

THOMAS and ANNE FENNELL

Thomas and Ann were born and married in Ireland; the specific places are not known but, in a record of baptisms of the parish of Dysart, County Kilkenny, are these:

1838, April 1, Eliza daughter of Thomas and Anne Fennel

1840, April 12, Anne daughter of Thomas and Anne Fennel

1842, May 22, Joseph son of Thomas and Anne Fennel

Although this list does not identify Richard, the oldest child, who is believed to have been born on January 1, 1835, the three that it does identify have the same names (Elizette, Anne and Joseph) as the three next-oldest children of Thomas and Anne. As well, the dates of baptism are reasonable with respect to the dates of birth of those three children of Thomas and Anne, as we know them, that is, March 20, 1837; February 19, 1839; and 1841 (day and month unknown). Accordingly it may well be that these were three of the children of the family that emigrated to Montague township, Lanark county, Ontario, Canada.

As well, among the marriage bonds of Ossary, Ferns and Leighlin (dioceses which include some or all of the counties of Carlow, Kilkenny, King's, Queen's, Wexford and Wicklow) is that of Anne Fennell and Thomas Fennell in 1835. Whether or not these were Thomas and Anne referred to above is unconfirmed.

On the back of a photo of Ann is the notation that her name was Mary Ann; nowhere else does that name appear. (Still, there is conjecture that her maiden name may have been 'Rose'.)

In "Walsh Heritage", a history of Walsh County, North Dakota, the date of the family's immigration into Canada is recorded as 1845. Only Division 3 of the 1851/52 census of the Township of Montague, Lanark County, Ontario, survives. It was recorded by John Nowlan in January 1852 and covers concessions 7, 8, 9 and 10. There the family first appears as "Fenlen", Thomas and Ann and seven children, of whom Richard, "Isetta" (Elizette, obviously), Ann and Joseph were born in Ireland, Mary, John and Rebecca in Ontario.

Thomas' farm was initially on lot 9, concession 10. Thomas received the patent to that property, the southwest quarter consisting of 50 acres, on April 6, 1858. The 1861 and 1871 censuses show them to have moved to lot 7, concession 7, but it was not until September 3, 1878 that they obtained legal title to 100 acres there. An 1863 map of Montague Township shows the family living on lot 9, concession 7 and the concession 10 lot to be unoccupied. (Since there is no other reference to lot 9, it may well be that an error was made in locating the family on the map). The map shows an Orange Hall and a school house situated on lot 9.

In the 1851/52 census Thomas was described as a labourer. They were of the Church of England, their home was a 'shanty' and none of the children attended school. By 1863 the map showed a school located on concession eight about two miles away. An agricultural

census was prepared but Thomas' name did not appear on it; but he was not a farmer. In fact life for the Fennells and their neighbours must have been difficult. The enumerator inserted the following brief note on the last page:

"There is no factories what soever in those four concessions the people in general is very poor the most part of them gets their living by working out in the winter and raising a little crop in the summer them that dont work out strives to make out their wants by getting out a little fire wood or hemlock bark or Cooper stuff to ---?--- the falls or to Merricks. I do not think there is 10 families from No 1 to 20 in the four concessions that could live by the crop they could raise on the farm but from 20 to Emsley the land is something better and the people is better of in general and as for water there is none except a few springs that comes from the swamp Very few weeks and then is pretty dry from July until the rain comes in the fall" (Note: the "falls" is a reference to Smiths Falls and "Merricks" to Merrickville)

From the Montague censuses of 1851, 1861, 1871 and 1881 the family group can be identified as follows:

		<u>Ages</u>				<u>Comment</u>
<u>Born</u>		<u>1851</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>	<u>1881</u>	
Fennell, Thomas	(Ire)	40	48	55	61	
" , Ann	(")	36	46	55	58	
" , Richard	(")	14	23	m.	m.	m.1869
" , Elizette	(")	11	20	?	m.	m. ?
" , Ann	(")	9	18	?	m.	m.1874
" , Joseph	(")	7	16	27	-	Dakota
" , Mary	(Mont)	5	14	23	?	died. ?
" , Rebecca	(")	4	12	21	24	
" , John	(")	4	10	19	-	Dakota
" , Jane	(")		8	14	m.	m.1874
" , Thomas H	(")		6	16	-	Dakota
" , Hezekiah	(")		3	12	20	
" , Susanna	(")		-	9	18	

