

# Olympic Athletes

## Frederick Simpson



Born in March of 1878, Frederick was the son of James and Mary Simpson. When he was just 5 years old his father died in a drowning accident on Rice Lake. His mother died when he was a young teenager, and so he then came into the care of his grandmother. At age 20 he moved across the lake to Hiawatha where he married the younger Susan Muskrat and raised eight children. The family had a small farm and Frederick hired himself out as a labourer, often running to and from his different jobs.

At the remarkable age of 28, Frederick entered his first race at the Peterborough Examiner Road Race's Thanksgiving Day inaugural event and placed third. His potential caught the eye of trainer Dick Baker, who took him under his wing with the YMCA Harriers. Simpson would go on to win the 10 mile race at Lindsay and place second in the Hamilton Herald Race. His success won him a spot on the 1908 Olympic Team for the games in England, just 2 years after he began competing.

In 1909 Frederick started running professionally, but found it too difficult to earn a living that way and retired in 1912, returning to the Hiawatha Reservation with his family. In the 1920s he crossed the lake again to the place where he grew up, Alderville. He died in 1945, and it is there that his handsome gravestone can be seen today.



As noted by Frederick's Great-Grandson David Mowat:

*The question is not why Indians chose to run. There are historical and environmental reasons for their natural ability to run.*

*But mostly they ran because they were good at it and because their lifestyle dictated it that way - probably as simple as that.*