



# *Historic Gloucester*

Newsletter of the

**GLOUCESTER  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY**

[www.gloucesterhistory.com](http://www.gloucesterhistory.com)

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*The Perley Home for Incurables originally faced Barton Street  
north of Aylmer Avenue  
(1915-1996)*



The Gloucester Historical Society acknowledges financial assistance of the City of Ottawa

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### President’s Report

By Glenn Clark

I write to you with mixture of sadness and delight.

Our tour of the RCMP stables on November 4<sup>th</sup> with thanks to our guide, Sergeant Major Scott Williamson was a great success. We had about 30 participants, just about the ideal size of group for this kind of tour. It lasted about an hour and based on the wide variety of questions and the number of photos taken, everybody enjoyed the event. The Gloucester Historical Society will look at possibilities for other interesting tours in the future.

We continue to work on two manuscripts, one on the history of Honey Gables and the other on the retail history of Bank Street within Old Ottawa South. I look forward to bringing you further good news as we close in on publication. The latter project will bring us a further benefit as we expect to video interview David Hillary of Hillary Cleaners shortly. His dry-cleaning business ran in Old Ottawa South from 1959 until 2023 and was the first drive through dry cleaner in Canada.

On a sad note, I must inform you of the passing of Gladys Wicker, who so generously allowed us to interview her about her memories of growing up in Overbrook in the 1930s and 1940s. The interview took place in the fall of 2020 during a lull in the Covid pandemic and was presented to our 2022 Annual General Meeting. The link to this interview appears on the front page of our website

Gladys Wicker (March 29, 1931-November 22, 2023) was a dear friend and coworker for many years. She grew up on Queen Mary Street and attended Overbrook Public School (Gloucester School Section 25) and the High School of Commerce. She spent her entire career working at Canadian Livestock Records (from the late 1940s until the early 1990s). She moved with her sister Ivy to Mooney’s Bay in 1964 where they spent the rest of her life with

their treasured Yorkshire terriers. Sister Ivy is still living at age 101.

I must also report the expected closing of the Grace Johnston History Room, likely in 2024. The City of Ottawa has advised us of the impending closure and demolition of the building at 4550 Bank Street, the former Gloucester Township Hall. We are being encouraged to move our records to the Ottawa City Archives.

In this issue of Historic Gloucester, I write about another lost building in Old Ottawa South, the former Perley Hospital. I write about the history of this hospital and its long connection with the Perley family, who were very successful lumbermen and later involved in national politics and philanthropy. Enjoy!

With snow now on the ground and Christmas lights and music everywhere, I wish everybody a wonderful Christmas.



*Gladys Wicker*



**Lost Old Ottawa South - The Perley Home for Incurables – 43 Aylmer Avenue  
By Glenn Clark**



***Booth, Perley & Pattee Mills on Chaudière Island circa 1878  
(CSTM Eddy Collection, originally LAC PA-012497)***



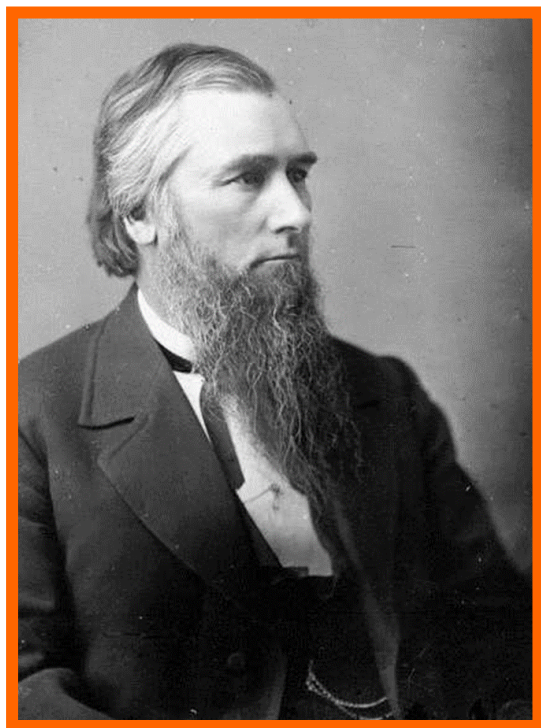
***The Perley Family Homestead, 415 Wellington Street,  
Near the current site of Library and Archives Canada  
The original site for the Perley Home for Incurables 1898-1915***





*Interior of Wellington Street building*

*Lillian Freiman appears halfway up the stairs surrounded by nurses  
A.J. Freiman (of Freiman's Department Store)  
is second from left at the bottom of the stairs*



*Honourable William Goodhue Perley*

*Topley Studio Fonds/Library and  
Archives Canada/PA-013009*

## Origins of the Perley Family

William Goodhue Perley was a native of Enfield, New Hampshire and later lived in Lebanon, New Hampshire before immigrating to Ottawa in 1854, where he established a successful lumber business and later sat as a member of Parliament for the City of Ottawa. His home was situated above the cliff on the north side of Wellington Street (415 Wellington) so that he could overlook the many lumber mills that were located below on Lebreton Flats and surrounding Chaudière Falls. This is now the site of the Library and Archives Canada building. He passed on April 1, 1890 after a short illness.

