

On Sunday, June 25, 1961, a provincial historical plaque commemorating The Honourable James Young was unveiled on the grounds of Central Presbyterian Church, Queen's Square, Main Street, Cambridge (formerly the city of Galt). This is one in a series of plaques erected throughout the province by the Archaeological and Historic Sites Board of Ontario, and subsequently by the Ontario Heritage Trust.

The unveiling ceremony was sponsored by the Waterloo Historical Society; Mr. A.W.A. Taylor, president, acted as program chairman. Participants in the event included: Professor T.F. McIlwraith of the Archaeological and Historic Sites Board; Mr. R.M. Myers, MPP (Waterloo South); the Reverend David Gowdy, D.D., of Central Presbyterian Church; Mr. W.C. Barrie, past president of the Waterloo Historical Society; and Mrs. H. Donaldson, Galt alderman. The plaque was unveiled by Miss Margaret Taylor of Galt, whose family members were close friends of the Youngs.

The plaque was replaced at the same location in September 2006.

THE HONOURABLE JAMES YOUNG 1835-1913

Born in Galt, Young was educated locally, and from 1853 to 1863 was editor and publisher of the *Dumfries Reformer*. From 1867 to 1878 he represented South Waterloo in the Canadian Parliament, and from 1879 to 1886 was the member for North Brant in the Ontario Legislature. Appointed provincial treasurer in 1883, he was compelled by illness to resign the post four months later, though he remained a member until 1886. A frequent speaker and writer on commercial affairs, Young was also a noted local historian. He published a number of books, including *Reminiscences of the Early History of Galt and the Settlement of Dumfries* and *Public Men and Public Life in Canada*.

L'HONORABLE JAMES YOUNG, 1835-1913

Né à Galt, James Young fut éduqué dans la localité. Entre 1853 et 1863, il fut le rédacteur et l'éditeur du *Dumfries Reformer*. Il représenta, de 1867 à 1878 la circonscription de Waterloo Sud au Parlement canadien et il siégea comme député provincial de la circonscription de Brant Nord à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario, de 1879 à 1886. Nommé trésorier provincial en 1883, il dut démissionner de son poste quatre mois plus tard, en raison d'une maladie, mais continua de siéger comme député jusqu'en 1886. Il prononça souvent des discours sur les affaires commerciales et écrivit beaucoup sur le sujet. C'était également un spécialiste

connu de l'histoire locale. Il publia de nombreux ouvrages, dont *Reminiscences of the Early History of Galt and the Settlement of Dumfries* et *Public Men and Public Life in Canada*.

Historical background

The eldest son of John Young and Janet Bell, James Young was born in Galt in 1835, and educated locally. Early on, he demonstrated exceptional ability as both businessman and writer and at the age of 18, he became editor of the *Dumfries Reformer*. He held that post for 10 years, and then from 1863 onward was engaged in a number of other business enterprises. He was president of the Gore District Mutual Fire Insurance Company from 1877 to 1912.

James Young began his public career in 1857 as a member of the Galt School Board, and later served for six years on the town council. From 1867 to 1878, he represented Waterloo South in the Canadian Parliament and, from 1879 to 1886, he served as the member for Brant North in the Ontario legislature.

During the Liberal administration of Alexander Mackenzie (1873-1878), Young was chairman of the Committee on Public Accounts and Committee on Supply. Among the measures for which he was largely responsible were an improved system of tendering for printing contracts, the appointment of a special committee which recommended the introduction of *Hansard* (the official verbatim report of the debates in the House) and resolutions authorizing the formation of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics. For a few months in 1883, Young served as the treasurer of Ontario in Oliver Mowat's administration before illness forced him to resign the post.

As president of the Associated Mechanics' Institute of Ontario during 1870-1881, Young was largely responsible for the direction of the Industrial and Arts Departments of the provincial exhibitions. For some years, the versatile Young was also president of the Galt Hospital Trust.

James Young was also a local historian of note, and is perhaps best remembered for writing *Reminiscences of the Early History of Galt and the Settlement of Dumfries in the Province of Ontario* (1880) and *Public Men and Public Life in Canada* (1902). The former is still a standard work for anyone interested in the history of this particular region of southwestern Ontario. It was compiled from extensive research in early records as well as from interviews with early settlers and their descendants. James Young died in Galt on January 29, 1913.



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