

**MORRISSEY FAMILY HISTORY NEWSLETTER**  
**DESCENDANTS OF PATRICK MORRISSY AND MARY PHELAN**  
[www.morrisseyfamilyhistory.com](http://www.morrisseyfamilyhistory.com)

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*Welcome to the Morrissey Family History Newsletter. This, and future issues of the Newsletter, will contain Morrissey news and updates for the family history website. I hope you find something of interest in the Newsletter. Please email me if you have news you would like included in the Newsletter or if you know someone who would like to be added to the mailing list. Please email me if you would prefer to not receive the newsletter and I will delete your email address from the list.*

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**Notes on Dr. William P. Morrissy:**

Certain ancestors stand out more than others, and Dr. William P. Morrissy is certainly one of them. Perhaps because of Dr. Morrissy's letter of 1866 to his Uncle Lawrence Morrissey in Montreal—the letter contains detailed information on the family at that time—Dr. Morrissy's later life takes on greater interest than it might otherwise have had. Until recently, information on William was scant at best; except for the research I included in the *Morrissey Family History Newsletter* (issue # one, winter 2004) we didn't know much about the life of Dr. William P. Morrissy. This dearth of information on Dr. Morrissy changed after I heard from Jean Gulas of New York City. Jean is an excellent and tireless researcher and much of the following information is from her. She is also related to Dr. Morrissy's descendants' extended family.

**More on Dr. William P. Morrissy's Life in Greenpoint, Brooklyn:**

William P. Morrissy was born in 1843 in Miramichi, New Brunswick, the son of Patrick Morrissy and Rose Farrell. John Veraker Morrissy, a younger brother of William P. Morrissy, became a Member of Parliament in the early 1920s. Another younger brother, Edward Morrissy, is the father of Dr. Herbert Morrissy, M.D. The youngest son in the family is Frank Morrissy, who married at St. Patrick's Church in Montreal in 1899 and then proceeded west to Minnesota.

After completing his medical studies Dr. William P. Morrissy settled in Greenpoint, a neighbourhood in Brooklyn, NY. Greenpoint was once referred to as the "Garden Spot" and it seems to have been, in Dr. Morrissy's time, a fairly close-knit community of businesses, stores, schools, and churches. Today, Greenpoint has obviously seen better times, but with urban renewal and some gentrification, I suspect it will become a much-desired neighbourhood once again.

Dr. William P. Morrissy married Jeanette Sutherland on 10 May 1871. Jeanette was born in New York in 1851. Her father was Alexander Sutherland who was born in Scotland around 1818; Alexander Sutherland died on 11 March 1884, aged 67 years. Her mother was Bridget Power who was born in Miramichi, NB in 1825 and died on 7 February 1895, aged 70 years. Perhaps Jeanette's mother saw a "good catch" for her daughter in Dr. Morrissy... Bridget Power would probably have known that the Morrissy family was upwardly mobile and making a name for themselves back in Miramichi.

Bridget Power and Alexander Sutherland had seven children: Mary was born around 1853 and died on 30 December 1870, aged seventeen years; Charles, an infant son, died on 18 July 1871 at eleven months; William was born around 1856, he moved to Stony Point, NY; John, born around 1858, died on 25 November 1920; Josephine, who became a school teacher, was born around 1861 and died sometime after 1930; Louisa was born around 1863 and married John Hughes Jr.—they had a son, John Hughes III, born in 1900, and a daughter born in 1903. Jeanette L. Sutherland was born in 1851 and married Dr. William P. Morrissy in 1871. Most of these family members are buried at First Cavalry Cemetery in Woodside, NY.

