

**William Murdoch 1795-1865 and Margaret Nixon 1807-1883  
County Monaghan, Ireland to North Carolina**

The May 19, 1829 *Belfast News Letter*, and numerous other publications, announced the marriage of William Murdoch, age 34, and Margaret Nixon, age 22.

On the 14th inst. in St. Mary's Church, Dublin, by the Rev. W. J. Purdon, WILLIAM MURDOCH of Annaroe, County Tyrone, Esq. to MARGARET, second daughter of James Nixon, of Glasslough, County of Monaghan, Esq.

The fathers of the newly-weds, Robert Murdoch 1751-1838 and James Nixon 1769-1842, were long-time acquaintances and both worked as land agents for the Leslie Estates. The Leslie family, of the landed gentry class, owned thousands of acres in the counties of Monaghan, Tyrone and Donegal. Their family seat was Castle Leslie in Glaslough. In 1822, 27-year-old William Murdoch took over his father's position.



William brought Margaret home to the townland of Annaroe, located about one and a half miles northeast of Glaslough, just over the River Blackwater, in County Tyrone. Annaroe, also spelled Annaghroe, was among the landholdings of the Earl of Caledon.

The townland encompassed 147 acres. A tree-lined drive led the way to Annaghroe House. To the south, the Farm Yard included a barn, well, orchards and gardens. The perimeter of the townland was open meadowland. The road leading south to Glaslough and north to Caledon crossed River Blackwater at Annaghroe Bridge.

By all accounts, the house was a large, rambling structure. William would build a state-of-the-art cattle barn, which included a cistern for watering livestock and a second-floor hay loft.

<https://maps.nls.uk/view/246840415>

If the Murdoch family could parachute in from the great beyond, they would recognize their Irish homeland. An overhead view of Annaroe using Google Earth shows little change to the land. Though the buildings have turned to ruins, most of the walls stand and it's easy to discern the footprints of the house and cattle barn.

In addition to his job as a land agent and accountant for the Leslie family and a few other wealthy landholders, William was a justice of the peace, served on grand juries and was an appointed magistrate. He served as secretary of the Emyvale and Glaslough Dispensary and the Trough Baronial Fever Hospital. William founded the Trough Farming Society.

**TO BE LET.**  
**Lead Mines, County of Monaghan.**

**T**HE Rich and Extensive LEAD MINES of Muckno, Clontibut, and Ballybay, situate in the Barony of Cremorne, and County of Monaghan, on the Estate of Lord Viscount TEMPLETOWN. These Mines are situated in a populous part of the country, where labour is cheap, and which abounds in excellent roads. The ore contained in the Mines is peculiarly rich, and, from the situation of the Mines, can be obtained with facility, without the aid of expensive machinery.

They will be Let together, or separately, as may suit the views of the persons proposing for them.

Apply to WILLIAM MURDOCH, Esq. ANNAROE, near GLASSLOUGH, (if by letter, post-paid,) by whom proposals will be received, and who will furnish any further information that may be required.

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1st August, 1836.

William was a member of a committee starting up The Ulster Fire and Insurance Company. Another startup was establishment of a coach route between Monaghan and Belfast (seven hours in a four-horse coach).

For a time, William was a land agent for Lord Viscount Templetown. Here is William brokering a lead mine on behalf of Lord Templetown.

An 1839 valuation of property in Co. Monaghan reveals that William Murdoch owned four mills, under lease from the Leslie Estate: a linen mill in Drumbanagher, a corn mill in Emyvale, a flour mill in Killycooly known as Emy Mill, and a flax mill in Mullan. More about the mills in a few pages.

Around 1836, William concentrated on improving the breed of cattle in Ireland, particularly short-horned Durhams. To this end, he went to Scotland in 1837 and purchased a bull named Bampton, said to be the "finest animal ever imported into this country." Bampton did his duty and won prizes at all the fairs. The 9-19-1840 *Northern Standard* reported on the Trough Farming Society cattle show and had this to say:

*A few years since, a Durham cow, or any such animal, over the value of £10 or £12, was hardly known in the neighborhood; but now, we are happy to say, that almost every farm in Trough can turn out a stock of cattle fit to adorn the domain of the proudest aristocrat. This beneficial change is altogether owing to the exertions of Mr. Murdoch, of Annaroe, who, in order to improve the breed in the country, embarked a large capital in the trade, and, by the most approved management of his stock, convinced the farmers around him, by the forcible argument of the great profits he realized, that a good stock, though at first dearly purchased, eventually yielded a larger return: or--to use his own trite expression--"if good stock won't pay, it can't be expected that bad will."*

*The first prize--a silver vase--was adjudged to Wm. Murdoch, Esq., for the best Thorough-bred Bull, that gentleman having exhibited that wonderful animal, Bampton, decidedly the finest specimen ever seen in this country, weighing upward of 25cwt., which, we understand, he is about exporting for America.*

Bampton was exported to Port Gibson, Mississippi and, additionally, William sent sheep, swine and Durham cattle to Maryland, Kentucky and Tennessee.

In April of 1841, William sold his Durham cattle. The auction was widely advertised: *To say any thing of the excellence of his Stock is unnecessary, as it is universally known Mr. Murdock has bred them with the greatest care, having spared no expense to procure the purest Blood in Great Britain.*

The auctioneer provided a "long car" to transport attendees from Simcox's Hotel in Drogheda to Annaroe.



