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From Nenagh to Toronto in pre-Famine days

By Vivian D. Boulos

The document below, now published for the first time, has been in the possession of the Morphy family since its composition 136 years ago. John Morphy, who was my great-grand-uncle, was the son of Edward/Edmund Murphy (1789-1862) of Nenagh, a carriage-maker who emigrated to Canada in 1837, settling in Toronto, Ontario.

According to family tradition the Morphy family came from Flanders (now in Belgium) to Torquay (in Britain), possibly during the expulsion of the Huguenots from the European mainland. Despite its similarity with the common Irish surname of Murphy, Morphy has always been a distinct surname (possibly originally Morpie/Morphie) and the family have always been Protestant.

Edward/Edmund Murphy of Nenagh married in 1813 Eliza Walker of Portadown, Co. Armagh. They had ten surviving children, of whom the eldest was John, the compiler of the 1862 document published below. Born in Banbridge, Co. Down in 1812 or 1813, he emigrated to Canada (*via* New York) in 1837, where he became a Crown Lands lawyer. He married in 1843 Anne Laing/Layng of Florence, Co. Fermanagh, and died in 1891.

The other surviving children were: Andrew M. (1814-1910); Edward M. (1820-1905); Samuel (1822-1865); George (1824-1884); Henry Brindley (1826-1882); Eliza and Harriet Amelia (1838-1904). All of these children were born in Monaghan except Harriet, who was born in Toronto, and John, born in Banbridge. Three of the nine (Andrew, Edward and Samuel) became jewellers in Canada and three more, in addition to John, the compiler of the 1862 document, became lawyers – George, Henry and Thomas, the last two QCs.

The jeweller sons, like their mother, were all Methodists, but the lawyers were all Anglicans. Also, Eliza Walker their mother, according to family tradition, was descended from the man of that name who was involved in the Siege of Derry, whose statue is in that city.

I have been researching my family roots for some six years, mostly in Canada and the United States. I have presented to the Local Studies Dept. of Tipperary County Library (Castle Ave., Thurles, Co. Tipperary) a six-page professional Family History Report, containing additional information not in the 1862 document and extensively footnoted by me. Readers interested in the Morphy family may inspect and use this material, which is not copyright.

The footnotes to the 1862 document have been compiled by me. Obvious or other errors (e.g. in placenames) of a minor nature have not been corrected or footnoted.

Crown Land Department, Quebec, June 3, 1861, by John Morphy, to his wife, Eliza, and his son Henry Edmund

My uncle John, my father's eldest brother, held the family property in Nenagh, County Tipperary, Ireland, and died in Barbados without male issue. My uncle Andrew then held it for more than forty years, and died on the 8th of January, 1862, without issue, leaving my father, his only brother, heir-at-law, who sent Power of Attorney from Toronto to Samuel Brindley of Happy Grove, Nenagh, to act in my respect to the said property. This Mr. Brindley acted on, as per his letters to my father, Edward McNamara Morphy, Sr., who died in Toronto on May 4, 1862, leaving me, his eldest son and heir-at-law.



Mr. John P. Russell and the Reverend James Elliott, Wesleyan minister, attended my father in his last illness and Mr. Elliott officiated at his funeral, and the Mayor of Toronto gave certificate of my being the eldest son of my father. I attended his funeral from Quebec. He was buried in the Necropolis Cemetery, Toronto, on May 7th, 1862, and was 73 years of when he died. He was born in 1789 in Nenagh.

My father was apprenticed to Mr. Ramsey of Nenagh to learn to make agricultural implements, and went with him to Scotland to finish his apprenticeship, and he remained in Scotland for about two years. On his return, by way of Belfast, he married Eliza Walker, daughter of John Walker in Portadown, County Armagh. He was then twenty-four years old and she was nineteen. The year of their marriage was 1813.

My father commenced his business in Banbridge, County Down, where he remained about one year, and then removed to Monaghan, County Monaghan, where he remained until 1837.