His family could be traced to Allan Perley who immigrated from Wales to Charlestown, Massachusetts, near Boston on July 12, 1630. His father was John Perley (1769-1863) and mother, Susanna Goodhue (1781-1863) resided in Enfield, New Hampshire where William was born on June 4, 1820. Following education in local common schools, he entered into the lumber trade. He married Miss Mabel Elvira Ticknor Stevens on September 14, 1846, who later died on September 11, 1863 leaving him with two children, George Halsey Perley and

Mrs. Ephraim Webb (Mabel Ticknor Perley). Another, Florence Stevens Perley did not survive early childhood (1848-1851).

William came to Ottawa from nearby Canaan, New Hampshire with partner, Mr. Gordon Burleigh Pattee (1822-1908). They entered the lumber trade with Lorenzo D. Brown under the name Perley, Pattee and Brown. Mr. Brown left the partnership in May 1864. Although his initial undertaking was small, he gradually amassed a fortune. On June 20, 1866, he remarried to Miss Georgiana Maria Gale and with her, he had a second son, Herbert Stevens Perley.

Mr. Perley had worked with J.R. Booth on the Canada Atlantic Railway and served as its President for several years. He and Mr. Pattee also had an interest in orange culture in Florida. He was elected as the Conservative Member of Parliament in 1887, a position that held until his death. One of his last acts of civic duty was as a supporter of the Interprovincial Bridge project that was not completed until 1901<sup>1,2</sup>.

## **Perley Home for Incurables – 415 Wellington Street**

The Perley Home for Incurables was incorporated on October 18, 1897<sup>3</sup>. The home was the former Perley mansion.

### ***Officially opened on January 21, 1898***

*George H. Perley handed over a case containing the deeds of transfer to chairman of Board of Directors for the home on behalf of the heirs of William Goodhue Perley.*

### ***The address of His Excellency, the Governor-General Lord Aberdeen.***

*He said the occasion was one to create feelings of almost unmixed satisfaction. In one sense the term 'Home for Incurables' had a saddening and a mournful sound, but it also has a sound which creates a soothing and pleasing feeling. This was to be a Home; a place where those who were in the wisdom of the Almighty, afflicted, would be provided with a retreat where nothing would be left undone to alleviate their sufferings*



and where the sanctity of the term would be preserved. His Excellency paid a glowing tribute to the kindness and benevolence of the donors of the institution to whose memory it will stand as a lasting monument as well as those citizens of Ottawa who had taken such a kindly interest in the arrangements for the reception of those who were to occupy it.

The object for which the institution was founded was one worthy of the utmost commendation and the interest evinced in the institution by the public was demonstrated by the large attendance. Time would show better than anything else that a long-felt want had been supplied, but a more significant proof of the this was to be found in the list of those who had come forward as founders of the institution, who were to be complimented on their substantial demonstration of interest in a cause so grand and benevolent.

His Excellency deeply regretted the absence of the president, Mr. J.M. Garland, who had been indefatigable in his efforts to make the Home a success and concluded by declaring the Perley Home for Incurables formally opened for the benevolent purpose for which it had been established.

Sir Wilfred Laurier later responded.

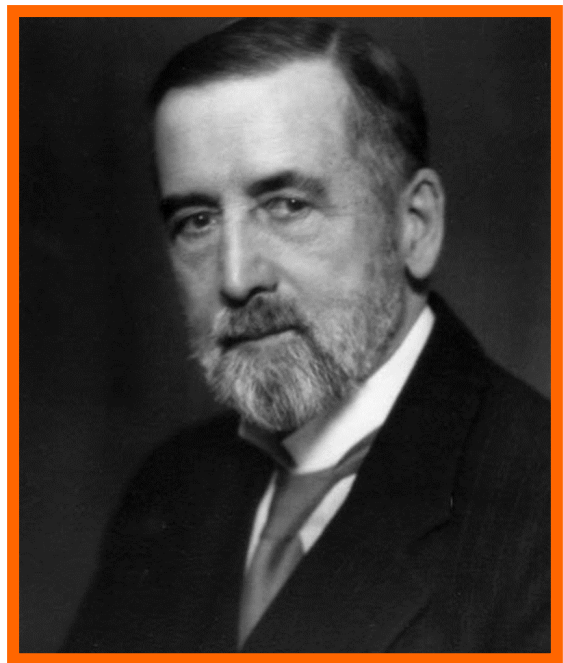
He said that his feelings at being present on this occasion were those of mingled pleasure and sorrow. He had spent so many happy hours as the guest of his departed friend, Mr. Perley, that the recollection of his loss produced feelings of deepest regret and sorrow, but he believed that nothing could be more according to the wishes of his dear departed friend than that his house should become the home of those who have no home and of those afflicted by Providence.

The idea of the Perley Home had followed a discussion between Mr. John M Garland and George Perley while holidaying in Arizona in 1897. They were discussing the growth and improvement of the city of Ottawa. Mr. Garland specifically expressed the need to help those who were suffering incurable diseases. <sup>4</sup>

Others who had attended the 1898 opening included Sir Wilfred Laurier, Lady Laurier, the Honourable J.L. Tart, the Honourable William Mulock, the Honourable Sidney Fisher, the Honourable W.S. Fielding, Sir Henry Joly, and Ottawa Mayor Bingham.

The original home had 25 rooms and included both paying and non-paying patients. Preference was given to non-paying patients given that paying patients had other choices for care. The first floor was for men, and the second floor for women. The third floor was the nursing quarters, and the basement was the laundry. The home was run like a hospital with the focus on cleanliness, nursing, and an on-site doctor. A north wing extending towards the Ottawa River was not in use in 1904. In those early days, the archaic term 'inmate' was the term used for residents.

