

Algeron Sydney "A.S." Horswill 1862-1927

By

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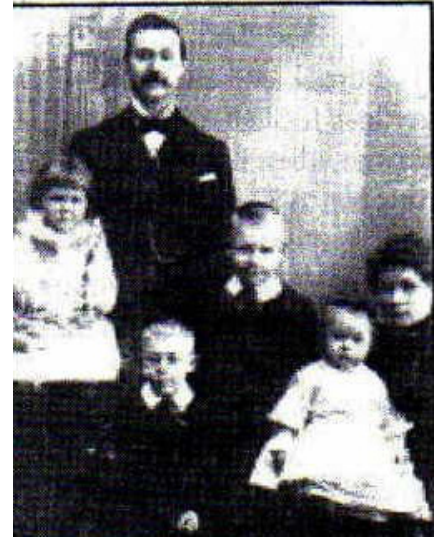
Algeron Sydney Horswill, son of Richard Knowling Horswill and Mary Wyatt, was born on February 1st 1862 in Leamington Spa, Lancashire, England. He arrived in New York on October 24 1881 and ended up in Northern Wisconsin.

He married Amy Vivian Partington, (b. 20 May 1867 in Manchester, Lancashire, England) in Selkirk, Manitoba, Canada in 1885.

He was a sawyer when he first came to Rat Portage. Later he and his wife opened a confectionary on Main St.

Around 1895 he went into the grocery business erecting the J & B Grocery on Matherson Street (subsequently occupied by Mastercraft Upholsterers).

Mr. Horswill was appointed 1st Lieutenant of the fire brigade in 1894.



He was a member of the Town Council in 1895, 1901, 1902, 1903, and as Mayor of the town in 1904-1905 He represented the town in Toronto in the case over the water power question. Rat Portage wanted to possess the falls at the electric power station. The Hudson's Bay Co. Owned land on the other side. Both companies claimed their rights extended to the centre of the river bed and opposed the town's application.

They had a large family of which all but the last child were born in Rat Portage, Ontario¹:

- i. Richard Sydney Horswill b. 2 Nov. 1884 in Rat Portage, Kenora, Ontario, d. 28 Jan 1887 in Rat Portage, age 2 years, bur. in Lake of the Woods, Cemetery in Kenora, site 3W-10-3
- ii. Algeron Thomas Horswill b. 26 Oct. 1887 in Rat Portage, m. Margaret Pearl McGregor 26 Jan 1910 Nelson, BC, d. 18 Mar. 1965 in Castlegar, BC
- iii. Alfred Stanley Horswill b. 12 Mar. 1891 in Rat Portage, m. Irene Evelyn Danforth, m. 03 Feb 1919 Nelson BC, d. 3 July 1979 in Nelson, BC
- iv. Eva Violet Gersnell Horswill b. 20 Apr. 1892 in Rat Portage, m. George Robert Vincent 27 Mar 1921 Peace River, Alberta, d. 19 Jan. 1975 in Ladner, BC
- v. Amy Vivian Horswill b. 14 Oct. 1894 in Rat Portage; m. Robert Morrow 2 Mar. 1915 in Nelson, BC, d. 12 June 1920 in Nelson, BC
- vi. Mary Louise Horswill b. 6 Feb. 1897 in Rat Portage, Albert James Brubakerd 12 Aug 1918 Nelson, BC, d. 15 Oct. 1964 in Vancouver, BC
- vii. Leslie Wyatt Horswill b. 27 Jan. 1899 in Rat Portage, d. Feb. 1900 in Rat Portage, 1 year bur. Lake of the Woods Cemetery site 3W-10-3
- viii. Edward Allan Cecil Horswill born February 18 1902 in Rat Portage, m. Eunice W. Drinkall 20 Oct 1922 Spokane, Washington, d. 22 July 1965 in Vancouver, BC
- ix. Hugh Vernon Horswill b. 29 Dec. 1905 in Rat Portage, m. Kathleen d. 24 Dec. 1994 in Trail, BC
- x. John "Jack" Partington Horswill born June 17th 1910 in Nelson, BC married Margaret Anne Hipperson

He was the last Mayor of Kenora under the Name "Rat Portage" before it changed its name to Kenora. The name Hudson's Bay Company adopted for their post located on Old Fort Island on the Winnipeg River was Rat Portage, a rough translation of the Ojibwa name Waszush Onigum. This name was adopted by the community

that grew up around it. The first suggestion of a name change came in a public meeting in 1892 followed by a local poll held by the local newspaper where 103 voted to retain it while possible alternatives, including Sultana, Norman, Sabaskong, Island City, Island Park, Pequonga, and Lakeside garnered a total of 173 votes. Strong feelings were expressed and the idea was dropped.

In 1902, the issue was raised with Imperial, Portage Falls, Goldwater, and Kenora presented for public approval.

In 1904 the Town Council gave the first reading of a bylaw to change the name at an October Council meeting and a week later, the name Kenora was chosen. The name was derived by combining the first two letters of Keewatin, Norman, and Rat Portage. Credited with inventing the name was given to Mrs Matt Brown and Miss Hall. When the decision of the meeting was reported to the town, there was an instant uproar. A petition against the change was circulated in the town and sent to the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council in Toronto, whose approval was required to make the name change official.

The issue in the municipal election held on January 2, 1905. In that election, Mayor Algernon S. Horswill was re-elected, as were three of the 1904 Councillors. Added to the slate were C.C. Delbridge, who was opposed to the name change, and William Robertson and W.W. Scott, whose position on the name issue seems to have been pro-change. The Lieutenant-Governor required a resolution from the new Council confirming the former's Council's resolution regarding the name change. A special Council meeting was held and the confirming resolution was passed. At a April 10, 1905, town meeting held in the fire hall, once again, indignation was expressed with the name change. When Mayor Horswill was asked to explain the actions of the previous Council in passing the name by-law, he explained quite calmly that they had been within their rights to do so, since they were the elected representatives of the people.

Less than a month later, without the voter's input, Kenora was officially declared the new name of the Town, by ratification of the Lieutenant-Governor. A large crowd assembled for another town meeting on May 25th gathered to express indignation. The Mayor was allowed to defend the actions of himself and the Council and he did so. When he was finished, there was applause and the name "Kenora" remained.



In 1908 A.S. Horswill moved to set Nelson BC where he first set up a grocery business at 420 Baker Street and subsequent at 524 Vernon Street. He carried on his building there from 1910 until his death on May 25 1927. The business was sold in William R. Champion. He served as alderman in Nelson for two terms and ran for Mayor in 1927 but died on May 25 1927 in Spokane, Washington, USA while under going surgery. His wife died on Jul 7th 1944 in Nelson, BC

Sources

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ⁱ Comments by grandson Marty Horswill that there were 11 children can't be conformed, nor the story about beating up the Commanding Officer of a Militia in England or the taking of his whole family to England during Queen Victoria's Jubilee to get a Royal Pardon. .