

BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY: WILLIAM McCORMACK and MARY BAIN

First Appearance in the Documents: **William McCormack** (born McCormick) first surfaces in the records in the 1851 Census of Scotland. The family constellation at this time includes father James McCormick (born about 1811 – hand loom weaver) and step – mother Jane McDowell (born about 1813), and children Alice (born about 1832 – prin winder), William (born about 1834 – hand loom weaver), John (born about 1836 – hand loom weaver), and James (born about 1840 – prin winder) – all born in Ireland. Their address at this time is 10 Union Street, Calton, Glasgow, Lanarkshire. The family is not included in the Scottish 1841 Census, so it can be inferred that they arrived in the Glasgow area during the Irish potato famine (probably between 1842 and 1848).

Early Background of the McCormick Family: It can be asserted that the McCormicks were originally from Scotland based on:

- 1) History, where large numbers of Scots were transported to “Plantations” in Ireland during the 17th Century.
- 2) Religion, with the family being Presbyterians.
- 3) DNA, where the male McCormick Y chromosome study at Family Tree DNA shows a high resolution match between a descendant of John McCormick to a descendant of a McCormick born in Scotland in 1759. It is likely that both they and the family of the biological mother of William and siblings, Agnes McKee, were of Scots ancestry but residing in the northern counties of Ireland.

It can be added here that higher resolution testing of the McCormick Y chromosome shows that it is typically British (R-L21), but also that they are among a group who have been termed “Iberian Celtic”, carrying the diagnostic Y mutation of S1052+ among Scots.

The author has autosomal DNA matches to many second and third cousins or more distant kin on the McCormick side. One third cousin, a descendant of William and Mary, matches at the highest match level of all 3rd cousins. Also the author, a 4th cousin to a descendant of John McCormick, the brother of William McCormack, is that cousin’s highest match in the entire Family Tree DNA database.

There is no documentation (e.g., Presbyterian Church records in Ireland) that will at this point allow any extension of the parentage of James or Agnes beyond 1851. The names of parents were not included on the death certificate of James McCormick, and Agnes McKee had died likely soon after the birth of her last child in 1840 (before death registration).

McCormick – McCormack: While it is evident from the census records in Scotland that the McCormicks were born in Ireland, however once they reached Canada they gave their birthplace as “Scotland”. This would likely reflect the prejudice towards the Irish at this time. To

emphasize his assumed “Scottishness”, William and his children eventually came to adopt the McCormack spelling (the author’s great grandmother Anna even using the “MacCormac” spelling of her surname. It is interesting that the descendants of William’s brother John, who came to Canada with him in 1863, only used the original McCormick spelling – as do his descendants to this day.

Early Background of the Bain Family: The ancestry of Mary Bain is relatively easy to trace. She was born 12 December 1838 in Westmuir, Barony, Lanarkshire to Andrew Bain and Elizabeth Muir. Andrew Bain, a coal miner, was born 1818 in Barony (probably Westthorn) to William Bain (a coal miner born locally), and Elizabeth Muir who was born 1816 in Westmuir.

The author (and for example his mother’s second cousin) has a DNA match to a descendant of Helen Michie, the sister of Rebecca Michie (born 1793, Alloa, Clackmannanshire, Scotland), the mother of the above Andrew Bain. The author (and his mother’s second cousin) also has a high match (designated as 4th cousin by Ancestry.com) to a Bain – Michie ancestor, Margaret Snadon who married James Michie. Margaret’s parents, cousins William Snadon (born 1700) and Catherine Snadon (born 1700) – both born in Alloa. In addition the author (and his mother’s second cousin) have a high match to Margaret Muir, the sister of the above Elizabeth Muir. The Michie family can be traced to the Bruce and Crawford family of Shropshire (e.g., Robert Bruce, 7th Lord Auchenbowie) and to almost every member of the Scottish aristocracy (e.g., 6 of the children of the Stewart 1st Duke of Albany). Mary Bain, however, was of very humble origins, with her father dying in the local poorhouse in 1876 – although her grandfather Muir was a master hosier (stocking maker). Both the author’s mother and an uncle independently told him that Mary Bain McCormack expected an inheritance from the “Dolly Shoe Company” which the Bains owned in Scotland. The uncle said further that he was told that the Bains owned a chain of shoe stores in Hamilton or Dundee, Scotland – but this inheritance never came. The author has been unable to verify this story, and it seems very unlikely.

