

Early Mayors – *Christian Kumpf, 1838-1905*



Born in Beerfelden, Hesse-Darmstadt, Germany in 1838, Christian Kumpf immigrated to Canada where he settled in Waterloo. He began working in Daniel Snyder's store and post office, where he soon rose to the position of assistant postmaster. When Snyder retired in 1862, Kumpf became Waterloo's postmaster — a position he held for over 42 years. In 1860 Kumpf and John Bowman purchased the Berlin Chronicle and Provincial Reformer's Gazette and moved it to Waterloo. They renamed the newspaper the Waterloo County Chronicle and shortly thereafter sold the publication in 1864. When the Bell Telephone Co. opened its first phone office in one of the local post offices in 1885, Kumpf became the company's agent.

In 1889 Kumpf was instrumental in the establishment of the Dominion Life Assurance Co. and became one of its two first vice-presidents of the company.

Kumpf served on many community boards of directors. In 1890 he became the first president of the Waterloo Board of Trade and chairman of the first Board of Park Management and later a trustee on the first board of the Berlin-Waterloo Hospital built in 1894.



In the Town of Waterloo's history, Kumpf is only one of two people to be elected mayor without having first served on council as an alderman. During his first term as mayor throughout 1879-1880, Kumpf was received by the new Governor-General, the Marquis of Lorne (Germany) and his wife, Princess Louise, daughter of Queen Victoria, during their official visit to Canada. In 1888, during Kumpf's second mayoral term, the town's first municipal library was established, and the following year Kumpf drove in the last spike during a ceremony to mark the extension of the Berlin Street Railway to Waterloo.