

MORRISSEY FAMILY HISTORY NEWSLETTER
DESCENDANTS OF PATRICK MORRISSY AND MARY PHELAN
www.morrisseyfamilyhistory.com

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WINTER 2004

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.

OBITUARIES:

Herbert Lewis Morrissey (6 February 1938 – 13 August 2003): It is with sadness that I heard the news of Herb Morrissey's death. Herb was a family man and an accomplished magician whose Toronto-based business serves an international clientele (please see www.morrisseymagic.com). "Herbie", as I always knew him, was a first cousin, the only child of Alex and Ivy Morrissey. Herb's widow, Shirley Howe, lived with my family on Oxford Avenue in Montreal for about a year before she married Herb in June, 1959. I remember getting ready for the wedding and meeting her brothers from Prince Edward Island.

Herb was one of those exceptional and rare people about whom you say, "They broke the mould when they made Herb." As a child he was always doing magic tricks, he knew what he wanted to do in life from an early age. I remember Herb doing card tricks on several occasions in our living room. Once we all drove out to a West Island restaurant to see him perform. Another time we stayed up late to watch him on a Radio-Canada television programme hosted by Lise Payette, a future Quebec cabinet minister. I remember Herb learning how to eat fire and when he said that I could be "the youngest fire-eater in Eastern Canada" it meant actually trying to do it.

Herb's parents were good and kind people. He was their only child and there is a photograph on the family history website of Alex holding a new-born Herb taken in 1938 on the back balcony of my grandmother's Girouard Avenue flat. My mother remembers Herbie as the only child at her wedding reception—he was running around—when she married my father Edgar Morrissey in 1940. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, my mother and brother and I had a country cottage in St. Eustache across the street from the cottage Alex and Ivy shared with my grandmother and Aunt Mable, so it was quite a gathering of family every summer. Ivy's sisters Rosie and Doris, and their father Mr. Lewis, used to visit on summer evenings.

I remember the happy summer evening in 1961 when Herb and Shirley's first child, Kim, was born. Another memory, but a sad one, was the summer evening in 1960 when we heard that Aunt Mable (Morrissey) had died; if I am not mistaken she died when she was visiting P.E.I. with Herb and Shirley. It was quite a blow to her mother, my grandmother, for whom she was a close companion.

After living for many years in Ville St. Laurent, Quebec, Herb and Shirley relocated to Don Mills, Ontario, in the late 1970s. Herb and Shirley have two children, Kim (Blaine Sharpe) and Danny (Phoebe) and two grandchildren, Brandon and Taylor.

Dorothy Magrane Morrissey (1917 – 7 May 2003): It is also with sadness that I mention the passing of Dorothy Morrissey. Dorothy Magrane married Herbert Morrissey at St. Patrick's Church, Montreal, in 1939. For several years in the 1950s Herb and Dorothy and their family lived next door to us on Oxford Avenue in Montreal. When my father was in Peter Bent Brigham Hospital in Boston, where he died in 1956, Dorothy traveled to Boston to be of help to my mother. Herb and Dorothy had two children, Bob and Linda, and five grandchildren (Kimberley, Marnie, Donna, Jim, and Dan).

Notes on Dr. William P. Morrissy:

William Morrissy (1845) was one of the children of Patrick Morrissy and Rose Farrell of Newcastle, New Brunswick. Williams' father was born in Ireland and came to New Brunswick in 1837 with his parents Patrick Morrissy and Mary Phelan and his siblings. In New Brunswick, Patrick married and had nine children including William. William's siblings are Catherine (1839), Mary (1845), Patrick (1849), Anne (1851), John Veraker (1854), Sara Jane (1855), Edward (1858), and Francis (1863).

