

From his first coming to St. John, the features of character that rendered him conspicuous among his fellows during his long and useful life, were clearly defined.

He was by trade a carpenter, and his extensive knowledge of mechanics contributed, no doubt, to his success in other spheres of business. Immediately on his arrival in this city, he was employed by the shipbuilding firm of Owens & Layton, and continued until the firm was dissolved in 1827.

His next engagement was in the timber business with Mr. Maccan, and in this connection he gave several striking proofs of his practical knowledge of geometry, and introduced many valuable improvements in the measurements and an arrangement of square and round timber.

In the year 1831 he became connected with the firm of Owens & Buda, and, in the following year, was sent to Britain to arrange the business affairs of the concern, which had become greatly involved. On this mission he was eminently successful, and afforded unmistakeable proofs of business tact and ability. Soon after his return to St. John, the title of the firm became changed to "Owens & Duncan." The names of these worthy men became widely known on both sides of the Atlantic, and, although they encountered many losses on land and sea, there was one thing that neither prosperity nor adversity seemed able to shake from them—a reputation for sterling honesty in all they said and did. Their ships were well known and justly famed in Britain and America for beauty of model and good sea-going qualities. For many years past they continued to own the vessels they built, and kept them trading to different parts of the commercial world.

The abundant success that came as a fitting reward to a business career of over thirty years, was largely due to the wisdom and prudence of the senior partner of the firm. Mr. Duncan was about 24 years of age when he came to this city, and yet his character was marked and decisive.

From the first, his knowledge of men and things, his studious habits, and his prudence and caution, made him respected and highly valued as a confidential friend and adviser. None knew him, or spoke of him, as a "young man;" and many who were his seniors by years, looked up to him for counsel and advice. He was always remarkable for temperance in eating and drinking.

Those who knew him from the first, say, that although it was a time when liquor of "all kinds was in common" among business men, and a special virtue belonged to a liberal consumption of brandy, he was never known to indulge in drinking habits. His desire for information was very strong, and his good sense led him to see that it was rather from books, than from such men as a small commercial town supplied, that his desire could be gratified. He aimed high, and collected into a little library the works of the wisest and best of men. Over them he pored the greater part of every day, filling and feeding his mind with the treasures of wisdom they contained. There is still in the possession of his family an old Latin Bible which a friend purchased at his request in New York. It was published in 1557, and is quite a curiosity. It was once the property of a Mr. Tetrel, whose name appears on the first page, and the date 1560. His delight at getting possession of this old Bible was great, and for many years he made it his constant study. In 1832 he carried it to Britain with him, and among the numerous annotations, I found, at the close of the Old Testament, a few lines written in that unmistakeable hand, telling the number of days they had been out, and giving the degree of latitude and longitude the ship was in.

But what was so strange, he never once allowed his intense fondness for reading to interfere with his business arrangements. On the contrary, his work was always ahead. He was never known to be behind time in anything, and so well known were his accuracy and honesty, that whatever bore the impress of his shaky, cranky pen, was never questioned. The workmen would slip