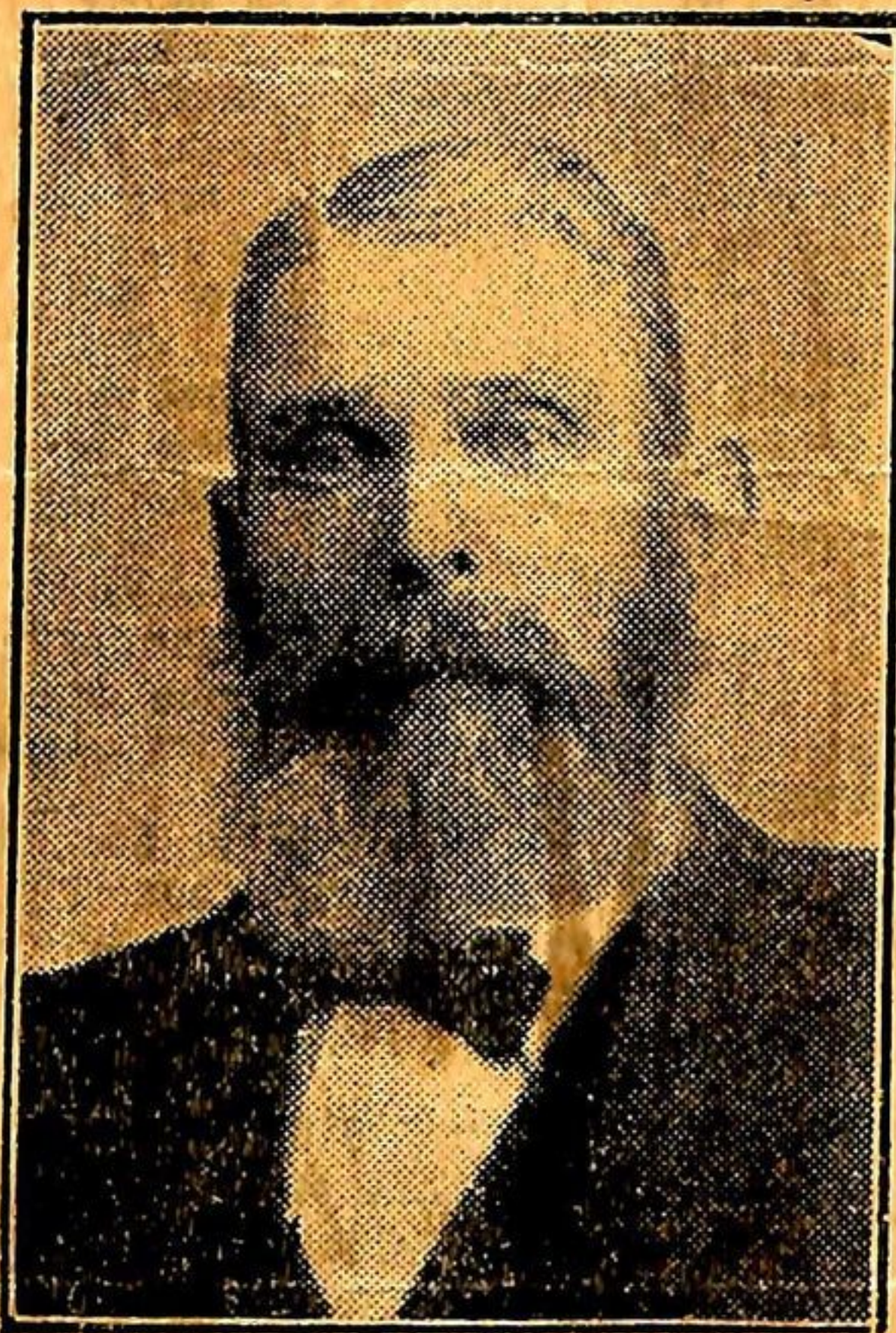


**John Preston, Sr.,
Brownsville's Veteran**

There was a period in Britain's history when the defence of the Empire did not appeal to the popular mind as it does at this time. Kipling had not appeared to immortalize the "Tommy Atkins" of the Crimea, and the many devices now prevailing to ameliorate the hardships of a soldier's life were unknown.

