

Fred Parnell was certainly instrumental in founding the Society and was President from 1927 – 1935. Upon his death, the following article appeared on the front page of The St. Catharines Standard on Wednesday, 28 Feb. 1951. It is transcribed here, only correcting some obvious typos. There is also a picture of Fred with the article, however it has not been included due to clarity of the copy. As you will see from reading this article, Fred was truly a great citizen and historian.

Fred Parnell, Former MPP, Dies at 82

Fred R. Parnell, well known throughout St. Catharines district, died Tuesday night at his home on the Lakeshore Road.

Mr. Parnell was well known as a historian of this area, for he was born of United Empire Loyalist stock on the banks of the Ten Mile Creek, and took an active interest in the history of this part of Canada, contributing many articles to The Standard and papers to the Ontario Historical Association on this subject.

He was also very active in the political and civic life of this community and served as a member of the provincial parliament for a time under Premier W. H. Hearst, as well as being on the Board of Education and Board of License Comcation (sic), the Water Works Commissioners.

Mr. Parnell was active in Memorial Church, and for about 42 years was either a teacher or officer in Memorial Church Sunday School. He was superintendent for eight or nine years, and was secretary for many more years. For 10 years he was treasurer of the United Church Bible Society of St. Catharines.

For 53 years he was a member of the board of the church, and for 31 years was its recording steward. He was also chairman of the trustee board.

In military activities Mr. Parnell was a member of the Welland Canal Field Battery in the late 1880's, and during the Second World War served as sergeant in the Home Guard under Capt. Graves. He was also a member of the Recruiting League at that time, and later was on the committee chosen to select the site for the War Memorial.

For many years Mr. Parnell was secretary of the Conservative Association of St. Patrick's Ward, and became first president of the riding of St. Catharines when it was formed. He remained president for five years when he resigned to contest the riding in a by-election brought about by the death of the late Dr. E. Jessop, member of the provincial parliament. He was successful and remained in the provincial house under the leadership of Premier W. H. Hears, during his term of office.

Municipal Life

In municipal life Mr. Parnell represented St. James Ward on the Public School Board, when the city was divided into six wards. Later he was a member of the Board of Education for eight or nine years as representative of the County of St. Catharines.

For 10 years he was also a member of the Water Commission, in two elections being returned by acclamation, and in one election receiving the highest vote of any individual on any board. For four years he was a member of the (sic) for the City of St. Catharines, and for one year was its chairman.

When the Lincoln Historical Society was instituted Mr. Parnell became the first president and continued as such for 10 years. He was also the first president of the United Empire Loyalist Society and was largely instrumental in arranging the U.E.L. memorial in Memorial Park. Another activity in which he took part was the St. Catharines Lawn Bowling Club of which he was a past president. Mr Parnell was the last surviving member of the original Grantham Brass Band.

Historical Matters

During his life he took an active interest in historical matters and spoke to numerous clubs. At a meeting of the Ontario Historical Association in St. Catharines he read a paper prepared by himself on "History of the Niagara Peninsula." (ed note: the OHS held it's annual meeting June 22-24, 1932 in the parish hall of St. George's Church.)

He also wrote a history of the Township of Grantham, the Banks and Valley of the Ten Mile Creek, the History of Memorial Church, and a History of the Old Methodist Church at Beaverdams, near Thorold.

Other literary activities included a column published regularly in The Standard on lawn bowling.

For more than 30 years Mr. Parnell was connected with the wholesale grocery business in the city, most of the time a general manager of his firm. He was for a time president of the Independent Wholesale Grocers of Ontario. During recent years he was president of the coal firm of Parnell and Garland Ltd.

Lodge Activities

Lodge activities also took up much of Mr. Parnell's time. He was a Past Master of the Grantham Loyal Orange Lodge, and of the Lincoln County Orange Lodge. For 10 years he was Grand Registrar of the Royal Black Knights of Ireland of Western Ontario, and for one year was Grand Master

He had the 50-year medal in the Masonic Lodge and for a number of years was secretary of Maple Leaf Masonic Lodge No. 103. He was a 32nd degree Mason. Another lodge in which he was active was the Scottish Rite

Among his many hobbies were fishing, hunting, lawn bowling, history, poetry and growing flowers.