Marriage of William McCormack and Mary Bain and Time Before Emigration: The couple were married 30 April 1858 at the Camlachie Free (Presbyterian) Church just west of Westmuir (Westmuir Street) where both families were residing at the time. The 1861 Census of Scotland shows them residing at 26 Westmuir Street where William was noted as a cotton weaver, and Mary was named “Mary Bainer McCormick”, with their son James Bain McCormick (age 3) and a household with 14 lodgers. This is the last record of the couple in Scotland, and, according to the date given in Canadian census records, they emigrated in 1863. There is no record of their voyage, but they left with William’s brother John and wife Barbara (Thornton), leaving behind their parents and siblings. One is left to guess whether Mary’s departure had anything to do with the death of her mother Elizabeth one year later (1864).

Arrival in Canada – Caledonia, Haldimand County, Ontario: The McCormick brothers and their families soon settled together in Ancaster, Wentworth County, Ontario, Canada, however their first destination (at least that of William) appears to have been Caledonia (where the author

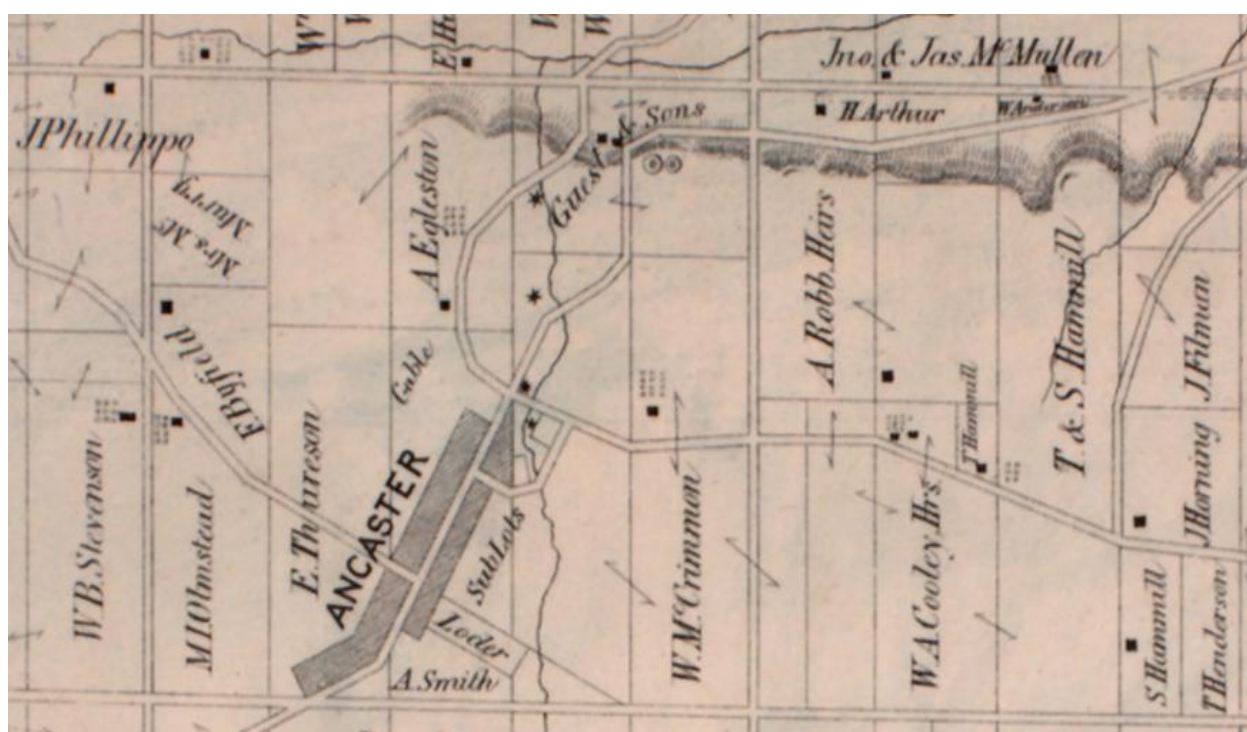
presently resides), or more precisely the small adjoining village of Seneca (according to the residence noted in the baptismal record). Daughter Elizabeth was born there in 9 July 1863. Both Elizabeth and her older brother James were baptized in Seneca Township on 23 November 1863. Clearly William was checking options elsewhere (other than Ancaster) since William's son William (born 1866 – about 3 years after emigration) was born in Brattleboro, Vermont, USA – so Mary must have been there too. With the exception of Anna, born 1871 in Ancaster, all further children of William and Mary were born in other locations (see below). While John's first child James was born in Scotland, their next child Agnes was born in Ancaster in 1864 – so perhaps William was doing the scouting for opportunities elsewhere.

