

The McDougall Mill

by Harry Hinchley

After Hon Francis (later Sir Francis) Hincks, had bought the land along the falls and rapids of the Second Chute of the Bonnechere he had a portion surveyed to form what ever since has been known as the Hincks Section of Renfrew. To encourage industry he offered building lots along the north bank of the river at bargain prices to those who would establish mills.

John Lorn McDougall, a leading merchant and land owner of Renfrew, accepted the offer and bought "one quarter acre of land immediately adjoining the dam and flume at the second chute of the said Bonnechere River." He agreed to build a "large grist mill" and to make the deal legal and binding there was included a cash consideration of "five shillings of lawful money of Canada." The use of decimal coinage was still 3 years in the future.

To drive the mill, Hon. Francis Hincks agreed to supply "a fair equitable proportionate share of the water running in the said Bonnechere River sufficient to drive four run of stones." This was because there were other mills further down stream all supplied from the same flume and they all had to get their fair share of water. This was set out in a further clause which provided that Hon Francis Hincks "does not guarantee any certain supply of water but simply a fair proportion with other properties of water lots."

The agreement was signed on October 29th, 1855 by John Lorn McDougall and by George Ross, on behalf of the Hon. Francis Hincks. Promptly the next day at "53 minutes past 9 of the clock in the forenoon of Tuesday, the 30th day of October in the year of our Lord, eighteen hundred and fifty five, it was duly registered by James Morris, Registrar for Renfrew.

