

## ERASTUS REDDICK

Erastus' birthdate, May 30, 1851, is known only because, when he was baptised on Easter Sunday, April 21, 1878, it was noted in the North Gower Anglican baptismal register. (Still, his cemetery stone records his birthdate as June 12, 1851). Why he was baptised at the age of 27 is not known but it may be because he had not been baptised in the early years or because his initial baptism was in the Presbyterian church and he may have been influenced by his mother in later years. Belle Eager recalled Erastus' sister, Jemima, saying that James, Erastus' father, was a Presbyterian but not an ardent church-goer. Matilda was Anglican and it seems that when James chose to not attend church, Matilda attended the Anglican church. Each census until 1871 records the family as Presbyterian. Thereafter James was reported as a Presbyterian and the rest of the family as Anglicans.

The Anglican baptismal registers record no entries for James' family until Louisa was baptised in 1858. Thereafter, all of the family, except the twins who were born in 1866 and died at the age of five, were baptised in the Anglican church. But there were no entries before Louisa so it may be that Robert, Mary Ann, Erastus, Oliver and Milo were not baptised or were baptised in the Presbyterian church. (Still none were seen there although the registers may not be complete; and Milo was baptised in 1876 in the Anglican church at the age of about 21).

Although Erastus was baptised in 1878, it was not until December 6, 1896 that he was confirmed, age 45, in the Pierces Corners Anglican church. About that time he was offering the family farm for sale although it was not until February 1898 that he and his mother left for Minnesota. Erastus' father, James, had already died and almost all of the rest of the family had already made that trip.

Belle Eager believed that Erastus was one of the family who was in Minnesota as early as 1884. In fact, he and Oliver were there before then; the 1900 census noted that he had immigrated into the United States in 1877. The 1880 Federal census listed both Erastus and Oliver in Mille Lac Township, Aitkin County, in that year.

Erastus' name appeared with Oliver's in the 1880 census of Mille Lac Township, Aitkin County. There were only 27 people enumerated in the township in 1880. Oliver was the primary individual enumerated; Erastus was identified as a "brother".

	<u>OLIVER</u>	<u>ERASTUS</u>
Census No.	5	5
Age	25	27
Relationship		Brother
Status	Single	Single
Occupation	Farmer	Farmer
Born	Canada	Canada
Father Born	Scotland	Scotland
Mother Born	Scotland	Scotland

Minerva and Matilda arrived not long after the two brothers. Subsequent census' recorded the immigration of the sisters, and Eliza Ellen, in years ranging from 1882 to 1887. Matilda and Minerva are said to have settled first in the Mille Lac Lakes region of Aitkin County (which is where Oliver and Erastus were in 1880) and filed for homesteads. A niece has said that there is a Reddick Creek nearby that still appears on maps and that she had seen the foundation of Oliver's house as recently as 1978.

It is not yet known how long Erastus stayed there but he and Oliver moved to Aitkin and operated a confectionery store in a small brick building (no longer there) which was near the present high school. In the backyard there was playground equipment for the children of the neighbourhood.

Erastus' name appeared in the census of Marlborough township in:

1861	age 9
1871	" 20
1881	" 30
1891	" 38

It may be that he was home in 1881 and 1891, or it may be that his parents listed him (and Oliver in 1881) as family members although he was not there. Alternatively, it may have been that the farm in Minnesota was their home in the crop season but that they returned to the east each winter.

Although Erastus had been in Minnesota many years before, he lived with his parents in Marlborough township for some of the years in the 1890's. He may have actually been there at the time of the 1891 census; James was old by then and died in 1893. Thereafter he may have felt that he had to stay with his mother until she had sold the farm. Although Matilda's youngest daughter, Mary Ann Amanda, was still at home in 1891, the 1910 census of Minnesota notes that her date of immigration

was 1892. Accordingly it would seem that only Erastus was with Matilda after James' death. It was Erastus who operated the farm in the mid-1890's and it was he who advertised it for sale or rent in 1895/96. And in 1898, after the farm had been sold to Joseph Bartley, it was Erastus who accompanied his mother to Aitkin when she eventually moved there to be with her daughters, most of whom lived there.

The U.S. census of 1890 has been largely destroyed so it has not been possible to locate the family in Minnesota on that date. In 1900 Erastus, identified as a farmer and the owner of property, and his mother were living in Aitkin Village. He was recorded as having been born in June 1853, of having immigrated into the U.S. in 1877 and been 23 years in the country.

Isabel Eager spoke of Erastus as having been on crutches. She mentioned more than once that he and Oliver worked in a copper mine; there is no other confirmation of this and it seems unlikely, but it cannot be ignored. Research may disclose that they lived on a farm but that their work was in a mine.

Like Oliver, Erastus died of pipe cancer. His death occurred on July 1, 1906 ("..after a long illness...bore his affliction with fortitude..two brothers, one of whom cared for him for some time past..."). He was buried in the Lakeview cemetery at Aitkin. The reference to "two" brothers must have been to Oliver and Robert but only Oliver was in Aitkin. Milo may not have been alive at that time although Erastus' mother lived for another five years and when she died there was a mention of Milo in New York.