One of the most important documents we have in the Morrissey family history is William's 1866 letter to his uncle, Laurence Morrissey, in Montreal. This letter is full of interesting family history. Laurence, or someone else, thought so highly of the letter that it was sent to Rose McWilliam in New Brunswick; Rose was one of Catherine Morrissy's grandchildren. According to a prefatory note to the letter, written by Tally Morrissy, the original copy of the letter was passed on to Rose McWilliam's daughter Mona and then "taken by her heir Lottie Barry, sister, of Chatham." We don't know who has possession of the original letter now.

My brother, John Morrissey, had a copy of the letter in his family history files for many years. In 1979 John wrote to The Miramichi Historical Society in Newcastle, New Brunswick, inquiring after our family history. In response he received a letter from the Society's Corresponding Secretary, Edith MacAllister who, by coincidence, is herself descended from the Morrissys in Newcastle. She writes, "I enclose a letter by my great-uncle William Morrissy, to his uncle Laurence in Montreal in 1866... I would judge that the Laurence Morrissey who left Barnaby River for Montreal would be your great-great-

grandfather.” Edith MacAllister’s grandmother was William’s sister Catherine Morrissy. Coincidentally, again, Catherine Morrissy, born in 1839, was Laurence’s (my great great grandfather’s) goddaughter. Patrick Morrissy (William’s father) and Laurence Morrissey are siblings. Copies of the letter were then passed down to other generations of the family.

My own acquaintance with William’s letter only begins around 1999 when I began corresponding with Jane Morrissy Allan of Miramichi, NB. I also received a copy from Bannon Morrissy and then my brother forwarded to me his research into the family history. Reading Edith MacAllister’s letter to my brother I note another coincidence; she writes, “Your letter to Mrs. R.H. Morrissy was given me by her daughter, Jane Haden...” A few years later Jane Haden married Dr. Charles Allan. I spoke on the phone with Jane many times about our family’s history.

Some information on William Morrissy can be found in *Family and Descendants of John Millae, Tipperary, Ireland, Ellen Meagher, Tipperary, Ireland*, compiled and privately published by Dave Gillard of Moncton, New Brunswick. My copy of this book was given to me by Jane Morrissy Allan when she visited Montreal in spring, 2000. Dave Gillard’s book includes information about the Morrisseys, some of which I have incorporated in our family history. Other information here on Dr. William Morrissy is from Sue McWilliam of Ottawa, Ontario. I highly recommend Sue’s informative website for its careful research and photographs; as well, the site also contains much information on the Morrissys. Please see:

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb./com/~mcwilliamstevenson/index.html>

William Morrissy’s letter to Laurence Morrissey was written on 5 May 1866, when William was twenty-one years old and just deciding to begin his medical studies. He states that he has already spent three years in college, “but not liking college life, and college life not agreeing with me, I left about six months ago, after taking a cruise schooner to recruit my failing health.” He mentions entering “the surgery of Dr. J.L. Benson, to prepare myself for entering college, which I intend to do with the help of God next autumn.” Even at this time William is planning to move either to New York City or Montreal. He suggests that if Laurence answers his letter he will go to Montreal. Either Laurence never answered the letter or William decided in favour of New York for some other reason.

William Morrissy graduated from The New York Medical College in March 1869. The college, located in Valhalla, Westchester, New York State, received its charter in 1860. It is still “in the Catholic tradition” and provides an excellent education in medicine. From here, William was launched into his medical career.

William married Jeannette Loretta Sutherland, the eldest daughter of Alexander Sutherland, on 10 May 1871, in New York City. The officiating priest was the Reverend Arthur J. Dorris. Rev. Dorris was at St. Peter’s Church in Brooklyn, NY, from 1864-1866. St. Peter’s Church, located on the corner of Hicks and Warren, was founded in 1859. In 1872, Rev. Dorris was pastor at St. Joseph’s Church in New York.

Dr. Morrissy returned home to Newcastle in October, 1877, the first visit in seven years. Another visit occurred three years later, in August 1881, for the funeral of his father, Patrick Morrissy. During the second visit he also traveled to Campbellton, to visit a married sister.