5-8-1841 *The Drogheda Argus*

*The great Sale of Thorough-bred Short Horns came off on Friday the 23<sup>rd</sup>, at the Farm Yard of William Murdock. It is long indeed (if ever) since even the beautiful and picturesque Lands of Annaroe had witnessed such a vast assemblage of noble and distinguished visitors, many of whom had come from remote parts of the county, to purchase some of this unequalled Stock.*

*On the road to the Murdoch auction.*

*The Cattle Shed, recently erected and altogether planned on a most economical and judicious construction, was the subject of universal admiration and enquiry. It stands upon the summit of a loft hill, overlooking one of the most exhilarating prospects which eye ever reposed on--it is built in similitude of the Ark, or of a Rotundo shape, being 60 feet in the base and tapering to about 6 feet at its apex. An interior circular wall at a distance of 18 feet from the exterior one, forms on the centre a most commodious and extensive laboratory in which the victuals, principally consisting of cut Turnips, are prepared by one man, who from the ingenious though simple contrivances of this novel Cattle Shed, is enabled with perfect ease and celerity, to supply upwards of 50 head of Cattle. A large cistern stands in the very centre, over a Well, from which on the turn of a cock, the Cattle are refreshed with clear and wholesome drink, sprinkling direct to them from the bowels of the earth. The loft erected is capable of containing the produce of 20 acres of Hay, which by an open Stair-case running up through the centre, is, at all times, well ventilated and kept in the sweetest possible state for feeding.*

*From the top of this Rotunda, the eye surveys a vast and almost boundless prospect, commanding the rich scenery of the counties of Armagh, Monaghan, and Tyrone, which afforded a treat of no inconsiderable interest to the crowds of spectators, who flocked to witness this sale.*

The reporter's enthusiasm knew no bounds and he went on to describe the cattle and the bidding process. In the end, the auction was a great success. Sixty-eight head sold for £2,000. Three lots of cattle and a bull named "Prince Albert" were destined for export to America.

## Sales.

### COUNTY OF TYRONE.

To be peremptorily Sold by AUCTION, at ANNAROE,  
(within 8 miles of Armagh, and 1 of Glasslough,) on  
MONDAY, the 1st of AUGUST next, and following  
Days,

**T**HE Entire STOCK of Thorough-Bred DURHAM  
CATTLE and LEICESTER SHEEP. HOUSE-  
HOLD FURNITURE, FARMING UTENSILS, HAY,  
CROPS of BARLEY, FLAX, POTATOES, and  
MEADOW,

#### THE PROPERTY OF M<sup>r</sup> MURDOCK.

##### THE STOCK

consists of a number of splendid Milch Cows, a 2-years'-  
old Bull, a number of 1-year-old Bulls and Heifers, and  
splendid Calves, of this year. The Sheep are bred from  
the best Stock in England.

##### THE DRAWING-ROOM FURNITURE

consists of an 8-Octave London-built PIANO, by Clementi,  
nearly new; a Nelson Couch, Window Curtains, and  
Drapery, of best Rose-coloured Damascus; Chairs, round  
pillars and claw; Sofa and Ladies' Work Tables; Book  
Cases and Cabinets; Carpets, Fenders, Fire-irons, &c.

##### IN THE PARLOUR,

a Set of Dinner Tables, 14 feet by 5, in good order; a  
Sideboard; 18 Mahogany Chairs; Window Curtains and  
Drapery, of Scarlet Damask Morocco; Carpet, Fender,  
Fire-irons, &c.

##### IN BED-ROOMS,

several Carved Mahogany Bedsteads, with the best Bed-  
ding; Palliass, Counterpanes, Blankets, &c.; Mahogany  
Dressing Tables, Wash-hand Stands, Commodes, Ward-  
robe Tallboys, Drawers, Looking-Glasses, Bed and Win-  
dow Curtains, Chairs, &c.

##### IN THE HALL,

a Stove, Barometer, Lamp, Chairs, Hat-Rack, &c.

##### IN THE LIBRARY,

a Mahogany Book Case, Iron Safe, Library Table, with  
Drawers; Letter Press, Stand, and a number of well-  
selected Books.

A quantity of Plate, nearly new, and Plated Ware;  
Drawing-room Lamps; a long Set of Stone China, of  
the best description; Glass, Delf, and a variety of  
Kitchen, Dairy, and other Furniture.

Two JAUNTING-GARS and Two GIGS, in good  
order; a quantity of SADDLES and BRIDLES, HAR-  
NESS, &c., &c.

THE FARMING STOCK AND IMPLEMENTS  
comprehend several Carts, Ploughs, Harrows, a few good  
Draft HORSES, &c., &c.

##### ORDER OF THE SALE:

The contents of the Dairy and Kitchen, and the Furni-  
ture of the Dwelling-house, on MONDAY and TUES-  
DAY. The Stock, Crops, and Farming Implements, on  
WEDNESDAY.

N.B.—Sale to begin at ELEVEN o'Clock, each day.  
Terms, Cash—exempt from Auction Duty. 1065

7-28-1842 *Newry Telegraph*

One year after selling off his prized Durham cattle, William and Margaret auctioned off the rest of their possessions. The Murdoch family was moving to America.

The four day auction at Annaroe started August 1, 1842. The contents show a well-to-do family. Of interest is the Clementi piano and the letter press.

The specific reason for their move to American can only be guessed at.

William leased Annaroe, which was just a small part of the extensive landholdings of whoever was the current Earl of Caledon. The second Earl had died in 1839 and his son, 27-year-old James Du Pre Alexander, was next in line.

Though William "owned" and managed the mills, they were under lease from the Leslie Estate, which was about to transition into the hands of the 21-year-old heir, C. P. Leslie III.

At age 47, maybe William was looking for land ownership and more opportunities for his children.

On October 31, 1842, William signed a Trust Deed (not recorded), leaving his friends Rev. William Smyth, John Johnston and Alexander C. Davison to manage his business interests in Ireland.

In the spring of 1843, the Murdoch family travelled to Liverpool where they boarded the *Hottinguer* for the trip to America.



Advertisements for the packet ship *Hottinguer*, captained by Ira Bursley, advised:

*Its Cabins are elegant and commodious, and are furnished with whatever can conduce to the ease and comfort of passengers. The Rate of Cabin Passage is Twenty-five Guineas, for which all stores are provided, except wines and spirits; these, if required, may be procured from the Steward.*

The ship left Liverpool on May 8, 1843, and arrived in New York City on June 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup>. On board were 19 cabin passengers, around 300 steerage passengers and merchandise, including 50 tons of coal.