The Sutherland family, and later Dr. William Morrissy and his family, continued to reside in Greenpoint, where Jeanette Sutherland's father worked as a ship's carpenter. In 1880, the Sutherlands were living at 144 Meserole Avenue in Brooklyn. In 1873, Dr. William P. Morrissy resided at 141 Meserole Avenue. Other addresses for Dr. Morrissy and his family are 146 Milton in 1879; 115 Noble in 1888; and 117 Noble in 1897. Dr. Morrissy's residences are all townhouses, or variations on the townhouse concept, and quite impressive even by today's standards. Indeed, until the latter years of Jeanette Sutherland Morrissy's life the family was affluent and had domestic help living with them.

Dr. William P. Morrissy and Jeanette Sutherland Morrissy had four children together. They had three daughters, Rose Mary, Jeanette, and Helen. Rose Mary, born around 1874, was their first child. Rose Mary married William Power and they moved to Duluth, Minnesota, perhaps partly because William's brother (that is, Rose Mary's uncle)

Frank Morrissy was already living in that state. William Power was born around 1875 in Canada, possibly in New Brunswick. Rose Mary died tragically in childbirth on 23 September 1909 at her home in Duluth. She is buried with her son (also named William Power) in First Cavalry Cemetery. Rose Mary's husband, William Power, remarried in 1920 and died in St. Louis, Minnesota on 5 November 1944. A second daughter, Jeanette L. Morrissy was born in November 1875; she died on 9 April 1938. The third daughter was Helen (or Helena) Morrissy, who was born around 1877 and died on 27 October 1934; Helen was also the co-witness at Jeanette L. Morrissy's wedding to Charles A. Kane on 8 April 1901, in Brooklyn, New York. Dr. William P. Morrissy and Jeanette Sutherland's only son, Francis (or Frank) Morrissy, was born on 13 June 1879 and died on 27 October 1934. Frank worked as a church organist and remained living at home with his mother and his sister, Helen Morrissy, until his death on 17 May 1933. Except for his work as a church organist, neither Frank nor Helen seem to have ever been gainfully employed.

Charles Archibald Kane was born on 5 November 1874 and died on 12 June 1946. He and Jeanette Morrissy Kane had five children: Charles Joseph, born around 1902, died 2 January 1985; Paul, born around 1904; Anne, born around 1906; William, born in 1910, died 30 July 1987; and Mary, who lived from 16 March 1916 to 1 October 2002, and married Thomas Joseph Quinn. William became the future Brother Conrad Gabriel Kane and taught physics at Manhattan College (<http://www.manhattan.edu/>) located at Riverdale in the Bronx borough of New York City. Charles Joseph Kane became a lawyer and married Julia Keating in 1933, they had two children: Kathleen (Grady) and Robert (1936-1992; he married Eileen Tiernan, now also deceased). According to the 1920 Federal Census for Kings County, Brooklyn, Dr. William P. Morrissy's widow Jeanette Sutherland, her daughter Helen and son Frank, were also living with Charles and Jeanette Kane at this time. Charles Kane worked at a succession of jobs and was employed in 1920 as an Inspector of Tenement Houses for New York City. The Charles Kane family residence in 1920 was located at 1007 East 35<sup>th</sup> Street, Brooklyn, NY. (See notes below)

The offspring of Charles Kane and Jeanette L. Morrissy are the only direct descendants of Dr. William P. Morrissy. Indeed, there is no one descended from Dr. William P. Morrissy bearing his surname today.

The Brooklyn Eagle, a newspaper whose archives from 1841 to 1902 can be accessed online ([www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/eagle/](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/eagle/)), is a wonderful source of information on Brooklyn in the final years of the nineteenth century, when Dr. Morrissy worked as a Police Surgeon. In 1897 two hundred and fifty physicians applied for the position of police surgeon, although there were no positions available. There were five police surgeons at that time in Brooklyn, earning the sizeable income of \$1,500.00 a year; this was soon to double to \$3,000.00:

The duties of police surgeons require them to attend at police headquarters whenever needed and to examine and report all matters referred to them. They are to report on the physical qualifications of candidates for patrolmen and shall make

yearly reports on the sanitary conditions of station houses, department buildings, etc. They are to attend sick members of the police force. They are also to make weekly visits to the station houses and are required to make charges against members of the force who seek to evade duty on the pretense of sickness.