I was born in Banbridge, December 14, 1813, and when about five years old, I accompanied my parents to Nenagh. We stayed with my aunt Anne who was married to her second husband, Strongman Switzer,² and who was then Governor of the Gaol at Bridewell, Nenagh. Aunt Anne had by her first husband Peter, Joseph, John and Rebecca Prosser, and by her second husband Catherine and Anne Switzer.

In about 1819, when I visited there, they were respectively about seven and five years old. One has since been married to Mr. Goggins, a watchmaker. The other to a Mr. Dudley, afterwards a professor or teacher in the Armagh Academy. We then visited at Mr. John Brindley's, Lord Dunnally's place, Silver Mines, etc. On our return my cousin, John Prosser, accompanied us and learned my father's trade.

When I was seventeen years old,³ I accompanied my father from Monaghan to Nenagh when he sold his life interest in a house on Castle Street for about 50 or 60 pounds to Andrew Brindley. We then visited at Mr. Brindley's Happy Grove, four miles from Nenagh. We went to Silver Mines church and I came almost daily to Nenagh and saw and conversed with my uncles Andrew and several of the inhabitants, including Mollie Shaughnessy, John Tucker, a sailor, and Patt Cleary, a chandler, Phill Ryan, etc., and visited at my cousin, Billy Slacks, at Derrynasling. He was married to my uncle John's daughter, Margaret. They had four or five children and emigrated many years ago to the Township of Blanchard, Ontario, Canada, where another sister⁴ married to John Blackwell was living. In 1831, Mr. Brindley's sons were Henry, Andrew, Samuel and John, and daughters, Mrs. Hill, and Eliza, who was delicate.

In the spring of 1832, my father received a letter from a captain of the Rifle Brigade at Cork, on the advice of which he went to Cork and got his share of the proceeds of an auction sale of articles of virtue which were the property of his cousin, Captain McNamara, of the Rifle Brigade.⁵ My uncle Andrew and my two aunts (father's sisters of Birmingham, England) were there, and the four got equal shares, about 500 or 600 pounds each.

My two aunts in Birmingham were married to two brothers, Catherine to Benjamin Mayo and Mary to John Mayo. Each had two children. Catherine had Deborah and Mary Anne, and Mary had Deborah and Isaac.

In the summer of 1832, I visited my said two aunts in the company of my parents. That summer they built a row of houses in Glasslough Street, Monaghan, and called it "McNamara Place". In 1833, I visited my cousins, Deborah and Isaac Mayo and their mother, my Aunt Mary Mayo, in Liverpool, England.

In May 1835, I joined the Constabulary in Dungannon, County Armagh. I remained there two months. Was at Castle Blayney two years, Enniskillen two years, Newtownbutler about one year, Lauthertown about one year, Garrison about one year, Derrylin about two years.

On February 13, 1843, I was married by the Reverend Mr. Jebb to Anne Eliza Laing in Florence, Courtfaurch Church, County Fermanagh. In the summer of 1844, I was six weeks in Dublin with annuaries⁶ brought on my over-exertion at an accidental fire. In December, 1844, we came to Monaghan, then emigrated to New York City, NY. We remained there six or seven weeks, and then came to Toronto. In July 1845, I was employed in the law offices of Messrs. Price, Ewart, Toronto, and remained there six years. Was articled to the profession for four years.

In July 1851, I came to the Crown Lands Department on the recommendation of the Honourable James Henry Price where I still remain. My brothers are:

Andrew, born September 20, 1818, now a jeweller in London, Ontario.⁷

Edward M., born February 26, 1820, now a jeweller on Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario.⁸

Samuel, born April 10, 1822, now a jeweller in Brantford, Ontario.

George, born March 13, 1824, now a barrister in Toronto, Ontario.

Henry Brindley, born July 26, 1826, now a barrister in Toronto, Ontario.

Thomas Macnamara, born January 20, 1835, now a student-at-law to my brothers, George and Henry.

