

on the

MAIN STREET



McDonnell Park in Lindsay is a place of exciting and enchanting beauty, admired by hundreds of tourists every year and a park which has a great historical background.

It is very interesting to chronicle another story regarding this ancient piece of property and it's pioneer owner, that extremely colorful and versatile gentleman, "Squire" McDonnell. From the pen of Mr. George Beall, Albert Street, and from his scrap book comes a second interesting story:

"Wm. McDonnell, 1814-1900, born Cork, Ireland. Wm. McDonnell went to Peterborough in 1830 and then studied law at Pennsylvania, U.S.A. He settled in Lindsay in the 1840's and founded a tannery, and later a store about 1852. He was in the Lindsay Customs Office and also a Lieut.-Colonel in the Militia. He was a good musician and composed both libretts and music for the 3-act opera "The Fisherman's Daughter", which was put on at the Princess Theatre, Toronto.

He very successfully wrote several books the sales of which ran into hundreds of thousands. He published two narrative poems - "Manita" and "Cleope". Manita was based on an Indian legend of Sturgeon Point, and later a steamer, owned by Charles Bur-

goyne of Fenelon Falls, and ran daily trips between Lindsay and Coboconk was named "Manita" after the heroine of this poem.

Wm. McDonnell was always known in Lindsay as "Squire" McDonnell. He built two houses on the north end of York Street on the river bank. The first was burned in the fire of 1861 and the second is, with some additions, the present Canadian Legion Hall.

After his father brought young McDonnell to Canada, business reverses compelled the father to return to Ireland, but he died on the way home and young McDonnell was left alone in Canada to fend for himself at the age of 16 years.

His indomitable energy, intelligence and uprightness won for him the place which he was to hold until the day of his death, a place in the hearts of all who knew him. His record was an exceptionally good one. He was chosen as clerk of the Division Court and appointed Justice of the Peace. He was a member of the County Council, was Reeve and for many years a member of the Council of the Town of Lindsay. He was a frequent contributor to the Public Press and wrote a series of articles on "Government" for the Toronto Globe.

It is interesting to note that he supervised the taking of the first census in Victoria County and appointed Census Commissioner by a warrant issued the 2nd of January, 1852, by his Excellency James Earl of Elgin and Kincardine, Governor General of Canada.

Wm. McDonnell was a member of King Hiram Lodge A.F. and A.M. He was interested in education and for many years held the position of chairman of the Grammar School Board. Up to the time of his death he maintained a keen interest in public affairs. He died at the age of 81 and is buried in Riverside Cemetery.