

AUGUSTINE McDONELL.

Augustine McDonell was the eldest son of Austin McDonell and his wife, Isabella McRae, who came to Canada in the year 1816 from Invernesshire, in the Highlands of Scotland. He was born at Dundee, in the Province of Quebec, on June 22nd, 1828, and obtained his primary education at Dundee, and later attended the Normal School at Toronto to qualify himself for the profession of school teacher. He taught school for three years or more in Blenheim and other points in the County of Kent, during which time he decided to take up engineering and surveying. He served his apprenticeship to Thomas C. Livingstone, and passed his final examination as a Provincial Land Surveyor on July 11th, 1863. He took up his residence at Chatham, Ontario, in 1859, where he continued to reside until his death on October 23rd, 1907.



During the many years of Mr. McDonell's practice, the western Counties of Essex, Kent, Elgin and Lambton underwent a wonderful change. The forests were cleared, the lands were drained and the swamps were reclaimed, and this progress was largely the result of the work of Mr. McDonell and the other surveyors and engineers who worked in this section of the country, which could not be made to produce until it was drained. Although he did a great deal of the land surveying which is incidental to the development of the country, he devoted most of his time, especially in later years, to drainage work. He also did some railway work, being the engineer in charge of the construction of the Erie and Huron Railway (now a portion of the Pere Marquette Railway).

Among the surveyors who served their apprenticeship with Mr. McDonell might be mentioned the name of Mr. J. S. Laird, who is now practising at Essex, and that of the late Jos. Tiernan, of Tilbury Centre, John Smith, Frank McIntosh and W. F. O'Hara.

Mr. McDonell met his death as the result of an accident, being thrown from his buggy when his horses ran away.

On August 14th, 1861, he married Margaret O'Flynn, daughter of Patrick O'Flynn, Brockville, Ont. There were three daughters and two sons, Dr. John F. McDonell, of Detroit, Mich., and Alexander P. McDonell, law student, who died on June 4th, 1886, in his twenty-third year.

In the death of Augustine McDonell, Chatham lost a citizen of unimpeachable honesty and splendid strength of character.

Such was Mr. McDonell, but whereas in some these qualities have a tendency to cultivate a character that, while it may be worthy of emulation, is harsh, Mr. McDonell was always the genial and courteous Scot. Pithy in address, appreciative and non-censorious in his estimate of his fellow man, he possessed a wide horizon in his regard for what is beautiful in art, literature and nature, that was as singularly at variance physically with his reputation as a mathematician and engineer, as was his strength of character with his liberal-mindedness in all that concerns mankind.

Mr. McDonell introduced a number of important changes in the Drainage Act of Ontario.

He was the promoter of the gigantic scheme known as the "Forbes Drain Scheme," in connection with the land now known as "Kent's Little Holland," which consists of some 5,000 acres of land, which have been recovered from nearly two feet of water and converted into fertile land, capable of raising during 1892 some 15,000 bushels of wheat.

The cost of relieving this tract of country from its watery bed was something over \$50,000, and it is now worth upwards of \$125,000.