According to the United States 1880 Census, Dr. Morrissy lived with his family in Brooklyn, NY. His family included his wife "Jenett Morrisey", age 29; daughters Rose, age 7, and Jenny, age 5; sons Willie, age 4, and Frank, age 1; and a domestic servant, Mary McDermint (sic) (probably "McDermott"), born in Ireland, age 18. Dr. Morrissy is listed as age 35. He seems to have been well established in his career and family life. The census place is Brooklyn, Kings (Brooklyn), New York City-Greater, New York.

The following article published in the 1 April 1882 issue of The Brooklyn Union Argus newspaper mentions Dr. Morrissy:

1 APRIL 1882

WHISKEY AND SODA.

Patrick O'TOOLE Takes Too Much Whiskey, and Bridget WALSH Gives Him Too Much Soda Bottle.

Patrick O'TOOLE, of 179 Greenpoint Avenue, was struck heavily with a bottle by Mrs. Bridget WALSH last night, and sustained a dangerous wound on the back of the head, which at one time was thought would prove fatal. It appears that Mrs. WALSH's husband recently purchased a liquor saloon, and last night gave an opening reception. O'TOOLE and a party of friends were present, and indulged very freely in alcoholic stimulants. While Mrs. WALSH was engaged in waiting on a customer, O'TOOLE put his arm around her waist, which she resented by striking him on the head with a bottle containing lemon soda, breaking the bottle and inflicting a deep wound. O'TOOLE was conveyed to the station house where he was attended by Dr. MORRISSY. While the doctor was dressing the wound, O'TOOLE became unconscious, and his pulse almost ceased to beat. The doctor thought the man was dying and had a priest summoned. Dr. LOUGHRAN came in person and administered the last rites of the Catholic Church to the supposed dying man. After diligent working the doctor brought O'TOOLE back to consciousness, when he was removed to his home. Mrs. WALSH was arrested this morning.

It is possible Dr. Morrissy worked at the Brooklyn State Hospital, located at Nassau Street and Jay Street, around four miles from 179 Greenpoint Avenue mentioned above. Brooklyn State Hospital included the rather dickensian sounding 1st Alms House and the Poor House and Hospital. Located in the Brooklyn State Hospital was a lower room that served as a police station or lock up. Perhaps Dr. Morrissy worked at the hospital and was on duty the day of the incident on Greenpoint Avenue. In 1886, Dr. Morrissy was appointed Surgeon to the Police Force. This was probably a political appointment as in the same newspaper article that this appears it is noted that Dr. Morrissy was also "a member of the 17th Ward Democratic Association of Brooklyn, NY."

In 1886, Dr. Morrissy and his family lived at 115 Milton Street in the Greenpoint neighbourhood of Brooklyn. Greenpoint is located on the western edge of Long Island, NY. Looking across the East River from Greenpoint, there is a spectacular view of downtown Manhattan. The neighbourhoods in this part of Brooklyn include Long Island City, Astoria, Greenpoint, and Williamsburg. From 1840 to 1860, shipbuilding was the major industry of Greenpoint. Later, it became a residential neighbourhood with factories and commerce. Greenpoint was amalgamated with Brooklyn in 1855.

Milton Street is one street south of Greenpoint Avenue. At the eastern end of Milton is Manhattan Avenue where St. Anthony's Church, constructed in 1874, is located. Due to its close proximity to 115 Milton, St. Anthony's would most likely have been the church the Morrissy family attended.

Today, on Milton Street between Franklin and Manhattan Avenue in Greenpoint, you will find attractive semi-detached single-family dwellings; some have large Bay windows on the second floor and a semi-enclosed balcony on the top, third floor. Brownstone houses can be found on Greenpoint Avenue and Kent Street. Greenpoint Avenue and Franklin, near where the Morrissys lived, now seem to be comprised of old three and four story industrial buildings; on street level some of the stores are boarded or closed. There are also three story apartment buildings.