(Brooklyn Eagle, 19 November 1897)

The position of police surgeon carried with it considerable authority over most police officers. An article of 23 February 1900 was critical of Police Surgeon Dr. Charles H. Terry, who ordered an officer back to work. The officer, Policeman Dressell, “committed suicide... while on post.” The officer suffered from chronic stomach pain and “a constant ringing sound” in his left ear. The officer’s wife and fellow police officers were critical of Dr. Terry’s authority.

Indeed, when officers wanted to retire at age sixty, or if they had suffered a physical disability, they had to report to the police surgeon for a medical examination that determined if they were in fact eligible to take time off work or to retire. It seems to have been the police surgeon’s job to keep to the minimum the number of men either receiving a pension or taking time off from work due to illness. For this reason it is unlikely that the police surgeon was much liked by some police officers.

An article published on 9 February 1893 in the Brooklyn Daily Standard Union describes a police officer who went “insane” while on the job. Patrolman John J. Murphy was in the dormitory upstairs at the police station when he began discharging his revolver and “muttering to himself.” He believed that Captain French, who was downstairs at the time, wanted to kill him. Captain French, with the help of other officers, subdued Murphy “who was clearly insane.” Then, “Police Surgeon Morrissy was summoned and the unfortunate man was taken home in a coach.” Murphy, who had served admirably as a police officer for four years, had displayed symptoms of possible mental illness for several weeks and his case was reported to the Police Commissioner.

An article published on 7 July 1877 refers to a meeting at which P.F. McBreen and Dr. Morrissy delivered a report to property owners in Greenpoint. McBreen and Morrissy had met with the Board of Health regarding “the Newtown Creek nuisances”, and the results were passed along at this meeting.

There was “Trouble at St. Anthony’s” according to the writer at the Brooklyn Eagle in an article published on 28 June 1881. Bishop Loughlin had “saddled (the congregation at St. Anthony’s) with a \$25,000.00 mortgage in addition to their other burdens.” There is a suggestion the debt had been unjustifiably imposed on St. Anthony’s by the Bishop. Dr. Morrissy served on a committee of five “to wait upon Rev. Father Murphy, the pastor, and demand an examination of the books of the parish.” At a meeting of 300 parishoners, blame was not placed on Father Murphy but they objected to “paying a debt contracted by the Bishop...”

On 27 September 1886, an article was published entitled “A Doctor’s War” and discusses a dispute between Dr. Morrissy and Dr. Hamilton Williams on the causes of John McFall’s death. McFall became ill at the residence of one of his relatives and Dr. Morrissy, being called in, diagnosed his illness as “Quincy sore throat”. McFall’s condition, unfortunately, continued to deteriorate causing his friends to call in Dr. Hamilton who recognized McFall’s illness as typhoid fever; a few days later, the patient died. There is a long discussion of McFall’s case by Dr. Hamilton, who is referred to as “the Irish agitator of Huron Street.” For whatever reason, Dr. Morrissy wasn’t available to comment on the case. Dr. Hamilton seems to have felt that Dr. Morrissy was negligent and shouldn’t have signed the death certificate, as Morrissy hadn’t seen McFall’s body until forty-eight hours after McFall’s death. The authorities seem to have supported Dr. Morrissy in this dispute, perhaps because of Dr. Morrissy’s position in Brooklyn society.

On 18 March 1887, Dr. Morrissy attended the thirty-eighth annual dinner of the St. Patrick Society. Dr. Morrissy sat at table number one. Everyone seems to have had a “glorious time”; indeed, “it was one of the very best public dinners ever provided by a Brooklyn caterer for the Brooklyn public.” All agreed that the “freedom of Ireland (from Britain) was near(er) at hand...”

