Major Baird for initiating this method. Let us hope that he had an opportunity to see it being used.



Battery RE-CELLING

Send your batteries to the company
Ontario Land Surveyors have come to trust.

We Do Most
Laptop Batteries

We rebuild rechargeable
battery packs for all electronic
field equipment

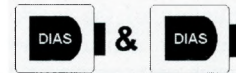
All packs rebuilt with latest in high
capacity battery technology

Call Ahead For 24 Hour Rush Service

Repairs to Most Radios & Bar Finders

Toronto
(416) 823-0489

Mississauga
(905) 822-9292



ELECTRONICS

1110 Kos Blvd., Mississauga, ON L5J 4L6

What Are You Waiting For?

Don't let another issue of North America's
leading Geomatics magazine pass you by!

SURVEYOR

Become one of over 1,000 Canadians that
already receive *Professional Surveyor
Magazine* 11 times per year

Subscribe online at www.profsurv.com
or call (301) 682-6101 for details.