The first patient was Thomas Little, who was severely injured in a railway accident and confined to a wheelchair. Another was an elderly black lady only known by the name 'Snowball' . <sup>5</sup>



Right Honourable Sir George Halsey Perley  
GCMG BA PC

He was made a member of the Imperial Privy Council and was Chief Canadian Delegate to the Geneva Disarmament Conference, 1932. He was Acting Prime Minister and director of half a dozen important companies

GCMG stands for 'Dames and Knights Grand Cross of the Order of St Michael and St George'

Library and Archives Canada/MIKAN 3544530

## Federal Expropriation

Plans were filed on March 11, 1912, to expropriate lands on the north side of Wellington Street from Bank Street westward to and including the Perley Home for Incurables <sup>6</sup>.

The 1912 Annual Report indicated that the old Perley mansion had a capacity of 25 patients and the demand for it was now exceeding the capacity. It was suggested that a new larger facility was needed. <sup>7</sup>

A new site for the home was tendered with a deadline of May 10, 1912. The following specifications were included:

- a one to two acre site
- near a streetcar line
- water supply and drainage were to be available on site. <sup>8</sup>

Government plans included new departmental buildings, requiring the removal of homes and businesses north of Wellington Street including the Perley home. The search was already underway with initial speculation of the new location being at Rockcliffe. <sup>9</sup>

## Subsequent Uses of 415 Wellington Street

Following the relocation of the Perley Home for Incurables from the Wellington Street site in 1915, the building was used by the Livestock branch of the Department of Agriculture until 1931 <sup>10, 11, 12</sup>. In 1926, the rear wing of the building was destroyed by fire <sup>21</sup>. From 1932 until 1941, it was used as the Canadian Legion Veterans' Shelter. This served ex-serviceman (World War I veterans) who were destitute or homeless <sup>13 14 15 16 17</sup>. In 1943, it was a federal government storehouse <sup>18</sup>

Finally in 1944, the building, located just west of Number 2 temporary building, was demolished. During demolition, an 1856 newspaper and similar vintage coins were found and turned over to the Perley Home <sup>19, 20</sup>.

## Perley Home for Incurables – New Location on Aylmer Avenue

In the face of federal expropriation, the Perley Home acquired new property on Aylmer Avenue in early 1913. The property transfer was registered on May 5, 1913. The plan was to build a modern building accommodating double the number of patients. <sup>22</sup> In May 1914, a contract was given to Mr. T.C. James to build the new Perley Home for Incurables on the Aylmer Avenue property. It was 3 storeys and built of reinforced concrete. The



architect was Horwood, Taylor and Horwood. Construction began immediately. <sup>23</sup> The Right Honourable Sir Robert Borden laid the corner stone on June 26, 1914. The new building served men on the ground floor, women on the second floor and cancer patients on the third floor. <sup>24</sup>

The formal opening took place on July 10, 1915 with honoured guests including His Royal Highness, the Duke of Connaught, his wife, the Duchess of Connaught and Princess Patricia. The new building accommodated 60 residents and was located on the west side of Barton Street and north of Aylmer Avenue. <sup>25</sup>

A house was located at 43 Aylmer Avenue, which was part of the Perley home property acquisition. This was rented out to a family until 1920 after which it was leased to the Ottawa South branch of the Public Library. They were asked to vacate the location in 1922 when the board of directors planned to demolish the house. <sup>26</sup> The house was replaced by the new nursing quarters building which was officially opened by Lady Perley on September 26, 1923. This accommodated 15 nurses, the superintendent and domestic staff. <sup>27</sup>

A new wing was officially opened on July 5, 1928 by the Ontario Minister of Highways, The Honourable George S. Henry. Mayor Ellis and the entire city council were present, as well as one of the original Perley heirs, Sir George H. Perley. The new wing brought the number of beds to close to 100. The other heirs included Mabel T. Webb, Albert S. Perley and Georgiana M. Perley. The home was not a publicly funded institution, rather it was founded based on sentiment and sympathy and run through the financial aid of public-spirited men and women.

<sup>28</sup>

Sir George Perley died on January 4, 1938, who was the long-term honorary president of the Perley Home. Please see the end of this article for Sir George's obituary, and the story of a life of extraordinary public service and philanthropy.

The 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Report indicated the need for further expansion. The number of residents was continuing to increase and had reached 111 in 1938. Occupational Therapy classes were introduced for the first time with positive results. As a consequence of the growing need, adjoining properties on Aylmer Avenue were purchased as well as a 4-apartment

house on Grosvenor Avenue. <sup>29</sup>

Princess Alice of Athlone, wife of the Governor General formally opened a third-floor extension on June 20, 1941. The new extension added 23 beds for a total of 99. The service wing including the kitchens was also revamped. The new wing also included covered sunrooms. <sup>30</sup>

A \$150,000 fund raising campaign was launched on May 28, 1955, to fund another new wing to be named the Mary B. Ross Memorial Wing, to honour the wife of well-known Ottawa newspaper publisher, the late P.D. Ross. <sup>31</sup>

At a special general meeting held prior to the 58<sup>th</sup> annual meeting in 1956, the name of the institution was changed to 'The Perley Hospital'. <sup>32</sup>

The new wing was officially opened on October 16, 1956 by Governor General Vincent Massey, increasing bed capacity to 214. Also present, was Ottawa Mayor Charlotte Whitton, representatives of the federal and provincial governments and descendants of the founding families of the home. The new wing was partially funded by a bequest of the late P.D. Ross in memory of his wife, Mary B. Ross. Also involved in the opening ceremony was Mrs. I. Perley-Robertson, daughter of the late Sir George Perley. <sup>33</sup>

At the 63<sup>rd</sup> annual meeting in 1961, it was reported that an approved change in policy had taken pressure off of active treatment hospitals. Originally, the Perley Hospital handled cases of patients who had little likelihood of significant recovery, but the new policy had the hospital accepting chronically ill patients who could possibly return home or to lower care institutions.