Life in Ancaster: One fact that is seldom discoverable is how Scots in those days felt about emigration. Surely it was difficult to leave their families. The author recalls an aged McCormack relative telling him that when the wolves howled in Ancaster, it made Mary very sad and homesick.

It appears that the earliest home site in the Ancaster area was in the Village of Ancaster or nearby. It is likely that John resided here while William was in Caledonia (1863) and Vermont (1866). The Directory for the County of Wentworth 1867 to 1869 has John McCormick, weaver, residing on Concession 2, Lot 44, but no record of William McCormick in the directories and assessment records of this era. He does not appear in these records until 1883.



However, the census record for 1871 has both John and his brother William residing together in Ancaster. At the birth registration for daughter Anna in 1871, William's residence is given as "Ancaster Village". There were no mills in the vicinity. The Agricultural Census of 1871 shows both families (John a weaver, son James a factory hand; William a weaver) living on Con 2 Lot 44 as tenants, each with $\frac{1}{4}$ acre of land – on which John grew 3 bushels of potatoes and 18 of apples, and William 2 bushels of apples. It seems that John and William were doing as they did in Scotland, weaving from home. It appears that these are all residents of the far west of the Village, or outskirts, near where Sulpher Springs Road meets Wilson Street. Perhaps not coincidentally, this (at the line between Lots 44 and 45) is where St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church was situated (in the census records, the William McCormick family in Ancaster gave "Presbyterian" as their religious affiliation).



1875 Atlas of Wentworth County

The McCormick brothers and families lived at the southwest corner of the village until sometime between 1872 when John McCormick, age 34, was recorded on Con 2 Lot 44, $\frac{1}{8}$ acres; and 1875 when John McCormick, age 36, knitter, was residing on $\frac{1}{4}$ acres situated at Con 2 Lot 46.