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**PASSENGERS :**

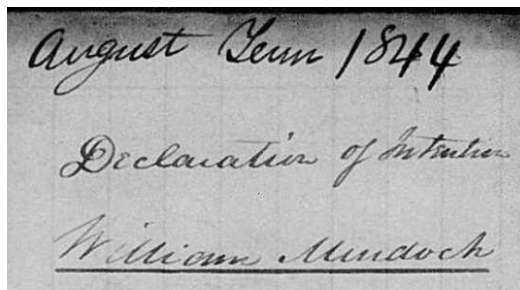
In the packet ship *Hottinguer*, from Liverpool—Mr W Murdock, lady, 3 sons, 3 daughters, 2 servants, of Monaghan, Ireland; Mrs T Cassen, Mr P Richardson, of Wakefield, Eng; Mr E Lloyd, of Birmingham; Mr H Mellen, of New York; Miss E F Wagstaff, of Market Ross; Miss M Stubbs, of Litchfield; Dr John Kirt, lady and daughter, of Moulton, U C.

The 6-19-1843 *Evening Post* (New York) reported the family's arrival. The Murdochs head the passenger list: William (occupation merchant), Margaret, six children (Jane, Robert, James, William, Henrietta and Mary) ages eleven to one, and two servants (Mary Callaghan and Jane

Chambers). Missing is five-year-old Margaret (Daisy) who had been left behind in England to be educated.

From New York City, the family travelled 250 miles west to a small village called Perryville, located in Armagh Township, Mifflin County, Pennsylvania. The early settlers in this area were Scottish and Irish, as reflected by the township name. In 1850, the name of the village would be changed to Milroy.

On May 22, 1844, William went down to the Mifflin County Courthouse in Lewistown to start the naturalization process. He reported he was a native of County Monaghan, Ireland, currently resides in Perryville and is about 49 years old. He migrated from Liverpool on May 8, 1843 and landed in New York on June 17, 1843. He stated his intention was to become a citizen of the United States.



In July of 1844, the two youngest Murdoch children died and were buried in the Milroy Presbyterian Church Cemetery--two-year-old Mary who was aboard the *Hottinguer* and nine-month-old Henry Smyth Murdoch, born four months after the Murdochs arrived in America.

In 1845, the Murdoch family travelled 600 miles south to Asheville, Buncombe County, North Carolina. William acquired a 100 acre tract of land, about a mile north of downtown Asheville, and built a homestead. Here the last three Murdoch children were born--Francis, John and Rollo.

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Read the story of Margaret (Daisy) Murdoch 1838-1917  
<https://ancestorsandothers.net/Murdock.htm>

## William Murdoch's County Monaghan Mills

In 1822, 27-year-old William Murdoch succeeded his father as land agent for Charles Powell Leslie II 1761-1831. William also took on the additional duties of accountant for the estates. After Leslie's death, William worked with the widowed Christiana Leslie. Next in line was Charles Powell Leslie III 1821-1871 who attained his majority in 1842 and took charge of the family holdings. In 1842, William was making preparations to move to America.

Ireland Valuation Records for 1838/1839 reveal William owned four mills encumbered by leases to the Leslie estate. See table and map on the next pages.

- linen mill in Drumbanagher
- corn mill in Emyvale
- flour mill in Killycooly known as Emy Mill
- flax mill in Mullan

The Leslie family papers are archived at the National Library of Ireland. This would be the place to look for interesting details about the mills and William Murdoch, but it's a long way to Ireland for a hands-on rummage through the Leslie papers.

Fortunately, one Anthony Doyle did rummage through the Leslie archives during his research for the 2001 publication *Charles Powell Leslie (II)'s Estates at Glaslough, County Monaghan, 1800-41: Portrait of a Landed Estate Business and its Community in Changing Times*.

Anthony Doyle writes:

"William Murdock succeeded his father as agent for the estates near Glaslough in 1822. He had assisted his father prior to this, in particular when his father was ill in 1818. This experience gave him a good understanding of the work of an agent and particular knowledge with regard to the Leslie estates. He continued the agent's role in a similar manner to his father. The following letter to Leslie of 20 October 1831 is typical of his correspondence."

*There has been a man looking at Emy mill he has offered 50 a year for the mill and four acres of land. He is a miller...and would repair the mill at his own expense...I think as you would be put to no expense further in repairs it would be as advantageous to give it to him. I am draining the bog bottoms near the rear of Cloncaw next Donagh and preparing them to lay them down for meadow...The wheat and Potatos crop is very good the oats but very middling butter and beef is selling very well I think the tenants will pay their rents this year...You will please say what your wishes are about the mill he has offered security in the rent.*

Maybe this report to Mr. Leslie put a thought or two into William's head about running a mill himself.

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Read Anthony Doyle's work here <https://archive.org/details/charlespowellles0000doyl>

Source: Ireland Valuation Records, 1824-1856  
 County Monaghan, Field Books (dimensions and amounts rounded)

