



Inducted: 2006

A breeder and showman of Shorthorn cattle and Lincoln sheep, from near Ilderton, Thomas Robson was also known as superior auctioneer and a talented vocalist. His knowledge as a livestock judge was well respected, and he travelled extensively to view animals and learn more about breeding. He won many awards and accolades in the livestock show ring, earning the admiration of his rivals. Tom Robson served in the militia, rising to the rank of Captain. His impressive political career began in 1883, with his election to London Township Council. Later, he became Warden in 1891. He also served as county clerk and county treasurer, and was elected Member of Provincial Parliament 1901 to 1905. His community involvement was valued, including service to local fair boards, insurance boards, lodge and church.

THOMAS E. ROBSON
1851 – 1940

Captain T. E. Robson was a remarkably, well-rounded person. He was a respected farmer with solid knowledge of animal husbandry, as well as an able politician, an auctioneer and a gifted singer. One person possessing all these admirable qualities earns respect.

Captain Robson's parents, George and Elizabeth, immigrated to Canada from England in 1820 and settled in London Township, where Thomas, youngest of ten children, was born in 1851. He soon picked up his father's interest in Shorthorn cattle, which the elder Robson imported from England. In addition to shorthorn cattle, their farm near Ilderton was also known for Lincoln sheep and Clydesdale horses. Young Tom gained a reputation for his ability to "fit" animals for judging in the show ring. Their Spring Grove Shorthorns enjoyed much success and they dominated the Toronto Exhibition for many years.

Thomas Robson gained a reputation as a livestock judge and was sought after by various exhibitions.

In 1882, he joined the militia and rose to the rank of Captain of No. 8 Company, Middlesex Battalion. A year later he launched a successful political career, with his election to London Township council, and then in 1891 he became Warden. His political career continued with the position of County Clerk, and then County Treasurer. He also served a term as a Conservative Member of Provincial Parliament.

Locally, he was a director of the Ilderton Fair, and a member of the Western Fair Board. He served as president of the Dominion Shorthorn Breeder's Association.

He travelled widely in Canada, the United States and England for his research of livestock, and wrote articles on Shorthorn cattle breeding for various publications. His authority on the subject was well respected.

Well-known in agricultural circles, he was the recipient of many social invitations. In 1926, he was invited to lunch with His Excellency, General, The Right Honourable Lord Byng of Vimy, Canada's Governor General of the time.

Captain Robson married Lila McEvoy and they had one daughter, Florence who had a career in art and theatre. She was a long time wardrobe mistress with the London Little Theatre.

Captain Tom, as he was known to his friends, enjoyed serving his community. He was active in the London Mutual Fire Insurance Company, The Masons, and St. George's Anglican Church.

He took accolades on the stage, as he was a noted storyteller, and according to his obituary, always had "an inexhaustible fund of anecdote and reminiscence, and what is more, had that rare gift of being able to tell them."

He was also known as an auctioneer, establishing a family tradition that still carries the Robson name. In addition, he was a singer of note. Of him, it was said that he had "not only a good voice but a splendid presence and the ability to interpret his song to the audience in a remarkable fashion."

For his varied and well-rounded career, as well as his contributions to agriculture and to his community, Captain Thomas E. Robson is hereby inducted to the Middlesex County Agricultural Hall of Fame.