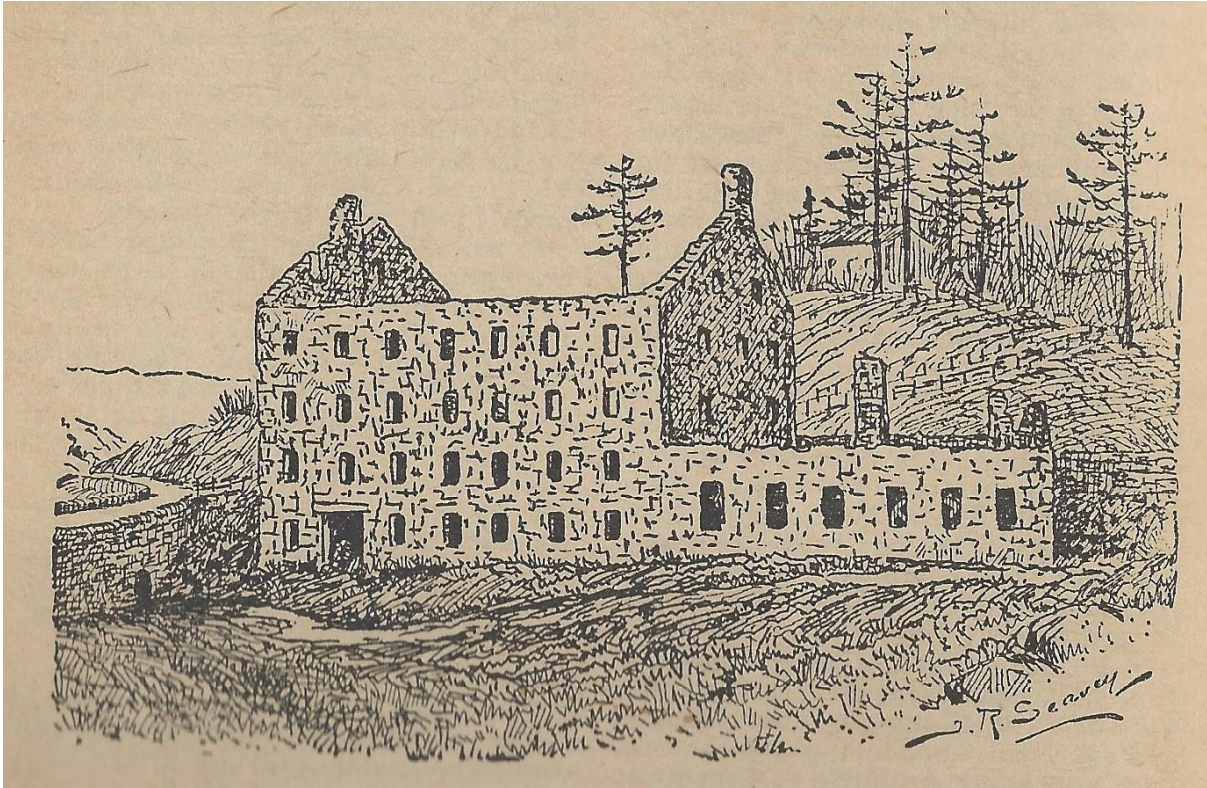
Assessment Roll for the Municipality										
NAMES AND DESCRIPTION OF PERSONS ASSESSED.						DESCRIPTION AND VALUE OF REAL PROPERTY				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Number.	NAME OF TAXABLE PARTY.	OCCUPATION.	Homeholder, Freeholder or Tenant.	AGE.	OWNER'S ADDRESS.	Acres.	Concession, Street, or other Designation.	Block.	Number of Lot, House, &c.	Number of Acres, or other measure.
606	McLaughlin Mrs		W		Depetown	2	L	1	25	82
	McL...						Ba	1	24	15
607	McCloud Rodrick	H	H	72	Ancaster	4	5	2	47	4
608	McCormick John	Knitter	H	38	"	3	5	2	46	14
	Brookbanks John		H		"	1	5			
609	McKrimmon Ira	Carpenter	H	22	"	5	5	2	46	14
610	McKrimmon J.E.	Farmer	H	48	"	2	18	2	37	140
						1	7	4	38	3

1874 Assessment of Ancaster Township

The above two maps from the 1875 Atlas show the town of Ancaster and the general vicinity, including Con. 2 Lot 44 extending to the Village of Ancaster at Wilson Street and Jerseyville Road. Also shown in the area where the Old Ancaster (Dundas) Road meets Wilson Street and continues as Rousseau Street (Mohawk Road). Seen here is also Ancaster (Mill) Creek with mills shown at the north east corner of Wilson and Rousseau, and further north along Wilson, all at Con 2 Lot 46, as well as one on the south side of Old Ancaster Road just before the creek falls over the escarpment.