This continued a trend from the care for the chronically ill towards rehabilitation, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, social work, and nutritional counselling. <sup>34</sup>

On April 6, 1972, Dr. T.L. Fisher, president of hospital staff, officially opened the James Alexander Broad Memorial Library on Barton Street for use as a reference library by hospital staff. Mr. Broad had joined the hospital in 1954 and was president of hospital staff from 1959 until his death in 1969. <sup>35</sup>



The City of Ottawa planning board approved plans on December 14, 1978, to build a new one-storey entrance off of Aylmer Avenue over the objections from local residents who wanted the entrance to continue to face Barton Street. <sup>36</sup> On December 28, 1978, the property and building were officially transferred to the City of Ottawa, the hospital previously owned and operated by an independent board of trustees.

Further major renovations were proposed with a tender due on December 12, 1985, but community support for improving or expanding the hospital, in the midst of a residential neighbourhood was waning. <sup>37</sup>

### **Perley Hospital on the Move Again**

In July 1987, the province agreed to replace the Perley Hospital. This was followed by a March 7, 1988 agreement between the federal and provincial governments to build a new 450 bed world class

geriatric hospital to replace the 204 bed Perley Hospital, the 142 bed Rideau Veterans Home and 50 beds at the National Defence Medical Centre in the vicinity of the General Hospital and Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario. <sup>38</sup>

By May 1995, a new location at 1750 Russell Road was selected and a fundraising campaign began. <sup>39</sup> In July 1995, invitations to express an interest in purchasing the 43 Aylmer Avenue property were requested. <sup>40</sup>

the new Perley and Rideau Veterans Centre opened for patients on October 21, 1995, first for those from the old Rideau Veterans Home on Smyth Road. <sup>41</sup> Residents from the Perley Hospital followed and were transferred to the new facility on March 23 and 24, 1996. <sup>42</sup>



*The Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre  
1750 Russell Road*

# **REAL ESTATE BROKERS Request for Proposal**

The Board of Directors of The Perley Hospital is inviting interested Real Estate Brokers to submit a proposal to sell The Perley Hospital properties.

Proposals should include, but not be limited to:

- proof of licensing with the Provincial Ministry, Consumer and Commercial Relations
- previous relative experience of corporation or salesperson responsible for listing
- fee/commission expectation
- proposed marketing plan
- listing duration required
- references

Proposals must be submitted by 3 p.m. on Nov. 6, 1995.

A package describing the properties is available from the Project Coordinator.

Please direct all enquiries to:

**Ms. S. Anson  
Project Coordinator  
The Perley Hospital  
43 Aylmer Avenue  
Ottawa, Ontario K1S 4R5  
(613) 730-7171 extension 269**

Proposals are to be left at The Perley Hospital reception, in a sealed envelope marked clearly "Listing Proposal."

72448700



# LOCATION LOCATION LOCATION FOR SALE

## **Former Perley Hospital**

- Overlooking the Rideau Canal
- Over 2 Acres of Land
- 120,000 square foot Building

*For further information please contact:*

**Nathan P. Smith / Philip Zunder / Gordon Taylor**

**Tel: (613) 236-7777 Fax : (613) 236-5958**



**Royal LePage Real Estate Services Ltd., Broker**

74334800

*Ottawa Citizen, March 13, 1996 p.C9*

### **Perley Site Reused for Private Senior Care**

Following the relocation of the Perley Hospital to the new Russell Road site, the old building was demolished. But the site would continue to offer care for our senior citizens. The new facility

was named The Colonel By Retirement residence and it opened on December 7, 1999. 43

(Author's Note: My paternal grandfather, Harold Gainsborough Clark Senior was in the care of the Perley Hospital prior to his death in 1962.)

Colonel John By was criticized for extravagance in the building of the Rideau Canal.

We hope to receive the same criticism.



**COLONEL BY**  
RETIREMENT RESIDENCE

43 Aylmer Avenue, Ottawa  
**(613) 730-2002**

Welcome to the Colonel By Retirement Residence, where the warm and gracious ambiance and full range of elegant private suites is complemented by a staff that will cater to your every need. When it comes to retirement living, you will discover that the Colonel By is dedicated to providing you with comfort, security and companionship; a caring place you can truly call home.

Visit our marketing office, Now Open!