My sisters are:

Eliza, born August 2, 1830⁹ and married to Augustus Webber of the Post Office Department, Toronto.

Mary Ann, born circa 1831.¹⁰

All the foregoing were born in Monaghan, County Monaghan, Ireland.¹¹

My sister, Harriet Amelia, was born in 1838 in Toronto.¹² The latter two sisters are living with my mother in Toronto.

My mother's father, John Walker, removed from Portadown over forty five years ago to Monaghan city, County Monaghan. My maternal grandmother's name was Mary, her maiden name, Moneypenny. [She] was a native of County Armagh.

My mother, Eliza Walker, was the eldest of the Walker children. The next, Margaret, married to Alexander Morton and is now dead. The next, Mary, was married to James Vance and is now dead. Then next, Sarah, married to William Ross, and both are living in Toronto. The next, John, is married to my cousin, Deborah Mayo, daughter of John and aunt Mary Mayo of Birmingham. They now live in Aylmer, Ontario, and have five sons and two daughters. He is a cabinet maker. The next, Susan, married Robert Clarke, now living in Brooklyn, New York. They have one son, a reporter for the *New York Herald*, and several other children. The next, James, died in Cobourg, Ontario, many years ago. The last, Martha, married Alexander McEloroy, and they have a family and live in Wisconsin, United States.¹³

In the summer of 1837, my father and mother and my said six brothers and two sisters came to Toronto, Canada, from Monaghan, County Monaghan, Ireland. I remained behind them and arrived in Toronto on March 17, 1845.

The record of my marriage is in Florence, Courtlauch, County Fermanagh, Ireland, and the record of my son, Henry Edmund's baptism is at the Wesleyan Parsonage, Quebec. He was baptized by Reverend John Borland, and was born December 29, 1852.

My son, Walter John, was born on September 5, 1855 and died on March 31, 1857 and was buried in the Necropolis, Toronto. My father was buried beside him, May 7, 1862.¹⁴ My daughter, Emily Jane, was born on March 13, 1858 and died on February 7, 1861 and was buried in Mount Herman Cemetery, Quebec, in the lot in which Donald George MacLellan, an esteemed friend of ours, is buried. He lived two years with us and died in our house, Belvedere Road, Plains of Abraham, Quebec. A neat headstone stands at his grave. The stone was erected by John Ewart as appears, and marks the spot, "In this ground lies Emily Jane".



The state of my affairs is easily told. I owe to no man anything. All my property is free from debt and is managed by Thomas Griffith (three houses and lots on west side of Church Street, above Dundas Street, Toronto; four on Alexander Street, Toronto; two on Maitland Street, Toronto; two on Duke Street, Toronto; six on Grosvenor Street, Toronto; and 212 King Street East, Toronto) in whom I have the most implicit confidence. I got an account from him up to the first day of May last in which there was a balance due me of about \$8.00.

Mr. Griffith has my Building Society Book and I have a copy of it. The insurance on Church Street property expires on the 10th day of August next; that on Maitland on the 15th day of March next. I will write Mr. Griffith to attend to them.

Crown Land Department

Signed: John Morphy

November 9, 1960 Gander, Newfoundland

Copied from a copy which was written exactly from the original manuscript on Sunday, January 30, 1944 by Stephanie Durnford Jones Millar, daughter of Miriam Morphy Jones, daughter of Henry Edmund Morphy, son of the above John Morphy. Miriam (Molly) Morphy married Philip John Jones, November 25, 1919, Oshawa, Ontario.¹⁵