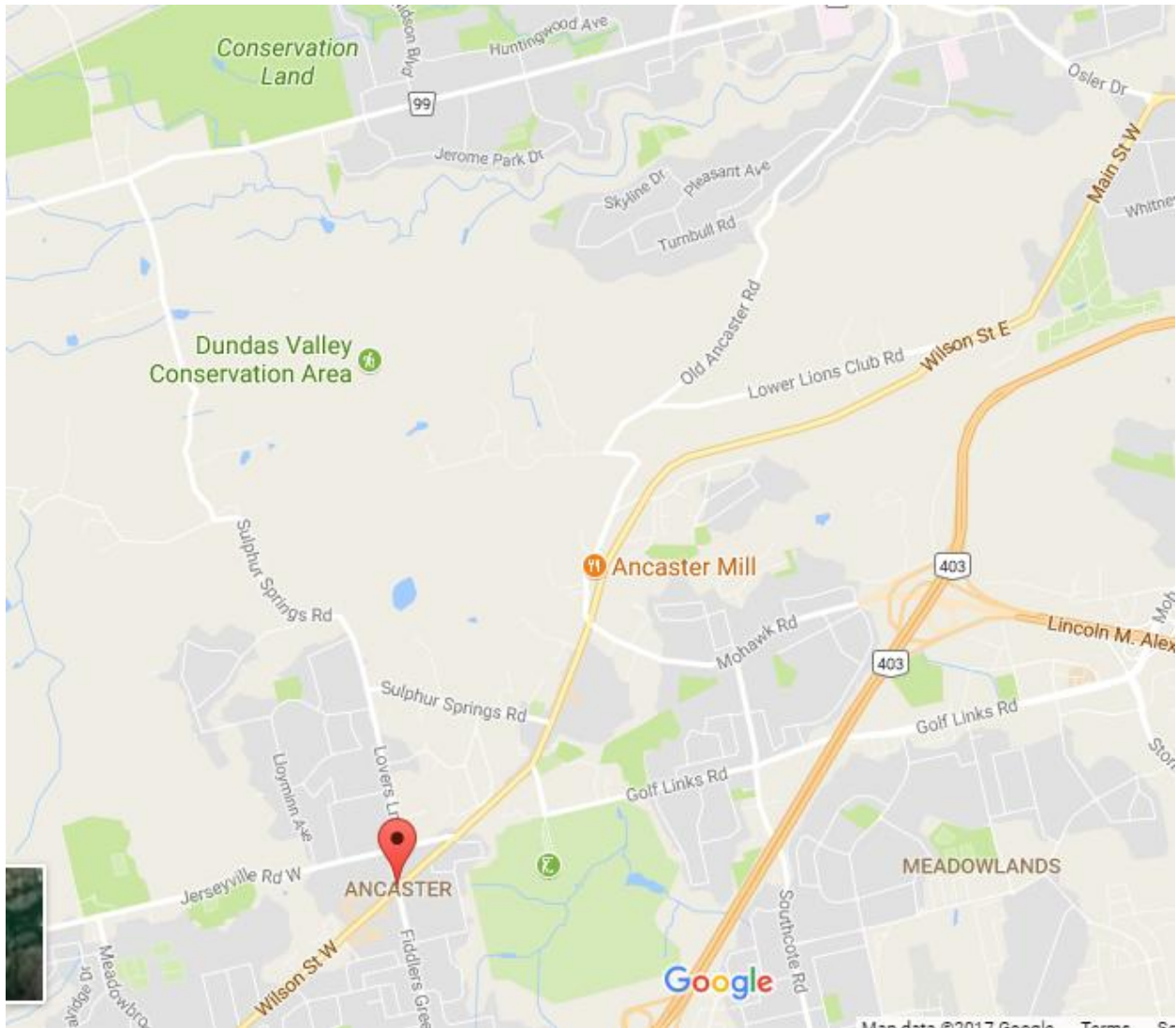
The above Assessment for 1874 and the Directory for 1875 are more specific giving the address of John McCormick as Concession 2, Lot 46 which is where all of the mills were located.

