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Welcome to the Fair!



Tower of Jewels

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The Journal of Local History

surrendered to Britain. With his wife and children in 1825, William, Dennis's father, set off for Dublin to seek refuge in what was once called New France, now known as Quebec.

Dublin fairly choked with those wishing to emigrate, some across the Irish Sea to Liverpool, but others on to the New World, where they shared something with the French besides their religion, namely a hatred for the English. Ships arrived in Dublin with Canadian lumber, and ship owners, seeking to make use of the otherwise empty return voyage, sold passage to the would-be immigrants. In 1825, William gained fares to Quebec for his family. The weeks-long voyage was perilous. Passengers were squeezed into airless holds with no privacy, too few buckets for sanitation, and too little water. Many were sick before they even boarded. Shipboard death from intestinal pestilence was always prevalent. Ships sailed up the Riviere de Canada (the St. Lawrence River) into the colony. Immigrants were put ashore in Quebec City, which retained the original French name. Passengers were quarantined and processed into the colony called Lower Canada, so named because it was on the downstream (lower) part of the seaway. The overload of new immigrants brought along Europe's cholera outbreak.

Martin took his family southwest to where other Irish had settled in Quebec around a farming town called Frampton. Those immigrants able to avoid illness and death had to sort out how to survive in this new land. Frampton, Quebec, is situated in rolling terrain between two rivers flowing northward. The region is still composed of small settlements. Spaced fifty miles through wilderness to the east is upper Maine, a hilly area that has remained desolate and mostly unsettled. (Frampton is two hundred miles north of Bangor, Maine.) The cold season in that part of Quebec lasts from December into March, with daily high temperatures rarely above freezing. By contrast, due to the warm North Atlantic current, King's County, Ireland, where the Martins had lived, had been much more temperate, even though at a higher latitude.

A quarter of Frampton's Irish came from County Wexford, located in the southwest corner of Ireland. One of the village's leaders was Martin Murphy Sr., who had emigrated from Wexford with his wife and seven children in 1820. His oldest son and his oldest daughter had remained on the Murphy farm until it could be sold years later when Martin Murphy Jr. turned twenty-one. [To avoid confusion with the Martin family, Murphy Sr. and Jr. and used from hereon.] In 1831, Murphy Jr. met and married Mary Bulger. A year later their son was born.



Dennis Martin and Frampton

By Bo Crane

In 1846, Irish immigrant Dennis Martin purchased land on the north bank of San Francisquito Creek at the base of Jasper Ridge. He arrived two years earlier over the Sierra with his father, William, brother Patrick, and married sister Ann. On his property, Dennis established a ranch, built a church, and created a cemetery. In the nearby redwoods, he purchased additional land and began a lumber business by operating two sawmills. By 1856, the lumber market had crashed and his ranchland title was threatened and ultimately lost as part of an underlying Mexican land grant dispute. Martin died employed as a laborer and broke in San Francisco in 1890. Some sixty-five years earlier as a five-year-old boy, he had emigrated from Ireland with his parents, two brothers and three sisters.

Dennis Martin's family was from a farming hamlet called Thomastown, just south of Black Castle Bog, King's County. In 1802, the Grand Canal was completed from Dublin to nearby Edenberry. Barge workers and travelers carried news of a better life available across the Atlantic in North America. The cheapest fares were to Canada, which had been settled long ago by the Catholic French but had since been

Marriages and baptisms were conducted in Sainte-Marie-de-la-Nouvelle-Beauce. The Irish were foreigners in a foreign land dominated by French settlers and influences.

The Murphy family had sons and daughters of similar ages to the Martin second generation. In a few years, the next oldest Murphy brother, thirty-year-old James, married eighteen-year-old Ann Martin, William's youngest daughter (and Dennis's younger sister). The couple named their first child and son Martin, which represented the first name of both of the baby's grandfathers and the mother's maiden name. The boy did not survive Quebec, taken by cholera along with two other grandchildren, daughters of Murphy Jr. The bodies were buried in Frampton's Cimetiere Saint-Edouard.