*Colonel By Retirement Residence Sales Ad  
Ottawa Citizen, July 21, 1999 p.A12*

**Sir George Halsey Perley Obituary**

Published in the Ottawa Citizen, January 4, 1938

*Sir George H. Perley, Canadian Statesman, Called by Death.*

*Life of Fine Service to Dominion and Empire is Closed in His Passing.*

*End Came in Sleep Early Today of Parliamentarian Who Had Been in Public Life Upwards of 40 Years.*

*Had Been Minister and also Acting Premier*

*Was Member of Prominent Lumbering Family of Capital.*



*Right Hon. Sir George Halsey Perley, veteran member of Parliament for Argenteuil and chief lieutenant of Conservative Leader R.B. Bennett, died in his sleep at his home here, 21 Blackburn avenue, at three o'clock this morning. He was 80 years old.*

*Sir George whose passing has occasioned the deepest regret not only in Ottawa and across Canada but also in the Old Land, had been in his usual vigorous health, attending the Governor-General's levee and making a round of calls on New Year's Day. Just a week ago today Sir George and Lady Perley had given a large dance for a debutante granddaughter.*

*Active in Canada's political life for more than 40 years, Sir George had been cabinet minister, high commissioner to London and acting prime minister during absences of Mr. Bennett. During the war he played a prominent part as minister of overseas military forces, high commissioner in London and as member of the Imperial war cabinet.*

*His death brings to a close a lifetime of service to Canada and the British Empire and widespread sympathy is being extended to Lady Perley and members of the family.*

*Sir George was attended yesterday afternoon by Dr. Campbell Laidlaw, after complaining of feeling unwell, but there was no one at the bedside when he passed away. His death was not expected. He attended the Governor-General's levee Saturday and proudly told a member of his family. "I looked around and I was the oldest man there."*

*Always looking and acting like a man far younger than his years, Sir George had gone north on a fishing trip early last fall and later spent a holiday at Virginia Hot Springs.*

### *A Real Benefactor*

*Sir George was a familiar figure on the streets of Ottawa and at all important social and government functions. His death was a distinct shock to a great circle of friends. He was a real benefactor to the poor although his philanthropies were always quietly carried out.*

*Only this morning Cecil Bethune, honorary treasurer of the Protestant Home for the Aged, received a subscription to the home in a letter from Sir George. The letter was dated yesterday. He also wished Mr. Bethune the compliments of the season. This was only one of his many benefactions to charitable endeavors in the Capital and in Canada.*

*A keen golfer, Sir George was on the links as frequently as time would permit, and he was an ardent fisherman. His robust health enabled him to enjoy all these activities right up to the time of his death.*

*Sir George is survived by his widow, Lady Perley, the former Emily White, daughter of Hon. Thomas White, a former minister of the interior, a daughter, Mrs. I. Perley-Robertson, and five grandchildren, Jean, George, Alexander, Anne, and Claire Perley-Roberson, all of Rockcliffe.*

### *To Ottawa in 1858*

*Sir George first came to Ottawa in 1858. He was then a small boy. The Perley family followed the head of the house to the Capital from Lebanon, New Hampshire, four years after Mr. Perley senior, commenced a lumbering business on the Chaudière.*

*His earliest recollections of Ottawa, Sir George afterwards said, was of going to a private school at the northwest corner of Wellington and Lyon Streets. This school was in a frame cottage which a few years earlier had been occupied by the Stewart family, a family prominent in the early days of Ottawa. The school, having "mixed" classes, was kept by Miss A.M. Harmon.*

*Later he attended the grammar school opposite City Hall, of which Dr. John Thorburn was then principal.*

*Among his early memories was the flooding into Ottawa of American silver during the American Civil War. Banks took it and paid it out. When his father went to the bank to draw money to pay men at the mill, he took the then small boy along in his four-wheel express wagon, with the cart heaped up with rolls of American half dollars and quarters.*

*In 1869 Sir George left Ottawa and did not return permanently until 1878. He attended St. Paul's school in Concord N.H. and subsequently Harvard University.*

#### *Saw Great Fire*

*During his holidays, he came back to Ottawa each summer, in 1870 he saw the great fire of that year sweep Carleton County and nearly sweep Ottawa. He recalled how the men at the mill went to the outskirts of the city with pike poles and ropes to pull down buildings which might help to extend the fire. For several days, he said, there was a thick pall over the city and the air was almost unbreathable.*

*Sir George was taken into partnership in the Perley-Pattee lumber business in 1878. On the understood principle that no man was a millman unless he had "sawdust on his shoulder" he spent the summer of that year in the bush near Peta-wawa. The Perley-Pattee business wound up in 1894 and Sir George started in business for himself in 1899. He built a mill at Calumet, Argenteuil county, and began lumbering on the Rouge River. He subsequently – only five years later in fact – became a member of the House of Commons for Argenteuil, and so commenced the political career which only ended with his death.*

*Illustrative of the constant regard which Sir George Perley had for the amenities of public life was his New Year's Day call on Prime Minister Mackenzie King at Laurier House on Saturday afternoon. Sir George and Mr. King chatted for several minutes in most genial fashion.*

*Whether as acting Prime Minister, acting Conservative House leader, or just front bencher, most intimate confidant of Rt. Hon. R.B. Bennett, Sir George always was courteous to friend and foe alike.*

#### *Admired by All Sides*

*And because of his courtliness, his friendliness, Sir George was respected and admired by all sides in the House of Commons, where his sudden passing will be widely and most sincerely mourned.*

*For the press, too, Sir George always had a kindly word, whenever he served as acting Premier,*

*he always tried to find at least some little news for the Press Gallery men, he appreciated their difficulties and did what he could to help.*

*Few Canadians Had So Long, Honored Service as Sir Geo. H. Perley*

*Was Member of Parliament for Over Quarter of Century, a Minister in the Government, and Canadian High Commissioner in London. Played Great Part in Development of the Capital and Was Noted for His Fine Philanthropic Works.*

*Few Canadians have been privileged to give such long and diversified service to their country as was Rt. Hon. Sir George Halsey Perley*