It is possible that until 1875 William and brother John worked at the Ancaster Knitting Factory, built in 1854. It was a, "four storey, stone factory, a dye house, a wool storehouse, a boarding house" on 5 acres of land with 150 employees. It was situated just east of Wilson Street on the creek bank north of Rousseau Street. However on 16 June 1875 it burned, "throwing over one hundred employees out of work", and it was not rebuilt.

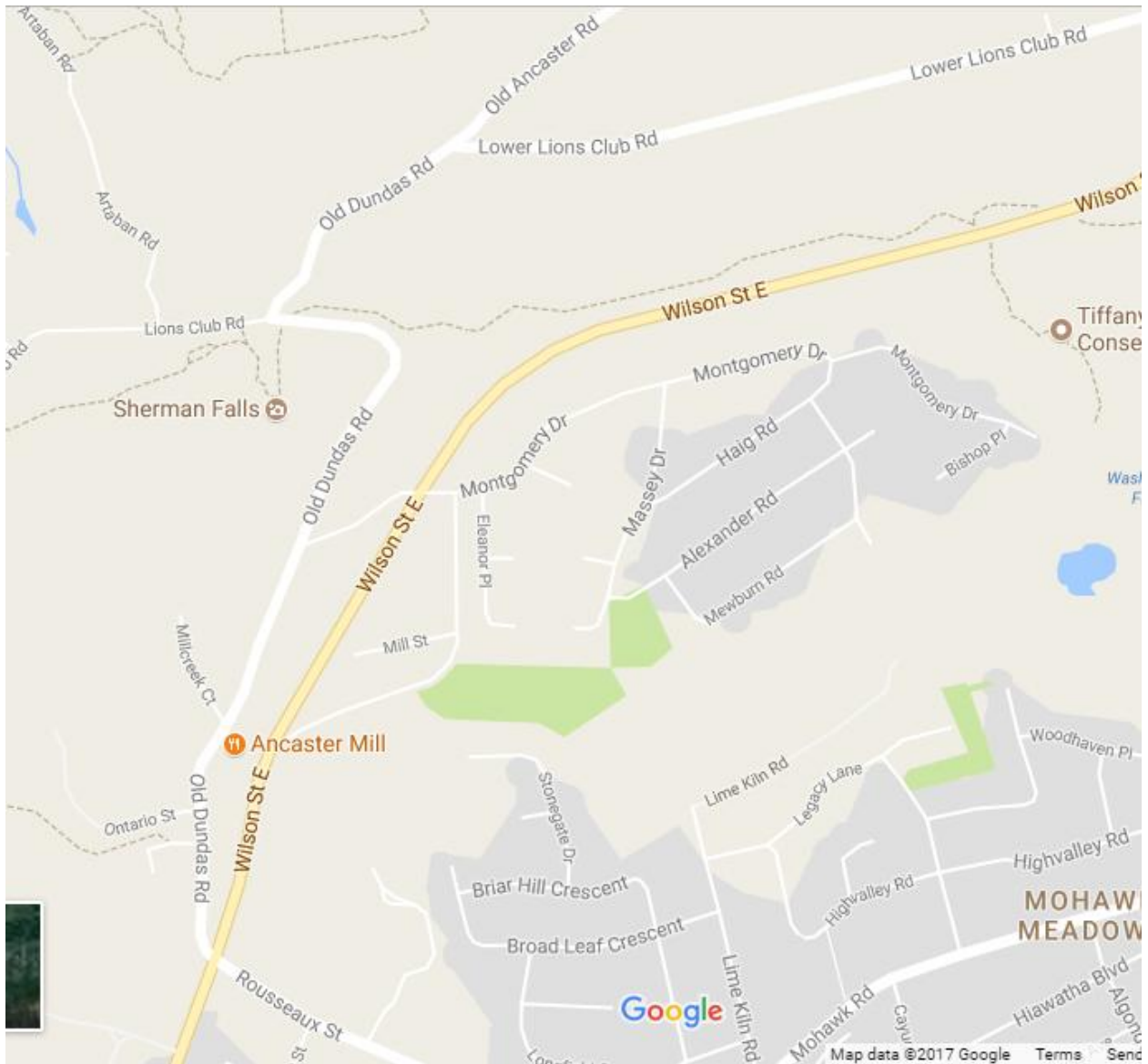


Ancaster Knitting Mill – burned 1875

The tradition in the family of John McCormick, brother of William, has John leaving for Strathroy after a mill where he was working burned. This must have been circa 1875, and 1876 when John McCormick disappears from the Ancaster Directories and Assessment records. There does not appear to have been any animosity between the brothers that could explain the separation. The family in Strathroy called William “Uncle Willie”, and there is a picture of John McCormick as an older man in the photo album of Agnes (McCormack) Young, daughter of William. Apparently John decided for reasons unknown to opt for a new start in an area far to the west, rather than remaining with his brother William and making the best of things in Ancaster and vicinity.



Clearly William McCormack moved about a lot in Southern Ontario. Oddly, the only child of William and Mary to have their birth registered in Ontario was Anna, born in 1871. The death record of William's daughter Agnes (McCormack) Young states that she was born in Chatham, Ontario. This location is somewhat close to Strathroy where William's brother John moved between 1871 and 1881. Also daughter Marguerite (McCormack) Whitney's death record states place of birth as Toronto. Death records cannot be accepted at face value – the information being entirely dependent on the knowledge of the informant. At the time of the 1881 Census William and family were residing in West Flamboro (likely in Dundas), and his brother John was residing in Strathroy. The Directory for 1883 has William living in the Township of Ancaster again.



