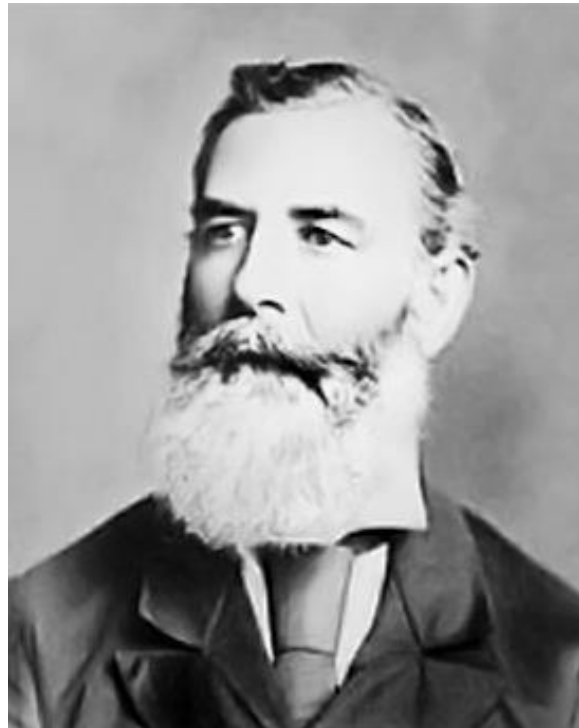


WILLIAM CANNIFF, MD, MRCS, UE

William Canniff was born near Belleville in Thurlow Township on June 20, 1830. He was the son of Dr. Jonas Canniff and Letty Flagler, and a descendant of loyalist James Canniff. He attended schools in Belleville, then went on to study at Victoria University in Toronto and the Toronto Medical School. He received his Medical degree in 1854 and became a member of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1855. He served in New York for some time then travelled to England, where he received his MRCS degree. He was connected with the Royal Artillery during the Crimean War. Following the war, he served in hospitals in Edinburgh, Dublin and Paris. He then returned to Belleville where he set up a medical practice. During the American Civil War, he served as a medical officer in the army of the Potomac.



Following the war, Dr. Canniff settled in Toronto, where he became the sub-dean of the Medical School and was appointed to the staff of the Toronto General Hospital. In 1867 he was a delegate to the International Medical Congress in Paris. On his return, he formed the Canadian Medical Association and became its first president. He served at the front during the Fenian Raids in 1867, and continued to have military associations through his life. He became the first permanent medical officer of health for the city of Toronto in 1883 and held that post until 1890.

In addition to his medical work, he was very interested in public affairs, writing and history. He contributed to medical magazines, and the daily press. Canniff was an active Nationalist He is best known for his historical study of Ontario, published as "*The Settlement of Upper Canada*". He also wrote "*The Medical Profession in Canada: 1783-1850*". In addition, he became very interested in the United Empire Loyalists, who played an important role in the establishment of Ontario. He was the leading force behind the 1884 UEL Centennial Celebrations in Toronto, serving as the chairman for that event, and was the keynote speaker at the Celebrations held in Adolphustown.

Canniff was married on June 20, 1857 to Grace Hamilton but she died in 1858 soon after their son William Hamilton Canniff was born. He married a second time on September 15, 1859 to Eliza Foster who died in 1908. By his second wife he had children James, Harry, Frank,

Clarkson, Fred, Jenny and Aubrey. He lived for some time in Port Carling. In his last years, he was sent to the House of Refuge in Belleville where he died on October 18, 1910. He was buried in Belleville Cemetery. His papers are held in the Ontario Archives. A National Historic Site marker was dedicated to Dr. William Canniff in the village of Cannifton.