



Coleraine Hall built to be showplace

by Harry Hinchley

Coleraine Hall was built by the Barnets to be a show place. It was designed in what the architects call the Late Victorian or Second Empire style of architecture, popular in the last century. With its mansard roofs and prominent towers originally crested with fancy iron work it presented a most imposing appearance. Although it has been remodelled and changed since 1885, when it was built, it is still a show place.

Alexander Barnet who built

Coleraine Hall and named it after an estate in Ireland was born in 1840 in Ashdad of Irish parents. As soon as he was old enough he went to the lumber woods and by 1860 he was taking out logs on his own up the Madawaska. In 1869 with partners William Bannerman and William Mackay he operated on a bigger scale on the Bonnechere under the firm name of Barnet, Bannerman and Company. In 1876 he bought Bannerman's interests and continued as Barnet and

Mackay until 1884. He also was in partnership with Thos Mackie of Pembroke. Over the years he worked extensive timber limits in the Upper Ottawa Valley as well as in British Columbia.

In Renfrew Alexander Barnet was a good citizen. He served on Council and on the Fair Board and worked for the good of the town. His business advice and financial assistance was greatly sought after and he was on the boards of many companies including the Merchants Bank.

The Barnets liked to entertain at Coleraine Hall and Christmas night was one special occasion when they held open house for their friends. When Lord and Lady Aberdeen came to Renfrew in 1895 to open Renfrew Creamery they were entertained at Coleraine Hall.

In the early 1950's Coleraine Hall was taken over by Victoria Hospital and was operated as a rehabilitation centre. Last year this was phased out and now the future of this historical old building is a little uncertain.



Frame building formerly the Renfrew Hotel.