*For more than a quarter of a century he was active either as a Conservative member of the House of Commons, a minister of the government or Canadian High Commissioner in London. He was many times acting prime minister and at one time or another held in an acting capacity most of the portfolios of the government. He was one of Canada's representatives at the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, and twice represented the Dominion at Geneva.*

*Sir George's name will always be linked with that of Sir Robert Borden because of his prominent part in the conduct of Canada's affairs during the Great War. Sir George was in charge of the Canadian High Commission's office in London when war broke out and in 1917 was confirmed in that office, succeeding Lord Strathcona. He was the first minister of overseas military forces of Canada from November 1916 to November 1917, and remained as High Commissioner until 1922.*

#### *In War Cabinet*

*While in London, Sir George was a member of the first Imperial war cabinet in 1917, and he attended the Imperial Conference of that year. He held the opinion the High Commissioner representing the Canadian government in London should be in sympathy with that government and consequently, after the ministry of the Rt. Hon. Arthur Meighen was defeated late in 1921 and a Liberal administration under Rt. Hon. W.L. Mackenzie King took office, he resigned, returning to his home in Ottawa.*



It was not long, however, before he re-entered active political life. In 1925 he was elected Conservative member for the Argenteuil, Que. constituency in the Dominion House and on re-election in 1930, when the Conservatives under Rt. Hon. R.B. Bennett assumed office, he was made minister without portfolio, becoming senior member of the cabinet.

#### *Much Respected by All*

A man of great patience, genial and friendly, Sir George enjoyed the admiration and warm regard of people in all walks of life. He was respected and liked by political opponents and was a real friend of newspapermen with whom he frequently came in contact. His popularity was not confined to Canada alone. In London, he was prominent both in public and private life and had a wide circle of friends while his frequent journeys to diplomatic parleys in Geneva, Genoa and Paris made him a familiar figure among the statesmen of Europe.

In 1933, when Sir George was in his 76<sup>th</sup> year, he acted as Prime Minister of Canada during the long absence of Rt. Hon. R.B. Bennett at the World Economic Conference. In spite of his years, Sir George was indefatigable, spending long hours at his desk every day, performing also the functions of minister of external affairs and minister of finance. With his hair only slightly tinged with gray Sir George presented an appearance of vitality and mental vigor that might well be envied by one a score of years his junior.

#### *In Lumber Industry*

In private life Sir George played a large part in the development of the once-famous Ottawa River Valley lumber industry, following in his father's footsteps in this respect, even as he had followed him into the House of Commons. He was a great philanthropist and several institutions in Ottawa were supported through the generosity of Sir George and his family.

#### *Native of New Hampshire*

Born in Lebanon, New Hampshire, Sept. 12, 1857, Sir George was a son of William G. Perley one-time member of parliament for Ottawa and prominent lumber merchant, and Mabel Tichnor (Stevens) Perley. His early education was gained at the Ottawa grammar school after which he attended

St. Paul's High School, Concord, N.H. and Harvard University where he secured his B.A. in 1878.

In 1900 Sir George unsuccessfully contested the federal constituency of Russell, Ont. And he was defeated two years later in a by-election in Argenteuil, Que. In 1904, he was returned for Argenteuil, and was re-elected in 1908 and 1911. He was appointed chief Conservative party whip in 1910 and played an important part in the subsequent defeat of the Laurier government. In 1911, he was sworn into the cabinet of Sir Robert Borden as minister without portfolio. In June 1914, Sir George took charge of the Canadian High Commission's office in London.

#### *Re-entry into Politics*

Returning to Canada in 1922, Sir George remained out of politics until 1925 when he was again returned for Argenteuil, retaining the seat in the 1926 and 1930 general elections. In 1930, he was taken into the cabinet of Rt. Hon. R.B. Bennett and as oldest member of the Privy Council in point of years of service he filled the office of acting prime minister on the occasion of Mr. Bennett's absence from Canada.

In the short term of the government of Rt. Hon. Arthur Meighen, just prior to the general election of 1926, Sir George held the portfolio of secretary of state.

Sir George married first in 1884 Annie Hespeler, daughter of Ward H. Bowlby, K.C. of Kitchener, Ont. She died in 1910 and in 1913, he married Emily Colby White, a lady of grace of St. John of Jerusalem, daughter of Hon. Thomas White, one time minister of the interior. One child, a daughter, became the wife of Captain Irvine Robertson. To perpetuate the name, Sir George having no son, Captain Robertson changed his name to Perley-Robertson.

#### *Services Recognized*

In 1915 the services Sir George had rendered the nation were recognized by the sovereign who made him a Knight of the order of St. Michael and St. George. He was also made a Grand Officer of the Belgian order "de la Couronne", in

recognition of his war services in London, and in 1931 was sworn into the Imperial Privy Council. A higher degree of knighthood came to Sir George in 1933 when he was the only Canadian mentioned in the King's New Year honors list. He was made Knight Grand Cross of the order of St. Michael and St. George. Dartmouth College honored him with the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws in 1933.

#### *Honored by Bishop's College*

On June 20<sup>th</sup>, 1935, Sir George was honored by the University of Bishop's College, which conferred upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Civil Law.

#### *Always Active in Politics*

Despite the fact that his business interests were varied and many, he always found time to devote his energy and ability to the service of his country, and in 1904 when elected to the federal Parliament at Ottawa in the Conservative interest for the county of Argenteuil, he soon became chief whip of the party.

Always a staunch Conservative, he had been a consistent advocate of a stable and thoroughly adequate policy of protection for Canadian industries.