Frampton was co-founded by Pierre-Edouard Desbarats, born in Quebec in 1764 of French parents. He worked as a French translator for the Quebec Gazette, which brought him a career as a printer. Later he became translator for the House of Assembly as well as deputy clerk, and in 1806 was granted 11,000 acres south of Quebec City on the Riviere Etchemin. After the War of 1812, land grants were given to Canadian soldiers as reward for British military service. However, many soldiers had no use for trackless forest and so were willing to sell their parcels. At that time, in order to reduce private land speculation, the colonial government was willing to grant townships to associations of individuals. Desbarats joined with William and Gilbert Henderson, nearby grantees originally from the Shetland Islands, to create a Frampton Township in 1815. William Henderson, a scholar and man of letters, most likely named the new township after Mary Frampton, a renowned writer of the day, then forty-two years old. "Mary Frampton" was also the subject of an epitaph by English poet, John Dryden, 1631–1700, who wrote a poem regarding the tomb monument of "a fair minded lady" who died in Bath, 1698. As road and bridge commissioner for Dorchester County, Desbarats had a bridge built between the Frampton Township and the village of Sainte-Marie-de-la-Nouvelle-Beauce, known locally as Sainte-Marie. The Frampton cemetery is named Cimetiere Saint-Edouard. St. Edward the Confessor was an English king, one of the country's national saints until St. George was adopted as the patron saint of England. Sainte-Marie, near Frampton, is now the county seat of Nouvelle Beauce, which was previously named Dorchester County. The county remains predominantly French speaking. Beauce is a region in France immediately south of Paris.

The Frampton Township developed as a result. In 1840, Frampton had three Irish families for every English-Scottish family. By 1844, all 1,662 inhabitants were Irish. Now, in the twenty-first century, the Irish community has vanished due to migration to New England, western Canada, and the western United States and assimilation into French Canadian culture.

The lands around Frampton, situated between two rivers, were malaria-ridden as well. Having lived near bogs back home, the Irish chose higher grounds around Frampton, which turned out to be rockier than the low ground and poor for farming. Besides the difficult soil, living in the French-dominated countryside did not suit all the Frampton Irish. Several chose to settle in what was called Upper Canada, meaning upstream on the north side of the St. Lawrence River, due west in what is now Ontario. Murphy Sr.'s grandson was born near Toronto in April 1840 to Thomas and Margaret Murphy Kell, who was named their baby Martin in the grandfather's honor. In 1841, discontented with the harsh Quebec climate and poor soil around his farm, Murphy Sr. traveled with his wife and unmarried children into Upper Canada. (Most versions of the Murphy-Martin story skip over this part).

In 1841, Ontario was not yet organized as a province and so Simcoe County did not yet exist. Margaret Murphy Kell's married in-laws were James Gugins and Jane Ann Kell. James Gugins had been born of Irish parents in Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1778, during the Revolutionary War. His family moved into Canada in 1782. A member of the Royal Canadian Volunteers, Gugins married in 1801 and was granted two hundred acres above the Niagara peninsula in 1802.

Apparently widowed and childless, in 1819, he married seventeen-year-old Jane Ann Kell, from Durham, England, in Quebec City's Holy Trinity Anglican Church. They settled in Sainte-Marie, where Jane gave birth to fifteen children, with ten recorded with death dates as well as birth dates, the others presumably dying in infancy. In 1837, a rebellion began in predominantly French Lower Canada (Quebec) against the colonial British government. With his wife pregnant once more, Gugins moved into Upper Canada to the village of Tosorontio in Upper Canada (now part of Ontario). Tosorontio means "Beautiful Mountain" in the language of the Huron, a tribe that lived in the region south of their namesake lake, and who were often in conflict with the Iroquois. Their daughter Hannah was born in Tosorontio in September 1838. The rebellion, which spread to English Upper Canada in 1838, ultimately resulted in the 1840 Union Act, which united both Upper and Lower Canada colonies, granting each more political

representation. Canada became a province in 1841. Seven more children would be born to the couple, making a total of twenty-three births, with four of the Ontario-born children with death dates listed. James died at age eight in 1858. His wife died eight years later at age sixty-five.