<b>Townland Date of Valuation</b>	<b>Name of Occupant &amp; Description</b>	<b>Amount</b>
<b>Glaslough</b> 2-21-1838	<b>William Murdock</b> House, office, & yard	£5
	<b>William Murdock</b> Stores, dilapidated & yard	£4
<b>Drumbanagher</b> (part of Glaslough) 12-1839	<b>William Murdock</b> Linen factory & stores	£34
<b>Emyvale</b> (or Scarnageeragh) 12-1839	<b>William Murdock</b> Corn mill, kilns & stores	£13
<b>Killycooly</b> 1-24-1838  Flour mill known as Emy Mill	<b>Wm Murdoch, Esq.</b> New Mill 81' x 35' x 58.6' Old Mill 59' x 23' x 35' Wheat store 74' x 27' x 35' Blacksmith's Dwelling 17' x 17' x 11' 1 <sup>st</sup> Miller's Dwelling 26' x 17' x 14' Clerk's Dwelling 25' x 17' x 14' 2 <sup>nd</sup> Miller's Dwelling 24' x 17' x 14' Kiln 25' x 27' x 35' Part of old mill 34' x 19' x 35' Basement storg 43' x 37' x 9'	£116
<b>Mullan</b> Errigal-Trough 10-8-1839	<b>William Murdock</b> Spinning factory & houses	£34
<b>Co. Tyrone</b> <b>Lower Dungannon</b> <b>Annaghroe</b> aka Annaroe	Annaghroe was valued in December 1836, but only the land is described.	£161





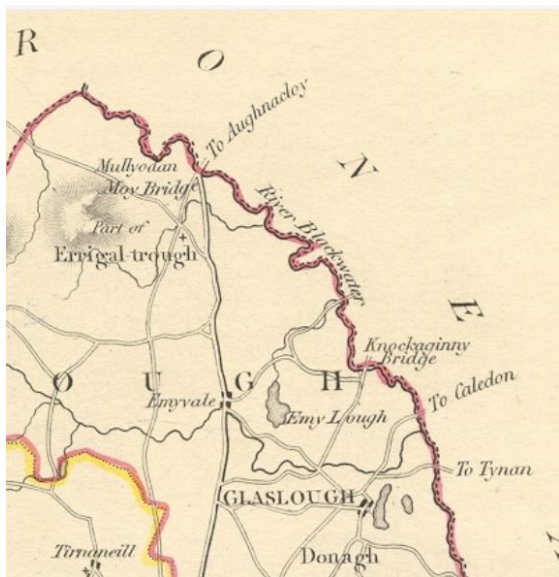


I could find little information about the properties in Glaslough and Drumbanagher. The Griffith's Valuation circa 1860 reports they were unoccupied.

I gleaned an assortment of information from here and there (mostly newspapers and a few leases) about Emyvale Mill, Emy Mill and Mullan Mill.

The 1835 Ordnance Map shows Emyvale Mill on Mountain Water River and Emy Mill and the race just above Emy Lough, but it does not depict Mullan Mill.

The mills are noted in Samuel Lewis's *Topographical Directory of Ireland*, Volume 1, 1837:



Page 464, Donagh: *At Emyvale are mills belonging to William Murdoch, Esq.*

Page 600, Emyvale: *A stream [Mountain Water] descends from the mountains on the west...on its banks is a large flour mill.*

Page 609, Errigal-Trough Parish (Mullan): *A small factory for weaving linen has been recently erected here.*

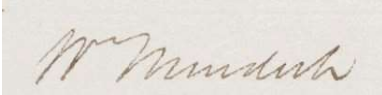

Lewis, Vol. 3, Atlas  
Monaghan County

The preceding chart lists William's properties as recorded in the Ireland Valuation Records, 1824-1856. Following the chart is the one-inch Ordnance Map, Revised 1900, on which I circled the mills and William's home, the townland of Annaghroe.

Ordnance map: <https://maps.nls.uk/view/247942572>

I did spring for one item from the Leslie archives. I had been wondering if William Murdoch, agent for the Leslie estates, was the same William Murdoch who came to America in 1843 and settled in Asheville, North Carolina. They seemed to be one and the same, but you never know. William Murdoch's original will, with a legible, strong signature, is filed in the probate papers of Buncombe County, North Carolina. Maybe I could come up with William's signature in the Leslie archives?

I requested a sample of William's signature from the National Library of Ireland and that resolved the question!

	1832 Ireland Account Statement for Christiana Leslie
	1861 Asheville, NC Last Will & Testament of William Murdoch

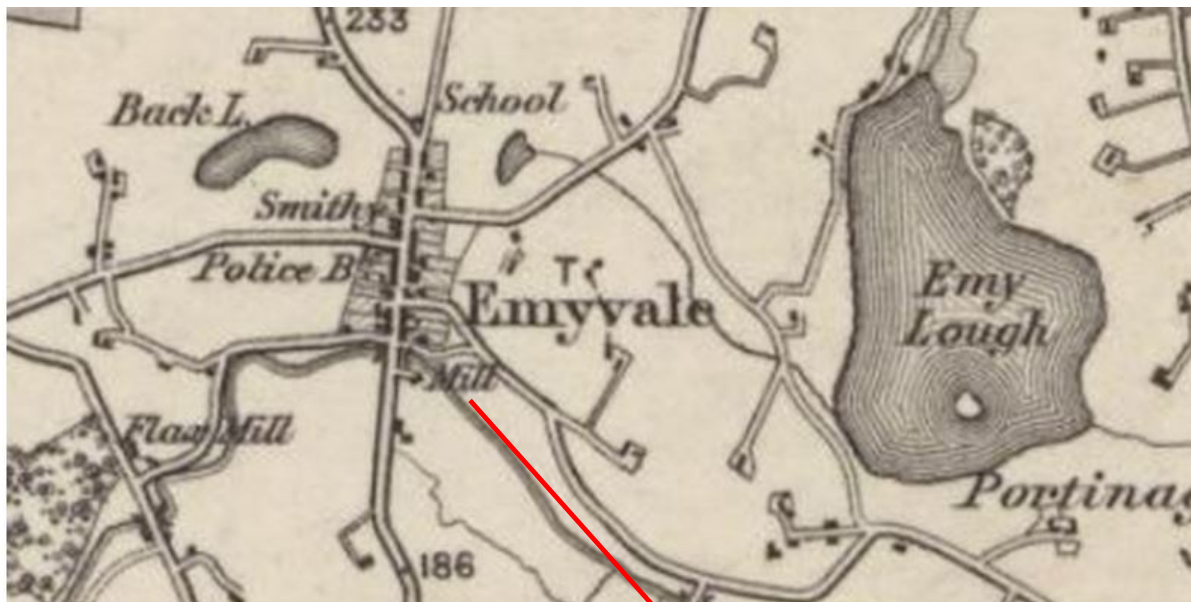
## Emyvale Mill

The mill in Emyvale (or Scarnageeragh) is described in Volume 40 of the *Ordnance Survey Memoirs of Ireland, Counties of Ulster 1834-8*, paraphrased as follows: The mill was owned by Mrs. Leslie and leased by William Murdock. The mill structure was a “good stone house, slated,” built in 1836. The breast-shot water wheel had a diameter of 16 feet, with a breadth of four feet. The wheel was made of wood and metal and drove two pair of stones, one lifting machine, two sets of fans, two screens and four sets of elevators.