#### *As High Commissioner*

It was 1914, following the death of Lord Strathcona, that he was selected as acting high commissioner for Canada in Great Britain.

Shortly after his arrival in London, the outbreak of war on August 3, 1914, altered all his plans.

Immediately he took up the duties of the Canadian high commissioner's office, rendered vastly more important by the great event of war, and for several years he labored in that position with industry which had always distinguished him.

#### *Task Was Difficult One*

The task was made all the more difficult because for two years of that time his duties were multiplied by his appointment as overseas minister of militia, duties which were multifarious, taxing the capacity of both mind and body. Without precedent to guide, clothed with absolute authority in a time of

great emergency, with heavy responsibilities placed upon him in organization, and a thousand and one matters relating to the care, co-ordination, and command of the Canadian troops. Sir George discharged the difficult duties in a matter most efficient.

#### *Played No Favorites*

He played no favorites, neither was he swayed from the course of duty as he saw it to Canada's soldiers.

His rectitude, independence, firmness, and persistency guided his whole administration under circumstances of utmost difficulty and in no case were these qualities revealed to better advantage than his insistence when opportunity came upon the appointment of a Canadian to the command of the Canadian army in France.

#### *Fine Military Organization*

In his military organization, Sir George secured a wonderful degree of efficiency. The army in France was kept at strength and in equipment and care was unequal on the West Front.

That his choice of staff was sound was evidenced on his retirement when Sir Edward Kemp, his successor as overseas minister of militia, made no changes and found complete satisfaction with the harmony and efficiency existing in London.

On his retirement from the overseas ministry in 1917, he was named high commissioner for Canada in Great Britain instead of acting high commissioner, in which capacity he had acted previously.

#### *Well Known as Philanthropist*

In association with his father's heirs, Sir George assisted in the formation of the Perley Home for Incurables in 1897 by giving for that purpose the family homestead and property in memory of the late William G. Perley, who was in his lifetime, M.P. for Ottawa.

He presented the city of Ottawa with a Tuberculosis Hospital building in 1912, and, with Lady Perley in 1920, presented the May Court Club of Ottawa with a building for their Convalescent Home.

(Note: The Perley Memorial Hospital for tuberculosis patients opened on March 12, 1913 as an extension of Lady Grey Hospital. This is now known as the Royal Ottawa Hospital at 1145 Carling Avenue)

### *Among Ottawa's Landmarks*

*One of the best-known landmarks in Ottawa, the old Perley home, on the north side of Wellington street near the junction of Sparks street, was built by the father of Sir George Perley, William G. Perley in 1873.*

*The Perley house is now the property of the government. For many years before its expropriation, it was owned by the Perley Home for Incurables, to which organization it was given by Sir George after the death of his father in 1890. It is now being used by the Canadian Legion as a shelter for unemployed veterans.*

*Expansion of government buildings is moving westward along the north side of Wellington street and plans involve eventually the tearing down of the historic building to make way for new government buildings.*

*William G. Perley and Gordon B. Pattee in 1854 came from New Hampshire to engage in the lumber business on the Chaudière. Their partnership prospered during 20 years and both Mr. Perley and Mr. Pattee decided to erect new homes for themselves. Mr. Perley chose the cliff overlooking the Chaudière, while Mr. Pattee chose Wellington street just west of Hill Street.*

*Both partners erected large white brick houses of the center door type. At the time the houses were the last word in home construction. The interior finishings were very fine, consisting of black walnut and other ornamental hardwoods. They were fitted with all the conveniences then known, including plants which generated gas for heating and lighting.*

*Mr. Perley had some trouble with the erection of his home. The site sloped rather sharply from Wellington street and as a consequence a dry wall had to be built from the top of the cliff and the lot filled in. A large amount of filling was required. Although Mr. Pattee had no trouble of this sort in erection of his dwelling, unfortunately, it stood in the path of the Great Fire of 1900. The Perley home still stands.*

### *An Ardent Golfer*

*Sir George was fond of a game of golf, and from 1900 to 1904 was president of the Royal Ottawa Golf Club. In 1905 and 1906 he was president of the Royal Canadian Golf Association. He was extremely popular with members and the staff of the Royal Ottawa and did much to make the club one of the finest on the continent.*

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### **Billings Bridge Presbyterian Church** By Glenn Clark

Our Summer 2023 edition of Historic Gloucester covered the history of St. Margaret Mary School and the associated St. Margaret Mary Roman Catholic Church in Old Ottawa South. As mentioned in that article, the church was originally Presbyterian

and traced to Billings Bridge Presbyterian Church. The above picture shows the original Billings Bridge Presbyterian Church on the south shore of the Rideau River with Billings hill in the background. It was located east of Billings Bridge. The church was built in 1865 and was demolished sometime between 1928 and 1933. It served as a Presbyterian church until 1914.