In Frampton, Margaret Murphy, the oldest Murphy daughter, met Thomas B. Kell Jr., born in 1804 in Durhamshire, England. His father, Thomas Sr., born in 1775, had taken the family to Canada in 1816 but had died in 1827 in Frampton, killed by a falling tree. Seventeen-year-old Margaret Murphy and twenty-four-year-old Thomas married in 1828. In 1829, their son Thomas J. was born and their daughter Ann in 1834. In 1839, Thomas Jr. moved his family to Ontario along with his brother George Kell, joining their sister Jane Kell Gugins and her husband. In 1840, Thomas and Margaret's son Martin D. Kell was born. (The previous is based largely on Dennis McLane's framptonirish.com. He concludes as follows: "In 1841, Martin Murphy and his family left Frampton for an area in Ontario. It seems that their first stop must have been the area around Toronto where his daughter was residing. Traveling with the Martin Murphy group also were James Enright, Thomas Enright, Mary Enright, William Martin, Dennis Martin, Patrick Martin, James Miller, John Sullivan, Robert Sullivan, Mary Sullivan and Michael Sullivan." Under a chronology listed, McLane states that in 1841: "Several Irish families leave Frampton. They first go to Simcoe County, Ontario. Then several went onto Holt County, Missouri.")

Murphy Sr.'s son-in-law James Miller, also from Wexford, had married Mary Murphy in Frampton. James Sullivan, from County Limerick. Sullivan, not yet twenty, was responsible for his younger sister and brothers, as their parents had died from one of the area's scourges (cholera or malaria). Brothers Murphy Jr. and James Murphy each had their own farms and stayed behind, as did their sister Johanna, married to Patrick Fitzgerald and raising her own family. William Martin also followed Murphy Sr., taking along his sons Dennis and Patrick. William had watched his wife, Mary, die in Frampton around 1841. (John Edmonds stated in "The Town of Searsville" that Mary Martin died of cholera.) William's daughter Ann Martin Murphy stayed behind with her husband James, as did his other two daughters. Elizabeth, William's oldest, had married Michael Walsh in 1832. Her younger sister, Catherine, was yet unmarried and may have stayed behind with her older sister as well.

Whatever visions Murphy Sr. had of the area north of Toronto were not enough for him to stay. The Irish were still seen as lower class in the eyes of the British government, for which Canada was still a distant colony. Not far south was the United States, a place that two generations earlier had broken ties with Great Britain. Murphy Sr. led his Irish friends and neighbors in 1841 across the border into the United States. The former collection of British colonies was still a young nation, said to offer opportunity and religious freedom, as well as latitudes of better climate. Waves of Irish immigrants, who had accepted the cheaper fare across the Atlantic to Canada, had already continued their journey to the new nation.

The Martins and the Murphys crossed into the United States near Niagara Falls into Buffalo. Steamboats at that time carried passengers across Lake Erie to Cleveland, down the Erie Canal, opened in 1825, to the Ohio River and from there past Cincinnati and Louisville and then up the Mississippi to St. Louis, all bustling ports benefitting from the river commerce. The Irish families of Frampton finally settled in western Missouri near the Missouri River on bottomland, where their settlement of farms became known as Irish Grove. Poor soil and continued pestilence, which took the life of Murphy Sr.'s wife and Murphy Jr.'s daughter, caused the families to seek land elsewhere. In 1844, the Frampton Irish of Missouri left the United States for a journey across Indian Territory to Alta California, where their Catholicism made them eligible for Mexican citizenship. Having left Ireland, the families had immigrated to three separate countries: the British colony of Canada, the United States, and Mexico, before the settling in California, which in 1846 was annexed by the United States as part of the war with Mexico.

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