



Robert McKinlay was born at Kilmarnock, Scotland, in August 1830. He was self-educated and was always hungry for new information and ideas which he could adapt.

He began his working life as a cutter of blocks for the printing of the 'old-time' shawls and other materials. He served his time at this highly regarded trade and became an expert craftsman. He then entered the postal service in Glasgow where he achieved high office. Just prior to qualifying for a substantial Government pension he decided to head for the colonies embarking on the clipper ship *Enterpe* for what turned out to be a journey of 4 months.

Robert with his wife and family landed in Dunedin in 1873 where he found an old friend Alexander Inglis of A & T Inglis Ltd fame. Inglis placed him in charge of the firm's boot manufacturing business, a position which he filled for four and half years. He subsequently held similar positions with Weale and Cooper, and John Anderson. When Anderson ceased work in 1879 McKinlay purchased some of the plant and began work on his own account at his residence at Hillside. The scullery did duty for a factory, and his staff consisted of one man and a boy.

His business prospered and some two years later he was offered a position with Sargood Son and Ewen Ltd as manager of their footwear factory and he took his staff with him.

In 1885 McKinlay again started on his own account in his old premises. Business increased, extensions were made, and by 1890 he employed 140 staff. As new premises were bought and new and more efficient machinery was introduced this staff number dropped somewhat while the business continued to grow strongly.

McKinlay was known as a man of integrity and this was reflected in his business and private life, and he was always a genial and kind person. He was influential in the New Zealand Boot Manufacturers' Association, and a member of Knox Church for thirty-five years.

A son, two daughters, and his wife predeceased him, and he left three sons and four daughters to cherish his memory. The business was continued by his sons Walter and William, and today, some 125 years later, it is remarkably still in the capable hands of the descendents of Robert McKinlay.

Robert died on 17 November 1907 and is buried in Dunedin's Southern Cemetery in a prominent site on the roundabout, in front of a stone with only the one word MCKINLAY.