

CITY OF DUNDAS

CHAPTER I

HISTORY



COMMUNITY HISTORY

While Dundas was first platted 1857, its first European resident had arrived 5 years earlier. John Irish is now considered the earliest settler of Dundas, Minnesota, arriving in 1852. It was the first settlement in what would become Rice County. Later, two brothers John and Edward Archibald would conduct the initial plat of the town, choosing to name it after their old home in Ontario named Dundas.

They chose the site in part for its potential as a milling hub. Located right along the banks of the Cannon River, the brothers established the Archibald Flour Mill in town in 1857. Dundas in its earliest days was an internationally recognized producer of high-quality flour. So much so that a second Mill owned by the Archibald's was built in 1870. Wheat farmers from all over the Cannon River Valley and beyond would travel to Dundas to utilize the mills located around the town, and Dundas Flour would then go on to be sold across the country and even in Europe.

Besides its function as an industrial centerpiece for the town, the Archibald Mill also served the role of a community building. The three-story building would host Church services and could serve as a defensive location in the event of an attack or skirmish between the settlers and the local Native American population.

While the earliest days of Dundas were defined by its role in the flour and wheat industries, a series of events ended up all but eliminating the milling business from town by the first half of the 20th century. On New Year's Day in 1892, the 1857 Archibald Mill burned down and the 1870 Mill was badly damaged. The latter was repaired and rebuilt; however, it would again suffer fire damage in 1914. Meanwhile, repeated wheat crop failures due to soil exhaustion and insects had done considerable damage to the farming industry in the surrounding area. With the rise of railroads and industrialization, Dundas was lagging further and further behind the scale of milling that could be done by millers in the much larger and better-connected City of Minneapolis.

By 1910 only the now twice repaired 1870 Archibald Mill would remain active. In 1930, the Archibald Mill was sold to a group from Minneapolis, who promptly closed the mill and sold the company's milling patents to General Mills.



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