On 11 March 1888, an article regarding the Seventeenth Ward [Greenpoint] Democratic Party, showed Dr. Morrissy’s support for Supervisor Bernard Lamb. Dr. Morrissy was later elected to represent his Ward at the 1888 Democratic Convention held in St. Louis, Missouri; Grover Cleveland, from New York, was nominated to run for President and Allan G. Thurman, from Ohio, for Vice President. They lost the election.

On 16 March 1888, the Brooklyn Eagle reported, “The students at Public School No. 31 Dupont Street, Greenpoint, were offered a handsome gold medal which Police Surgeon William P. Morrissy offered to the one who would show the greatest proficiency in English grammar...Delphine Contat had won the medal and to-day the principal got the school in order and Dr. Morrissy, in a brief address, presented the pupil named with the medal.” Public School 31 still exists today.

An article published in the Brooklyn Eagle on 8 August 1890 is titled “Dr. Morrissey’s Trip” and discusses his return to New Brunswick to fish. While there he stayed with Mr. James Russel and devoted his time to fishing “on the Big Hole, Sevogle, a few miles distant, and resulted in a catch of seventy-eight trout.” No doubt, Dr. Morrissy also visited with his family in Newcastle.

The Brooklyn Eagle reported on 13 January 1889 that Dr. William P. Morrissy was being considered for mayor. The reporter writes:

For the enlightenment of those who are unacquainted with Morrissey, it may be necessary to state that he is a promising patriot of the Seventeenth Ward identified with the regular ‘organization’. The kind of disposition ‘of the leaders’ has enabled him to vary the monotony of his private practise with pursuit of his duties as police surgeon at the comfortable rate of \$1,250.00... Morrissey, the EAGLE

submits, has duly qualified himself to enter the race for the Mayoralty nomination.

This brings us to the end of the story, so far, of the life of Police Surgeon Dr. William P. Morrissy. According to his death certificate, Dr. William P. Morrissy died around 10:45 a.m. on 12 March 1898 at his home at 117 Noble Street, Brooklyn, of Cirrhosis of the liver. He had resided in the United States for thirty-one years and died at age "51 years, ten months, and three days of age". However, if he were born, as previously thought, in 1843, his age at death would have been fifty-five years. It appears that alcoholism had much to do with his early demise. He was buried from St. Anthony's Church in Greenpoint on 16 March 1898. Jeanette Sutherland Morrissy, Dr. William Morrissy's widow, died at home of chronic myocarditis, at 75 Astoria Avenue in Long Island City, at 6:30 a.m. on 5 January 1929. William and Jeanette and their children are buried at First Cavalry Cemetery where there is an impressive, large, Morrissy monument.

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#### Notes:

1. Charles Archibald Kane's parents are *Charles Washington Kane* (see note 2. below), born around 1844 possibly in New Jersey and *Josephine Youngblood Millspaugh Bell* (see note 3. below), born 13 January 1844 in Montgomery, New York; they married on 26 November 1873 and had five children: Charles Archibald, born 5 November 1874, died 12 June 1946; Francis Edward, born 7 April 1877; Louis/Lewis Jasper, born 23 May 1880; Emma Eliza/Lydia, born 16 April 1882; and Joseph Albertus, born 4 April 1886, died 5 March 1888.
2. The parents of *Charles Washington Kane* are Charles Kane, born New Jersey around 1817 and Mary Ann (unknown last name), born around 1820 in New York. Their children are Charles Washington, born around 1844 in New Jersey; Jasper, born around 1845; Richard, born around 1848; George, born around 1851; Mary, born around 1854; Ellen, born around 1857; and Edward, born around 1860. The children, except for Charles Washington Kane, were all born in New York State.
3. The parents of *Josephine Youngblood Millspaugh Bell* are Archibald Bell, born in either Scotland or Ireland on 17 April 1789 and *Pamelia Millspaugh* (see note 4. below), born on 20 October 1798, died 3 October 1879, buried at Brick Reformed Church, Montgomery, (Orange County) NY. They married on 15 May 1817. Their children are Samuel Bookstaver, born 17 September 1817, died 26 December 1897, he married Sophia Brown Walworth on 16 September 1845; Selina Ann, born 28 January 1826, died 1 August 1854; Albertus, born 3 March 1826, died 26 September 1831; and Josephine Youngblood Millspaugh, born 13 January 1844.