Dr. William Morrissy died in 1898, in his early-fifties. Sue McWilliam points out that William Morrissy's brother John Veraker Morrissy mentions him in an 1899 letter to their other brother Frank Morrissy in Minnesota: "Bill died of liver complaints and Bright's disease and dropsy or a complication of diseases probably of liver complaint." Sue notes that "Brights disease is kidney disease, dropsy is edema—maybe he was diabetic."

Notes:

A copy of Dr. William Morrissy's letter to his uncle Laurence Morrissey and John Veraker Morrissy's letter of 1899 to his brother Frank may be read in the Appendices of the Morrissey Family History website.

The 1882 article on Dr. Morrissy can be found at www.bklyn-genealogy-info.com. This is an excellent site for genealogical and historical information on Brooklyn, NY.

Some of the above information on Greenpoint is from Frank Dmuchowski who grew up in that neighbourhood; information on Greenpoint, including photographs of the community taken by Frank Dmuchowski, can be seen at www.greenpt.com.

WWW.MORRISSEYFAMILYHISTORY.COM :
LETTERS, INFORMATION, & WEBSTATS:

My husband came across your website while looking up information re: Frank Morrissey. He was my grandfather, although I never knew him.

My mother was Patsy Morrissey, the only child of Frank and Eve (Dubois). Patsy (Pat) married Peter Robb of Montreal and there were four children. Twin boys, Francis Donald and Peter David, Christopher Michael and Patricia Joanne (me).

I will send my brothers the information from your web-site. They will be so pleased to find out so much information about our mother and her family. My husband and I tried to get information about Frank through the Montreal Canadienne organization. We were referred to Bob Morrissey of the Montreal Gazette who we wrote to, but did not receive a reply. Many months later I received a letter from his mother, with pictures of her and some of the Morrissey family.

If you would like pictures and information about Eve Dubois, Patsy (my mother) or of myself and my brothers, please e-mail us and we will be glad to send them to you.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Patty Ferrari

Grateful thanks for suggesting that I check the Montreal phone book in the search for my great uncle Charlton's family.

I found an M Charlton in St Antoine Street and wrote in the hope there might be a link. To my great delight, it was Mark Charlton—grandson of Art Charlton—who forwarded the letter to his grandmother — daughter-in-law of my long lost Uncle Peter.

She kindly wrote a long letter enclosing photographs and I've since replied with copies of certificates, emigration details, photos, etc.

It has taken more than two years to finally trace our family, so thank you once again for your help.

With best wishes from

Sheila Fermor Clarkson
England

The following appeared in the Lorraine Gosselin's informative "Computree" column of the December 2003 issue of *Connections*, Journal of The Quebec Family History Society (please see <http://www.cam.org/~qfhs/index.html>):

Morrissey Family History

Well-known Montreal poet and teacher (and QFHS member) Stephen Morrissey has created a site you will want to visit, even if you have no Morrissey ancestors. We rarely include personal family sites in Computree, but this one is different in its concept. Although genealogical information is included, it is presented in the form of a book. Well-selected and positioned photos are used in a very effective way to frame the story: Old family photos, as well as contemporary ones of tombstones, family homes, historical plaques, serve to illustrate his material. People contemplating writing their own family history will find many good ideas at www.morrisseyfamilyhistory.com. To read more about Stephen, consult his personal site at www.stephenmorrissey.ca.

(Please note: The design and layout of both sites is the work of our Webmaster, Jake Morrissey. SM)

Webstats:

Since the site came on-line in mid-July, 2003 to the beginning of December, 2003, there have been over 1600 individual visits to the site and over 12,000 hits. In July the daily average number of visitors was four; by early December there had been on average over fifteen visitors per day. Webstats haven't been available since December 5th, 2003.

I would like to wish you all a Happy New Year for 2004!

Stephen Morrissey

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