Referring to the Spencer Creek Conservation Report, *Old Ancaster Road* (1962), they write, *After 1882 there seems to have been only one wollen mill in operation in Ancaster; it changed hands from A.M. Newlands to William McCormick and Son sometime between that year and 1884. It is likely that this mill was built in 1867 where, according to Ancaster's Heritage by Paul Grimwood (1993), in describing the Knitting Mills in the village, reported, *The Wentworth Knitting Mills in a three story building 334' x 50' with a 30 horsepower water wheel to run it. Elsewhere in the same publication under the heading of Woollen Mills it was noted that, Alonzo Egleston built the Wentworth Woolen Mills on the north bank of Mill Creek, just below Eyre T. Thuresson's Carding Mill. He opened it in April, 1867, and the following year he employed twenty men. He spun, wove, cleaned, dyed, fulled, and carded wollen textiles and curtains; and wove and renovated carpets. He leased this mill to various men during its twenty years of life, and Mr. Naylor in 1876 to 1877, and others unknown. This mill burned**

in 1884. A granddaughter of William and Mary, Mary V. (Carpenter) Ward told the author that she, *remembered that William rented a wollen or cotton mill and that many of the local people worked for him. She thought the mill may have been located along the Old Ancaster Road, and that it burned down.*

In further attempting to determine the specific location of the Wentworth Wollen Mills, *Ancaster's Heritage* describes that , *When approaching Ancaster Village from Hamilton you notice in the hollow on the right hand (or Dundas) side of the highway an obviously old stone residence, No. 509 Wilson St., it is hard to realize that only ten years ago it was an untenanted, partial ruin of a once busy industry. It was built prior to 1868 by Eyre Thurreson as a foundry, with two 3 story factories to the east, factories which have long since disappeared.*



Thus it would seem that the Wentworth Wollen Mills was very close to the corner of Old Ancaster (Dundas) Road, Wilson Street, and Rousseau Street – along Ancaster Creek, accessed by the Old Ancaster (Dundas) Road, toward the present “Ancaster Mill” as shown in the map above.