On March 1, 1842, by an Indenture of Lease (Book 1842/12-144), William leased the Emyvale corn mill, cottages and water rights to William Smyth of Glaslough for £35 per year. The term of the lease was for the life of William Murdock or 15 years, whichever was the longest. The surprise in this instrument was a witness: Alexander Donaldson of Annaroe, butler to the said William Murdock.

The 1860 Griffith Valuation shows Robert Smyth lessor and Thomas Wright lessee; corn mill, office, land and water; valued at £19.

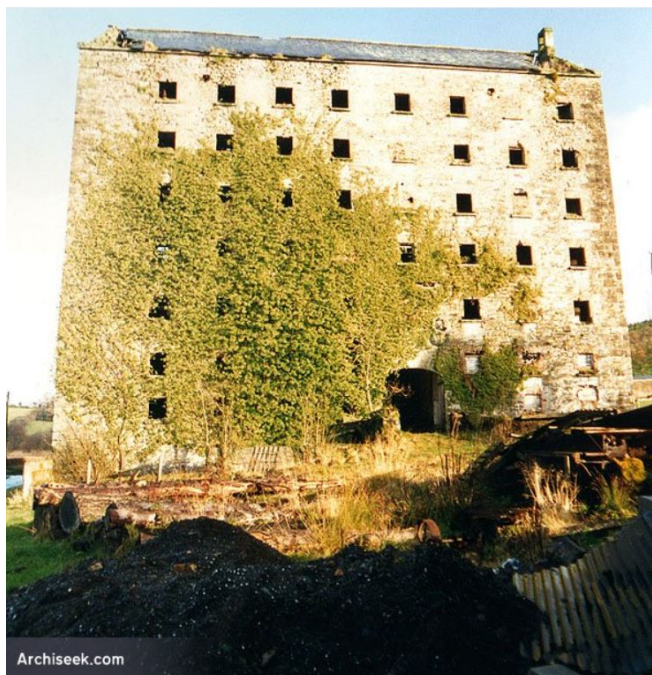
After 1860, it appears that Robert Smyth may have opened a separate mill near Emyvale for spinning flax and he also took charge of Mullan Mill. Too many Smyths/Smiths and too many mills to follow the paper trail of William’s corn mill in Emyvale. Did the lease last the life of William Murdock?



Likely this was William’s corn mill in “downtown” Emyvale on the Mountain Water River.

## Emy Mill

This photo of Emy Mill in Killycooly is posted on the internet by Archiseek.com. A person replying to the post thought the photo was taken in 1993, before the wrecking ball arrived.

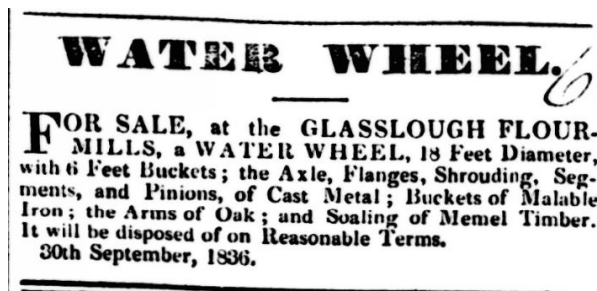


On April 4, 1836, by an Indenture of Lease (Book 1836/6-243), Mrs. Christiana Leslie leased Emy Mill and Mullan Mill to William Murdock of Annaroe, viz:

1. A mill formerly known by the name of Emy Mill and now known by the name of Glasslough Flour Mill.
2. Flax mill erected for the purpose of spinning linen yarn in the townland of Mullan.
3. Together with 10 A of land late Irish plantation measure contiguous with said mills.
4. Also the lake and mill dam known by the name of Emy Lake and Emy Mill Dam.

The term of the lease was 21 years at £200 per year.

The name Glasslough Flour Mill never caught on and the mill continued to be known as Emy Mill. William mentioned Emy Mill in his 1831 report to Mr. Leslie (Page 5) so we know the mill was built pre-1831. The 1839 Valuation reports an old mill and a new mill. Was William responsible for the new construction? Just after he leased Emy Mill, he went right to work on replacing the water wheel.



In 1839, William corresponded with John S. Skinner of Baltimore, Maryland, founder/editor of the *American Farmer*. William arranged to export some Shorthorn cattle, sheep and swine to Baltimore. During their correspondence, William wrote about his flour mills:

*If you would send us a quantity of your good wheat, we could use it, and it would, at market price, pay well enough. I generally get ground at my flour mills two thousand tons of two thousand two hundred and forty pounds per annum, and some years may do double that quantity. I will have to use half that quantity of foreign, to mix with the native wheat, the quality of which is so inferior. I paid last year £18 per ton of 2240 lbs. for nearly two hundred tons.*

On November 25, 1841, William executed a Deed of Surrender (Book 1842/7-62). For a token consideration of ten shillings, William Murdock of Annaroe yielded up to Mrs. Christiana Leslie Emy Mill, Mullan Mill, Emy Lake and Emy Lake Dam.