Born in Grantham

Mr. Parnell was born in the Township of Grantham on the banks of the Ten Mile Creek on June 24, 1868, the son of the late Lewis Parnell, Sr. who passed away Jan. 3 1898, at the age of 65, and of his wife, the late Susan Read Parnell, who passed away May 24, 1929, at the age of 99.

He received his education in the old brick school, S.S. No. 2 in Grantham Township. He then went to the old Collegiate Institute now known as Robertson School, and finally to St. Catharines Business College.

Mr. Parnell's great-grandfather, William Parnell, Sr. came to Canada from Cornwall, England, in the year 1796 and settled on

Queenston Street immediately east of Grantham Ave. He was a member of the First Lincoln Regiment during the war of 1812. Mr. Parnell's grandfather Stephen Parnell was a member of the Dragoons in 1837-8 during the Mackenzie Rebellion and at one time was a member of the Grantham Council.

Lewis Parnell, Mr. Parnell's father, was one of the pioneer fruit growers of the township of Grantham, and along with the late W. H. Bunting made one of the first direct shipments of apples to England during the early 1880's. He was a member of Capt. Cooke's Flank Company, attached to the XIX Regiment during the Fenian Raids of 1866.

U.E.L. Stock

On the other side of his family, Mr Parnell came of U.E.L. stock. His great-grandfather, George Read, enlisted at the age of 16 in Butler's Rangers and fought with that celebrated unit until peace was signed in 1784. At the close of the American Revolution he, with his brothers William and John, settled at Homer, where they obtained 1,100 acres from the crown.

William, with the assistance of his neighbours, erected the first Episcopal Church (1795) in this section, on his property. Divine service was performed there by Rev. Addison, first Episcopal minister in this district.

Mr. Parnell's grandfather, Cornelius Read, Sr. was a member of Capt. McErwin's company of the First Lincoln Regiment during the War of 1812 and saw service at the battles of Queenston Heights and Lundy's Lane. He was also present at the burning of Buffalo. He was one of the three commissioners appointed more

than 100 years ago to conduct the affairs of Grantham Township when St. Catharines was still part of the township.

Susan Read Parnell, Mr. Parnell's mother, was the youngest child of Cornelius Read and was born in the old Read home on the banks of Ten Mile Creek, Lakeshore Road, Grantham Township, in 1830 and lived more than 99 years. She retained a remarkable memory up to the day of her death, a gift she passed on to her son.

"Very few people love the beauties and enchantments of nature any more than I do," wrote Mr. Parnell in 1943. "The wooded and grassy hillsides and the old winding Ten Mile Creek on my father's farm will never be forgotten by me as long as my memory lingers with me.

"The song of the grey-bird (song sparrows) along the sloping hillsides in the early springtime will always remain as music to my ears, and the beautiful spring flowers carpeting the hills and valleys will forever stay a beautiful landmarks of my happy boyhood days."

Mr. Parnell is survived by a daughter, Mrs. Arthur C. (Nellie) Gander, Grantham Township, and a grand-daughter, Margaret E. Arbuthnot, and a son, Dr. Harry M. Parnell, predeceased him.

Mr. Parnell will rest at the funeral home of Butler and Son, 33 Duke Street, where funeral services will be held on Friday at 2:30 p.m. Interment will be in Victoria Lawn Cemetery.

Death Notice – from the Wednesday February 28, 1951 issue of The St. Catharines Standard

Died – PARNELL, Frederick R. – In the Township of Grantham on Tuesday, February 27th at his late residence Lake Shore Road. Frederick Raymond Parnell ex M.L.A. husband of the late Margaret Arbuthnot and dear father of Mrs. Arthur C. (Nettie) Gander of Grantham Township and grandfather of Margaret E. Gander, aged 82 years. Resting at the Funeral Home of Butler and Son, 33 Duke Street, where service will be held on Friday afternoon at 2:30 o'clock. Internment in Victoria Lawn Cemetery.