FOOTNOTES

1. Spelling of name varied. Edmund Morphy, Edmund Murphy, Edward M. Morphy. E. McNamara Morphis is listing in 1837 on Yonge Street, Toronto as "machinist and farm implement maker". *Canadian Geographic*, September/October, 1996, page 28.
2. Robert Switzer, Bridewell Keeper, Nenagh, witness to a Memorial, 25 March 1828, for John Blackwell and William Slack, brother-in-law.
3. Circa 1830. From *Nenagh and Its Neighbourhood* we learn that Andrew Murphy (sic), cordwainter (shoemaker) inhabited 64 and 65 Castle Street.
4. Elizabeth Biggs Morphy. Supposed to have twenty-one children. Many Blackwell descendants in Ontario today. She was always known as Elizabeth Biggs Murphy Blackwell.
5. *The Irishman in Canada*. Page 285. A family, not without being typical, is the Morphy family. During the Napoleonic wars, a young Irishman named Morphy [actually, McNamara] devoted to the crown and anxious for military distinction, raised a hundred volunteers, for which he was rewarded with a commission in the 95th Regiment. He served in the Peninsula and at Waterloo, 1815, after which battle he retired on a captain's half-pay and settled in Cork. He was appointed a magistrate. He died in 1831 leaving behind him a considerable amount of property – valuable paintings, works of art, articles of *vertu* collected during his campaigns – the proceeds of which, amounting to several thousand pounds, were equally divided between his next of kin, four cousins, two of whom were men.
6. Word in manuscript unreadable. Probably some sort of smoke inhalation or lung inflammation.
7. Andrew Morphy died London, Ontario, December 28, 1910 at age 96. This indicates 1814 as year of birth.
8. Apprenticed to a young watchmaker from Monaghan, Edward M. Morphy left Ireland at age 15 in 1835, and established his family in Toronto, Canada. He had a successful jewellery store on Yonge Street until at least 1906.
9. Possibly 1829.
10. Never married. Always lived with her sister, Harriet Amelia and her husband, Walter J. Ballard. Died in Los Angeles, California, and is buried in Hollywood Cemetery as Marianne Morphy.



11. Eliza Walker Morphy bore thirteen children, ten of whom reached adulthood. It is believed that three children, probably two children born between Andrew's birth date in 1814 and Edward's birth date in 1820, and possibly one born after Mary Ann (c. 1831) before departure from Ireland in 1837, are buried in Monaghan's Church of Ireland cemetery. Baptismal records for Edward Morphy, Samuel Morphy and Thomas McNamara Morphy have been found at St. Patrick's Church of Ireland, Church Square, Monaghan City, Ireland.
12. She later married Walter J. Ballard of London, England, and moved with him to Schenectady, New York. After Harriet Ballard's death in Schenectady, Walter Ballard and five of his six children came to Los Angeles, California in 1906 with aunt Mary Ann/Marianne. The five children of Thomas McNamara Morphy and his wife, Mary Ellsmore Evans Morphy, also moved to Los Angeles from Brampton, Ontario, the same year. These families were closely allied for twenty five years through business interests and two intermarriages. Thomas McNamara Morphy and Mary Ellsmore Evans Morphy were buried in 1909 in Woodlawn Cemetery, Santa Monica, California.
13. George Walker's family of North Norwick, Oxford County, Ontario, has been traced in that community. He emigrated to Canada in 1837 from Monaghan City, and it is believed that the Walkers and Morphys may have come to Canada as a family group.
14. Now St. James Cemetery, 635 Parliament Street, Toronto ON M4X 1R1. Phone: 416-964-9194.
15. As the descendants of Stephanie Durnford Jones Millar have not been located, the original manuscript referenced by Mrs. Millar in 1960 has never been found. These pages were typed on October 15, 1996, from Mrs. Millar's typescript by Vivian Maxwell Denniston Boulos of Seattle, Washington. She is descended from the two youngest Morphy children, Thomas McNamara Morphy and Harriet Amelia Morphy Ballard. Her grandparents, Evan Percival Morphy and Emily Elise Ballard, were first cousins. Mrs. Boulos is engaged in an extensive study of the Morphy family, and can be reached at 2040 Park Newport, Newport Beach, CA 92660-5801 USA. Telephone 714-759-4921. E-mail address Saga60@AOL.com.