After William moved to America in 1843, Emy Mill was run by William Villiers Ryan 1811-1865 for about 15 years. Mr. Ryan lived in Lough Emy House, near the mill. Not sure what happened to Mr. Ryan, but in the fall of 1861, Colonel C.P. Leslie auctioned off every last bit of personal property associated with the mill and the house (bags of flour, tons of wheat, carts and gigs, horses, farm implements) to recoup back rents.

In 1867, Leslie's agent advertised Emy Flour Mill for let.

**FLOUR MILL.**

**T**O BE LET, FOR SUCH TERM AS MAY  
be agreed on,  
**EMY FLOUR MILL,**  
Containing 8 pair of French Burr Stones, 5 pair of  
which has hitherto been employed in the manufac-  
ture of Flour; and 3 pair in a separate apartment  
used for the grinding of Indian Corn.  
This Mill is situate near the town of Emyvale, 5  
miles distant from Monaghan, and 3 miles from  
Aughnacloy, both excellent market towns, and  
within 3 miles of Glasslough, a Railway Station on  
the Ulster Line. The supply of water is good, and  
the Mill has been built with due regard to economy  
in the working. A solvent tenant, who will under-  
take to keep the concern in good repair, will be  
liberally dealt with; and for any such desirous of  
getting into the Flour, Indian Corn, or Oatmeal  
Trade, there can be no more eligible situation.  
Further particulars can be had on application to  
**JOHN CUNNINGHAM, Esq., Agency Office,**  
Glasslough. 1310

The next miller, James Clow 1820-1892, rented Emy Mill from Sir John Leslie in 1869. The mill ground flour, oats and Indian corn and Mr. Clow sold a full range of agricultural seeds and feeding stuffs.

At an 1883 exhibition in Cork, J. Clow & Sons reported they annually ground 900 to 1,200 tons of oats into "pinhead oatmeal" for porridge and "fine cut" for bread making.

This very successful business was carried on by the Clow sons until about 1905.

The 1911 census finds James Corrigan 1860-1912, carpenter & sawyer, leasing Emy Mill from Sir John Leslie--three dwellings, a corn mill, a flour mill and a sawmill. Corrigan signed a lease on November 1, 1905 for 21 years at a yearly rent of £30.

In his 1912 will, James Corrigan left the mill to his wife Susan and declared "it is my wish that my children work under their mother's control and authority for the common good of the family." Susan took charge, her seven children, ages 8 to 18, rose to the task, and the mill continued on. *Thom's Commercial Directory of Ireland* for 1958 has a listing for Corrigan Bros., Emy Mills, Emyvale.

**Corrigan Bros., Emy Saw Mills, Emyvale,**  
have made extensive purchases of timber in  
the Glaslough demesne. Their chief output  
is in the wooden parts of farming imple-  
ments, into which this timber is converted,  
in addition to which they make a large num-  
ber of useful articles for general and house-  
hold purposes.

Various sources report that Emy Saw Mill made the wooden parts of agricultural implements, hay rakes, and coffins. The last surviving brother, John M. Corrigan 1903-1974, died at Emy Mills.



## The Flood of 1841

Water to power Emy and Mullan mills came from Emy Lough via a mill race. Here is a report of a flood on March 12, 1841, that affected these two mills during William Murdoch's tenure. The letter, dated March 15, 1841, and published in the *Wexford Independent*, was written by Luke Gibson, Agent for the Earl of Arran in Donegal.

*I have just received an account of one of the greatest inundations which has happened during the memory of the most hoary-headed chronicler, the bursting of the rampart of Emy Lake, within five miles of Monaghan, at nine o'clock on the morning of Friday, the 12<sup>th</sup> instant. This reservoir contained 104 statute acres, and was 14 feet in depth of available water.*



*How awfully terrific must the scene have been, when in the short space of one mile there was 40 feet of a fall to the Blackwater, a river in no way inferior to the Wexford Slaney, which for 16 miles overflowed its banks, and presented to the eye of the astonished spectator a second deluge, carrying desolation on all sides, but more particularly to William Murdock, Esq., an enterprising gentleman, near Glasslough, who is sole proprietor of the flour mills of Emy and spinning machinery of linen yarn and power looms, with a factory for the manufacture of linen cloth, &c. The loss this worthy individual has sustained cannot be estimated at less than £500.*

*The above reservoir contained an available supply of water for six months to work three mills of thirty horse power each.*

When the rampart gave way, the waters of Emy Lough rushed north, flooding Emy Mill, then Mullan Mill. Just north of Mullan Mill, at Figanny Bridge, the water course turned sharply southeast and the flood waters rushed downhill into River Blackwater.

Mr. Gibson, himself, repaired the breach and wrote about it in another letter published in the 6-16-1841 *Wexford Independent*. The hole, 17 feet deep, 40 feet in breadth and 80 feet in thickness, was filled with 831 cubic yards of earth interlined with a clay paste.

It took over a month to effect the repair, but Mr. Gibson made a temporary cut to provide water power to William Murdoch's spinning and flour mills. Mr. Gibson reported William "at present gives daily employment to 700 workmen and mechanics, numbers of whom are in the receipt of from £50 to £100 per annum."

## Mullan Mill

In April of 1836 William Murdoch leased Emy Mill and Mullan Mill from Mrs. Christiana Leslie (Book 1836/6-243 - see Emy Mill for details). At the time of this lease, it's likely Mullan Mill had just been constructed. Mullan Mill is not depicted on the 1835 Ordnance Map, but is mentioned in the 1837 *Topographical Directory of Ireland* ("a small factory for weaving linen has recently been erected here").



It stands to reason that William Murdoch, land agent and accountant for the Leslie family, was the first proprietor of this flax mill. This is a nice claim to fame for Murdoch descendants, especially because this mill complex stands today. Likely there is existing stonework that dates back 190 years!