While the Crimean war was in progress and its issue in doubt, John Preston of Hants, England, now residing in Brownsville, enlisted in Her (Victoria) Majesty's service. He has a clear recollection of the stirring events which occurred at that time, but was too young to be on active service under the regulations then in force.

At the outbreak of the Indian mutiny his regiment, the 88th Connaught Rangers, was ordered to India, and reached Calcutta after a four months' continuous voyage on November 2nd, 1857, and was taken by forced march to the relief of Cawnpore. For more than half the dis-



JOHN PRESTON, SR.

tance the only means of transportation was by bullock teams. Sixteen men taken by each team, eight riding and eight marching four hours alternately. With only delay long enough to change bullocks every twelve miles, they pressed on night and day until Cawnpore was reached. The column of about 1,200 men, commanded by Gen. Windham, met with only a slight resistance to his entering the city, but being advised of a large force of rebels marching against them, he decided to meet them on the plains outside the city, where he was repulsed and compelled to retreat to the entrenchments outside, the rebels occupying the city. Sir Colin Campbell came to the relief of Gen. Windham, and the city was taken under a siege lasting nine days.

Mr. Preston clearly remembers the horrible condition of Cawnpore when the army entered it. He saw the well where about one hundred women and children were thrown after the massacre, and has many times admired the beautiful memorial chapel, surrounded by a garden, built upon the spot. He saw the house in Cawnpore (badly wrecked during the siege) in which the late Lord Roberts was born, and many times had him visit him as an orderly officer while Mr. Preston was doing sentry duty during those eventful days. Mr. Preston was at the battles of Pundoo Nuddie, siege of Calpeo Ginderboo and Birwah. The regiment to which Mr. Preston was attached was but a few hours behind the forces led by Sir Colin Campbell to the relief of Lucknow. He wears the medal and clasp for distinguished service in the India mutiny, which he prizes very highly. After serving ten years, the period for which he first enlisted, he again enlisted in the 87th Irish Fusiliers and remained in India until December, 1869, when they were sent to Malta, remaining about four years at that station. They then transferred to Halifax, doing garrison duty until the expiration of the twenty-one years of service in January, 1877, having spent eighteen of the



What Mr. Preston looked like when he was at Malta in 1869

twenty-one years in foreign service. While in Halifax Mr. Preston married Miss Allin, who still takes an active interest in all military operations, having spent nearly four years as a soldier's wife in the garrison at Halifax.

Thirty-nine years ago Mr. and Mrs. Preston came to Brownsville, and by their honesty, industry and genial spirit have endeared themselves to a large circle of friends, who recognize in Mr. Preston not only a soldier and patriot, but also a worthy citizen and Christian gentleman. Well and faithfully has he done his "bit" in Empire-building, for he and others associated with him, made it possible for Victoria the Good to be called Empress of India.

For many years Mr. Preston engaged in farming, in which he was very successful, and some few years ago he removed from the farm and has since been occupy-

ing a beautiful home-like cottage in Brownsville.

Possibly the outstanding feature of C company of the 168th battalion's recent visit to our village was their thoughtful and courteous recognition of Mr. Preston at his home.

Mr. Preston's home life has been brightened during the winter months by many reunions of his family, made possible by a visit to the paternal home of two of his sons, Isaac and Edward of Brock, Sask., who, with John, James and William and Mrs. Garfield Hunsley, all of Brownsville, comprise his family, and of whom he justly feels proud.

We turn in these troublesome times to the boys in khaki with admiration and with a supreme confidence in the ultimate victory of our Empire and her Allies in the titanic struggle for justice and world-wide freedom, but we cannot forget those who have made history worth reading and staked their all and risked their lives for Britain's cause and the world's civilization in the days long since past and gone.

J. W. H.