By 1861 Thomas was listed as a farmer; the family's home was a one-story log building. Two of the children, Elizette and Joseph, were away from home and four, Mary, Rebecca, John and Jane, were in school. T.H. (i.e. Thomas Henry) and Hezekiah were 6 and 3 years old respectively but there was another name on the roster, Sarah. She was identified as a family member but no age was given. Susanna is thought to have been born on January 22, 1862 and the enumerator filed his report on February 5, 1861 so, initially, it would seem that it was not she. Still, there is no word of another child and the better course would be to assume that Susannah was actually born in 1861 and that she was only a few days old when the enumeration was done. That would reasonably explain the enumerator's failure to insert an age for Sarah Susanna.

By 1861 Thomas' circumstances had changed a great deal. He now was recorded as having 250 acres, part on lot 9, concession 7 and part on lot 7, concession 10; he had 57 acres in crop and 11 in pasture.

Thomas Henry, Joseph and John were enumerated in the North Dakota census of 1880. By 1885 they had been joined by their parents and by Hezekiah and Susanna leaving Richard, Elizette (?), Ann, Rebecca and Jane (and perhaps Mary) in the east.

According to the 1900 census of North Dakota, Joseph and John immigrated into the United States in 1879, Hezekiah in 1882. On April 25 and May 30, 1882, Thomas and Ann sold their two properties in Montague Township and became pioneers for the second time. Susanna would have been the other family member to have emigrated at that time.

Thomas homesteaded in Pulaskie Township, Walsh County. Specifically, his homestead was on S1/2 SW1/4 of section 12, township 156, range 51 and on lots 1, 2, and 3 of that section. His farm lay on the edge of the Red River, his house on its bank. The separate lots were river lots, irregular in shape because of the meandering of the river and generally of small acreage. On the northern edge of his farm, also on the bank of the Red River, was the farm of John Weir.

On July 12, 1888, Thomas paid \$4 for the Final Receivers Receipt which was the balance of the payments required for entry onto his homestead and on September 24, 1889 he was granted his Homestead Patent, certificate #1634.

Thomas died in Walsh County on January 22, 1890 at the age of 75 years. Ann survived him; her name appeared as the petitioner for probate before the Probate Court of Walsh county on February 11, 1890 with hearing set for March 7, 1890 in Grafton. The will was said to relate to both real and personal property and named the heirs-at-law and the next-of-kin. The notice of hearing was published in the Minto Journal. Thomas' will directed that his property would go to "...my good and faithful wife Ann Fennell during her natural lifetime"; if she predeceased John, the property would fall to him. It would seem that it was John who had remained with his parents on their farm and who was intended to inherit eventually.

The heirs-at-law were identified as:

Ann	Fennell,	73	Walsh County,	
Richard	Fennell,	53	North Gower,	Ontario
Lizette	Burrows,	51	Walsh County	
Joseph	Fennell,	48	Walsh County	
Rebecca	Griffith,	36	North Ford (?),	Ontario
John	Fennell,	34	Walsh County	
Jane	Hawkins,	32	Carleton Place,	Ontario
Thomas H	Fennell,	30	Walsh County	
Hezekiah	Fennell,	28	Walsh County	
Susanna	Weir,	25	Walsh County	

Two children were missing from this list, Ann and Mary. Ann had died a few years earlier and, without any evidence, Mary is believed to have died as well.

Ann, Thomas' widow, died on March 19, 1894 at the age of 78 years. Upon her death the farm passed under Thomas' will to John.

Thomas and Ann were buried in a now-abandoned cemetery at the south east corner of section 30 of Acton Township. At one time there was a church on that corner, Methodist according to "Walsh Heritage" but "Evangelical" according to the 1893 Plat Book of Walsh County; perhaps both. It appears as though the church was located on the corner and the graves had extended in a single row beside the church from the road to the rear of the lot. The church was removed at some time before 1928 and only the strip where the graves are located remains uncultivated.