In November of 1841, William surrendered the lease of Mullan Mill and sailed to America in 1843. Robert Smyth took on the lease as shown in the circa 1860 Griffith's Valuation: one house, an office, workmen's houses, spinning mill and land, valued at £132. Presumably this is the same Robert Smyth of Emyvale Mill.

The end of the Smyth era seems to have come about 1880. At that time, Mullan Mill was leased from the Leslie Estate by a nephew of the same name, Robert Smyth. Nephew Smyth, "a large employer of labour and a gentleman of unexceptional character and position, happened to give slight offence to the then agent." Before he knew it, nephew Smyth received an eviction order. (4-3-1880 *The Peoples Advocate*)

In June of 1881, an auction was held at Mullan Mill which sold off the stuff of decades. The office furniture was auctioned, including brass musical instruments and a 32-inch drum. From the shop were beams and scales, a stove, a coffee mill and a treacle canister. Twelve bedsteads with bedding, tables and chairs, and kettles were cleared out of the lodging house. Contents of the mill and yard were numerous and included five tons of old metal and items ranging from crowbars to hackles and roughers to spinning bobbins. From the machine shop came lathes, saws, boring machine, presses and a barrel of white lead. The list filled a half column in the newspaper.

After clearing out the mill, Mr. Leslie's agent, James McCullagh, placed this 1883 advertisement to lease the Mullan Spinning Mill complex.

**MULLAN SPINNING MILL.**  
**T**O be LET, for such time and terms as may be agreed upon, **MULLAN SPINNING MILL.** In it there are two Steam-engines, which work up to 120 horse-power; three Boilers, with economisers and all necessary furnishings for same; also, a new Iron Water-wheel, twenty-four feet in diameter and twelve feet face. There is a constant supply of water to same. There are also large and commodious offices, manager's, and about forty workers' houses. Mullan Mill is situate in the County of Monaghan, about two miles from Caledon Railway Station, and is in the centre of a good flax-growing district.  
For further particulars apply at the Estate Office, Glasslough, to **JAMES M'CULLAGH, Esq.**  
Glasslough, 18th January, 1883.

The next tenant I know about is R.F. Bullick & Son. Robert F. Bullick 1832-1906 and his wife had an established haberdashery business in Coleraine. Their son James 1867-1951 was the impetus behind the creation of a woolen factory that turned out tweed cloth. They named the cloth Bann Tweed, perhaps because Coleraine is near the River Bann. An 1887 Coleraine newspaper reporter called James "our ingenious and enterprising young townsman" for his entrepreneurship in starting this new venture.

Needing a larger factory, the Bullicks moved to Mullan Mill. The Bullick father and son signed a lease with Sir John Leslie on July 5, 1892 (Book 1892/30-145) for a term of 99 years at a yearly rent of £30. The leased property included Mullan Mill and mill buildings, seven acres, water wheel and steam engine, and all houses, outhouses and buildings. Special instructions were written into the lease for operating the mill race from Emy Lake, taking into account the needs of Emy Mill.

The 1901 census shows James Bullick, woolen manufacturer, his wife Irena, and Robert F. Bullick. Improvements owned by the Bullicks were a cloth factory, grocery store, 12 occupied and 18 unoccupied dwellings. It's not clear who operated the mill after the father Bullick died in 1906.

In 1916 another auction sold off cloth processing machinery. The 99 year lease to Mullan Mill was passed on to Robert Boyd, then to Kenneth and James A. Pringle. There was an "extensive fire" in 1919 during the Pringle tenure.

11-7-1925 *Weekly Irish Times*

**BORDER BOOT FACTORY.**

A year ago Messrs. James P. McKenna and Charles McCluskey, County Council, Monaghan, purchased the village of Mullan, County Monaghan, and the derelict mill, covering an area of some eight acres. Machinery was installed and a boot factory set up, employing eighty hands. About 2,500 pairs of boots are being turned out weekly, and to cope with the growing demand extensions to the factory are being made. The machinery is worked by water-power. A huge turbine gives the power to the mill, lights the factory and the village.

Mullan Mill took a new direction on June 26, 1924, when the Pringles transferred the lease to James P. McKenna and Charles McCluskey (Book 1924/24-257). These local businessmen fit-up the mill for the manufacture of boots.

Charles McCluskey's uncle William McCluskey and his family had been in charge of operating the sluice gate that controlled water to Emy and Mullan mills.

First stanza of "We'll Wander Round by Mullan Mills" by Charlie McCluskey.

*We'll wander round by Mullan Mills,  
Down near the border of Tyrone  
Where snug amongst the pleasant hills,  
The factory stands--Truagh's only one.  
Here men and youths with colleens fair,  
Find work in bright and airy rooms,  
Its progress they all gladly share,  
The factory hums and business booms.*

In 1944 James Boylan & Son purchased the factory and continued making boots and shoes into the 1970s.

The year 2002 brought the start of an astonishing transformation to Mullan when the mill and village were purchased by Michael Treanor. The mill complex now houses a company that designs and manufactures customized lighting fixtures and the mill workers' houses have been renovated into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The area is not so different from what it was in 1840. If William Murdoch came back today, he would probably recognize the lay of the land. The race that flooded his mills is still there and the terraced houses for the workers still stand on either side of the road. But William would probably scratch his head over the solar panels mounted on the newer dwellings!

\* \* \* \*

William Murdoch, 1836:

*My first wish through life has been to endeavor to improve the condition of the humbler classes of my fellow countrymen, and to raise them permanently in the scale of society--not by agitation, not by giving them false notions of themselves, but by devising, what appeared to me, rational plans of improvement, and thus placing within their reach the means of bettering their own condition, by honest industry, whilst, at the same time, they contributed to increase the wealth and comfort of our common country.*

William's mills in County Monaghan provided employment to hundreds. When he reached Asheville, North Carolina, in 1845, the first thing he did was build a sawmill. During the Civil War, William and his son William H. Murdoch, MD opened a cigar factory, aimed toward providing employment for 40 to 50 women. William's son, Rev. Francis J. Murdoch continued along in the same vein. It is said wherever Rev. Murdoch established a new church, he built a mill to provide work for the community.