4. The parents of *Pamelia Millspaugh* are Lewis Millspaugh, born 12 October 1771, died on 6 August 1852 and Eve Decker, born 1773 and died 10 October 1837; they married on 22 November 1797 in Shawangunk (Ulster County) New York State.
  5. Notes 1., 2., 3, and 4. above are from information taken from Census reports, research by Jean Gulas.
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**Book Review: *Sir William Hingston: Montreal mayor, surgeon and banker*,  
by Alan Hustak**

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**Hardcover version, ISBN 1-896881-37-8**

**Softcover version, ISBN 1-89688-48-3**

### **Notes on Sir William Hingston:**

It was with great pleasure that I read *Sir William Hingston, Montreal mayor, surgeon and banker*, a biography by Allan Hustak. The book is highly readable and of interest to both a general readership and to anyone with ancestors in Montreal in the second half of the nineteenth century, as it vividly describes both this fascinating character from Canadian history as well as living conditions in the city at that time. A foreword by Professor Graeme Decarie of Concordia University's History Department, as well as photographs, contribute to this fascinating story of Hingston's life. There is also an excellent index and bibliography that make the book even more "user-friendly". In all, *Sir William Hingston, Montreal mayor, surgeon and banker* introduces us to a man of extraordinary ability and intelligence.

William Hingston's father, who was of Anglo-Irish descent, settled in 1823 on the Fifth Concession in the Township of Hinchinbrooke, about fifty miles southwest of Montreal. I know this area very well having owned property for many years only a few miles from the Hingston family homestead, where William Hingston was born in 1829. William Hingston was educated in Huntingdon, Quebec, and then by the Sulpicians at the Collège de Montréal in Montreal. He earned his Doctor of Medicine degree at McGill University in 1851. Hingston then continued his medical studies in Europe, specializing in surgery, before setting up his practise in Montreal.

By all standards, William Hingston was an extraordinary man. He was considered one of the top surgeons in the British Empire in the final decade of the nineteenth century. He also served two terms as Mayor of Montreal and then concluded his public life by being appointed to the senate in Ottawa where he served for eleven years. He was knighted in recognition of his distinguished service to the Dominion of Canada. He was also acclaimed as a banker; he was a president for many years of the Montreal City and District Savings Bank. His influence on Montreal life extends to this very day: Mount Royal Park came into existence during his mayoralty. We can also thank Hingston for

promoting sanitary living conditions in Montreal, which were in a deplorable state when he came to office.

There is a passage in Hustak's book that refers directly to our family's history, the passage deals with founding a hospital for "English-speaking Catholics" in Montreal. Hustak writes, "He (*that is, Sir William's son, Donald Hingston: my italics*) and Helen Morrissey (see note below), an English-speaking nursing sister at the Hotel-Dieu felt the time had come to open a facility for the city's growing English-speaking Catholic population." In 1908 the plan was to call the hospital "The Sir William Hingston Memorial Hospital for English-Speaking Catholics", this became the present-day St. Mary's Hospital.

There was much dispute regarding who was to run the hospital. Was it to be controlled by Church officials, or by a lay committee? Details of these negotiations are too complicated to be summarized here; however, the possibility that the new hospital would not come into existence was very real. A crucial deciding factor that saved the hospital is the intervention of two priests. Hustak writes:

It took another five years of negotiating but St. Mary's re-opened on March 20, 1934, after two supportive Roman Catholic priests, Luke Callaghan and Michael P. Dawson, convinced the archbishop of the wisdom of allowing the institution to be run by a lay board of directors. 'In one of the darkest moments, when our little group had been abandoned by its influential friends, Father Dawson and Canon Callaghan came to our help. In my opinion they saved St. Mary's,' Donald Hingston confided to friends.