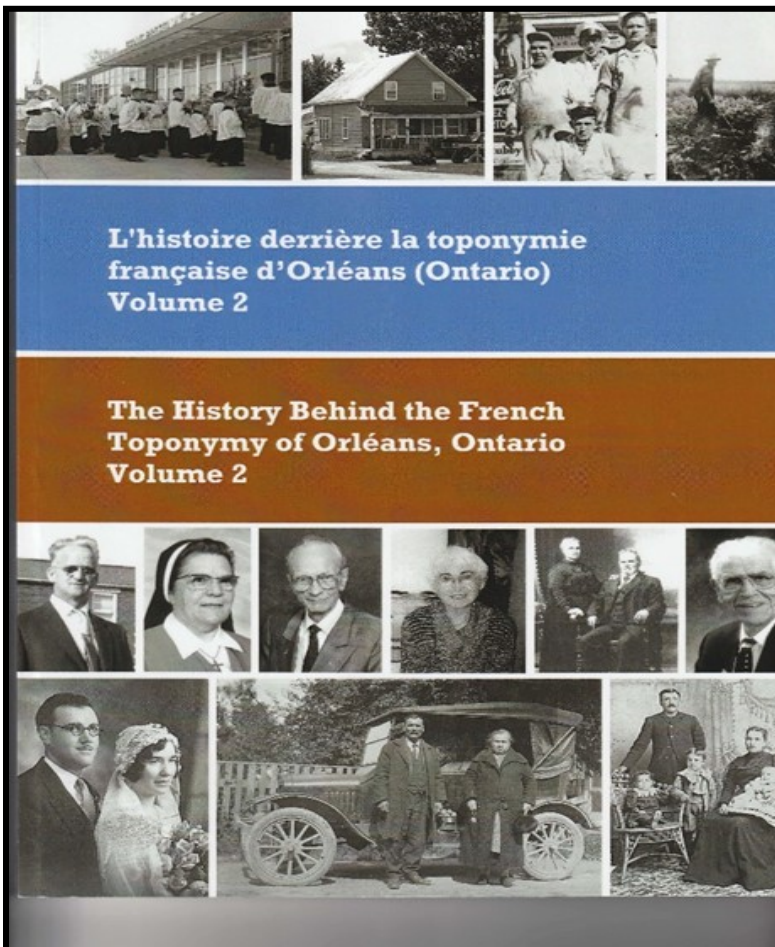
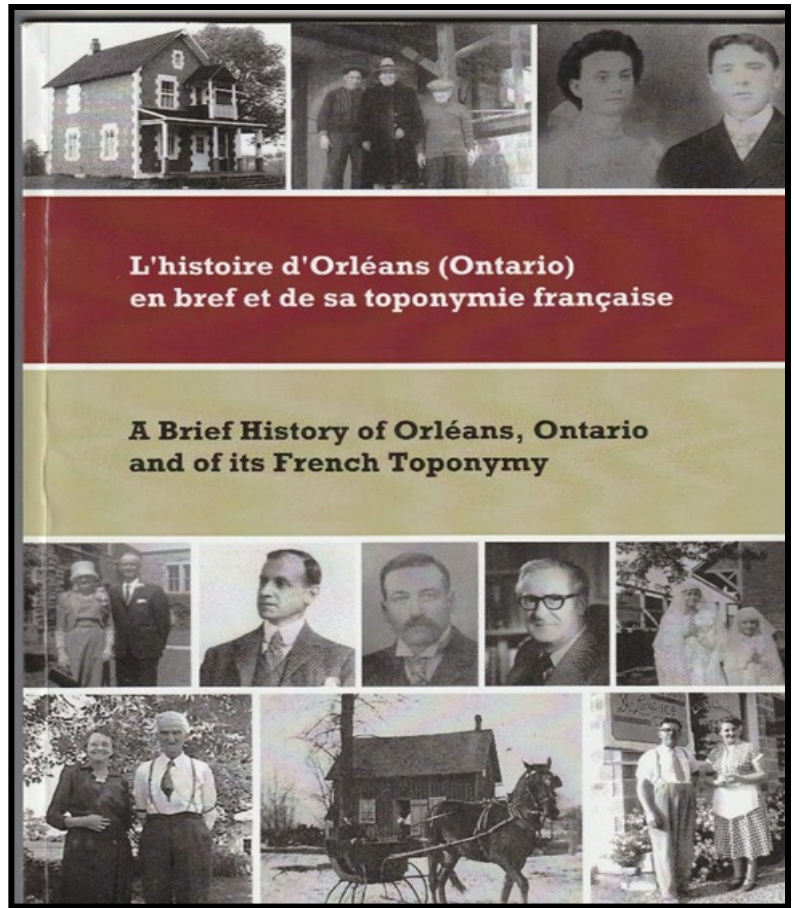
**Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all!**  
*From all of us at the Gloucester Historical Society*

(p.s. Hope Santa drops off lots of goodies for you!)

### New Orléans Publication

By Louis Patry

As president of the CAPNFO (Comité pour l'amélioration de la place des noms francophones à Orléans), a committee of the SFOPHO (Société franco-ontarienne du patrimoine et de l'histoire d'Orléans), I recently published a book of 50 bilingual chronicles relating to Orléans, Ontario. The title of this well illustrated 196 pages book is *The History Behind the French Toponymy of Orléans, Ontario Volume 2*. It is a follow-up to another 30 bilingual chronicles that were presented in the 114 pages book in 2017 *A Brief History of Orléans, Ontario and of its French Toponymy*. These books share the Francophone history of Orléans through the names given to public roads, parks, halls, buildings, and municipal facilities.



The Volume 2 sells for \$30 and the Volume 1 for \$15.

Books may be ordered by calling Louis Patry at 613-830-7788.

**Historic Gloucester** is published by The Gloucester Historical Society quarterly. It is intended as a Newsletter to members of the Society to provide interesting articles on Gloucester’s past and to keep them informed of publications available, upcoming events and other items of general interest. Comments, suggestions and potential articles are always welcome.

*The Gloucester Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the City of Ottawa.*

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