Perhaps the location was very close to the site seen below, between the junction of this road with Wilson Street (to the right of the picture), and the present Ancaster Mill (to the left of the picture) – both structures wedged between these two thoroughfares (as is the residence shown below).



489 Old Dundas Road

Clearly the mill leased by William McCormack appears to have been relatively close to the only mill remaining in Ancaster, the “Ancaster Mill”, 458 Dundas Road, a very trendy restaurant, north of the junction of Old Ancaster (Dundas) Road and Wilson Street, with splendid views of the creek.



Ancaster (Mill) Creek at “Ancaster Mill” dining complex

The Ancaster Business Directory for 1885 has a listing under “Wollens (Wholesale)” for McCormick Wm & Son, wollens. It is not clear if this entry was referencing the time just before the mill burned. In the 1886 Directory for the Town of Dundas, Wm. McCormack [first use of this spelling] was a dyer and resided on York [Road]. Similar information is given for his son James, although his occupation was “loom fixer”. It is likely that the loss of the mill was devastating to William McCormack, and he was forced to begin anew, “shifting gears” and using some of the other skills he learned at the factory. One wonders how very different his life, and that of his family, would have been had the mill not burned.



By the time of the 1891 Census, William and family (son James remained in Dundas, his occupation being “weaving”) had moved to Hamilton, with his occupation being, “wool dier”. The 1892-93 Directory of the City of Hamilton has an entry as follows, “McCormack, Wm, carpet weaver, 189-91 James n, h 44 Ferrie e. Presumably the first address is the factory and the second the home. The 1895 Directory has William McCormack as a dyer, residing at 308 Macnab n. A year later he (or his son William) is a “labr” residing at 358 Hughson n. In 1897 Wm McCormick is a dyer living at 353 John n. In 1898 there are two Wm McCormack entries with one a dyer of 230 Macnab n, and the other entry gives an address of 358 Hughson n.



Above are two pictures of William and Mary found in the album of their daughter Agnes (McCormack) Young (now in the possession of the author's second cousin's wife, Pat Lenz).

Returning to the chronology, the 1901 Census of Hamilton has Mary MacCormack with three of her children residing at 358 Hughson N. William has not been located anywhere in the Canadian Census for this year.

William died 28 April 1907. His obituary is found in the Hamilton Times of 29 April 1907 and reads, *William McCormick passed away at the City Hospital last evening after an illness of six weeks from pneumonia. Deceased was 73 years of age and had been a resident of this city for 20 years. He was born in Glasgow, Scotland and was a dyer by trade. He leaves five daughters, Mrs. Thomas Carpenter of Summitt, Ontario – Mrs. Henry Arnold, Mrs. Henry Young, Mrs. J. Dawson and Mrs. William Whitney; also three sons James of Arthur, Ontario – and John and*

William of Hamilton, Ontario. The funeral took place this afternoon from Robinsons undertaking establishment. Rev. Dr. Nelson conducted the service.

During the 1911 Census, Mary McCormack was residing with her daughter Elizabeth and the latter's husband Thomas Carpenter at the town of Summitt, not far from Copetown in Ancaster Township. Mary passed away 10 October 1912, with details as noted in her obituary of 2 October 1912 in the Hamilton Times: *At the residence of her son in law Mr. Thomas Carpenter of Summit Ontario on Thursday Oct 10, 1912, Mary McCormack widow of William McCormack age 74 years. Funeral at 1 pm to Hamilton Cemetery.* Thanks to Gail McCormick for locating these and many other records pertaining to the more recent McCormick generations – records pertaining to descendants of both William and her husband's ancestor, John McCormick.

Clearly the McCormacks were of modest means. The headstone in Hamilton Cemetery (William in Section X, Row 26, Grave 4, and Mary in Grave 1, is small, and was difficult for the author to locate (and he has not been able to re-locate it since). The earth was covering most of the inscription for Mary Bain. The following picture is of their headstone:



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