Canon Luke Callaghan, Father Martin Callaghan and Father James Callaghan, were brothers of Mary Callaghan who married Thomas Morrissey (my great grandfather) in 1867. Of course, Fr. Luke Callaghan was well connected in the Church; he had been for many years the assistant Chancellor at the Archbishop's Palace, located on LaGauchetière Street in Montreal. As a young priest he had been sent to Rome to study for his Doctorate and later he was pastor at St. Michael's Church, soon to be the largest English-speaking congregation in Quebec. Callaghan had influence and prestige and his intervention in the dispute regarding St. Mary's was decisive. Father Martin Callaghan officiated at the funeral of Sir William Hingston who died on 19 February 1907; Hingston's was the largest funeral at St. Patrick's since Thomas D'Arcy McGee's funeral in 1868.

Anyone living in Montreal's Notre Dame de Grace neighbourhood knows of Hingston Avenue, but most would not know of the fascinating Montrealer for whom this residential street was named on 29 May 1911. Sir William Hingston is certainly on the list of great Montreal mayors, along with Jacques Viger, John Easton Mills, John Guerin, Camillien Houde, and Jean Drapeau. As I was reading Hustak's book last spring, a letter carrier delivered a pamphlet: "Enfin! At last!" it reads, "56 New Condos" at "Les Terrasses Hingston" located on Hingston Avenue near Upper Lachine Road. Hingston will not be forgotten!

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**Notes:**

1. Sister Helen Morrissey—no apparent relation to us—is the author of *Ethan Allen's Daughter: The Life of Frances Margaret Allen* (Garden City Press, Ste. Anne de Bellevue, QC, 1940). Sister Helen Morrissey's book is a biography of Frances Margaret Allen who lived from 1784 to 1819 and was a daughter of Ethan Allen (1738 – 1789) who, with the Green Mountain Boys, took Fort Ticonderoga from the British and later attacked Montreal. The book has two parts, the first is a biography of Ethan Allen's life; the second part is concerned with the life of his daughter, Sister Frances Margaret Allen, who served at the Hotel-Dieu Hospital in Montreal from 1807. Sister Helen Morrissey's book was reviewed by Aloysius Plaisance, O.S.B., in "The American Benedictine Review", 8.2 (1957).

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**Notes on Geographical Locations in Canada With the Name "Morrissey":**

The following is from Natural Resources Canada. The ten locations are listed by name, followed by their geographical description, and finally the region where they are located.

Morrissey Harbour – Bay – Nunavut  
Morrissey Rock – Shoal – New Brunswick  
Morrissey Rock Provincial Park – Conservation area – New Brunswick  
Morrisseys Cove – Bay – Prince Edward Island  
Morrisseys Brook – River – Nova Scotia  
Morrissey – Unincorporated area – British Columbia  
Morrissey Creek – River – British Columbia  
Morrissey Park – Conservation area – British Columbia  
Morrissey Ridge – Mountain – British Columbia

Other places of interest: the Morrissey Tavern on Yonge Street in Toronto, the Morrissey Pub in Vancouver—I believe both are closed—and the Morrissy Bridge in Miramichi, New Brunswick, named after the Honourable John Veraker Morrissy. There is also the Morrissey, Fernie & Michel Railroad in British Columbia and Morrissey Magic, a store in Toronto.

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**Web Stats:**

The number of visitors to the site, [www.MorrisseyFamilyHistory.com](http://www.MorrisseyFamilyHistory.com), continues to increase. Almost 14,000 people have visited the site as of mid-January 2006.

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It's January and we've had a mild winter so far here in Montreal, but with over two months of winter left we will have the usual amount of snow and very cold weather we are all used to. I wish you all a healthy new year.

Stephen Morrissey  
January 2006

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