So, on October 31, 1842, William signed a Trust Deed (not recorded), appointing his friends Rev. William Smyth, John Johnston and Alexander C. Davison to manage his business interests in Ireland and on May 8, 1843, William and his family were on their way to America.

In the spring of 1843, the trustees advertised for sale properties William owned in Donegal:

- Newly built tenement with corn stores, kilns, let to Mr. William Rankin, yielding a clear profit rent of £80 yearly, held for the remainder of a lease of three lives and 61 years from Nov. 1829.
- Two tenements, held by lease forever, yielding a profit rent of £47 yearly.
- A corn store situated on the quay, held for the remainder of a lease of 31 years from 1839 which was last let at £35 per annum.



## William Murdoch in Asheville, North Carolina

On November 17, 1845, William Murdoch entered into an agreement with Bacchus J. Smith to purchase 100 acres on Glenn's Creek, about a mile north of downtown Asheville. William put down \$200 and Smith financed the remainder. William built a portable sawmill, erected a brick dwelling and improved the land, but he didn't make much headway paying off his debt. Smith brought the matter to court in 1851 (Civil Action Papers Concerning Land 1849-1870, Folder 1851). William's lawyer, N. W. Woodfin, explained his client was struggling to pay the debt and retain the land as a home, but Mr. Smith pressed on.

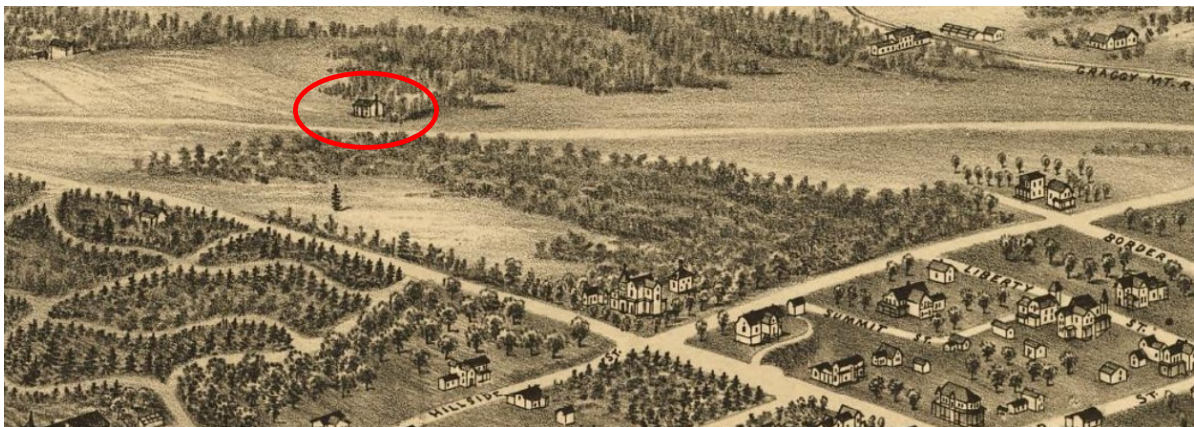
William turned to family for help. He contacted his nephew John Murdoch 1813-1861 of Cane Mount, Rodney, Mississippi. John was the son of William's half-brother John Murdoch 1780-1826 who married Esther Anketell in 1810 and brought his bride to Claiborne County, Mississippi. The nephew John Murdoch paid Bacchus Smith \$1,200 and it was agreed that John would reconvey the property to William when he paid John the sum of \$1,200 with interest and also paid \$75 to N.W. Woodfin (Deed Book 25/131, 2-27-1852).

Undoubtedly William settled his debts, but a deed was never issued. In 1886, when William's children were ready to subdivide the homestead, they had to track down the children of the nephew John Murdoch to obtain title to the land (Deed Book 58/213).

William Murdoch died February 14, 1865. He left his property to his wife Margaret--the 100 acre homestead called Annandale Farm and a 75 acre farm on Beaverdam Creek known as Mountain Farm (Deed Book 28/120). William's will includes a post script: *It is my desire and request to all our children that they assemble at least once a year under the paternal roof as long as their mother lives.*

In 1866, a year after her husband's death, Margaret wrote her will (just before sailing to Europe), the main point of which was to ensure the Murdoch farms would be held in trust for the benefit of all her children, until the youngest reached his majority. *It is my earnest wish that my real estate should stay in the family as long as possible so that any child will have a home to which they may return.*

There's half a chance this is the Murdoch house on the 1891 Bird's-Eye View of Asheville. It may not be the house, but it is certainly the location of the 100 acre tract.



<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3904a.pm006580>

The mother Margaret died in 1883 and the Murdoch children were soon in the real estate business. The Annandale farm land was subdivided and lot sales continued for the next 20 years. The City thought the land was ideally suited for a park and in 1890 made an offer to purchase 85 acres, but the Murdochs declined.

1-29-1887 *Asheville-Citizen Times*

**GRAND SALE**  
— OF —  
**Asheville City Lots!**  
— — —  
**On Monday, July 4, 1887,**

Will be sold at auction twenty-four choice city lots, one mile north from the Court House, a part of "Annandale," the farm owned by the late William Murdoch.  
These lots are situated as follows: Three fronting on Merrimon Avenue (Beaverdam Road), seven fronting on Murdoch street, eight fronting on Charlotte street, two lots cornering on Charlotte and Mary streets, four lots fronting on Mary street.  
Terms of sale, one fourth cash, and balance in one, two and three years, with interest at

Where exactly was the Murdoch house? Probably somewhere around 12 Kimberly Avenue. The deed (Book 25/131) for the Murdoch tract starts: *Beginning at a locust stake on the bank of Glenn's Creek.* The lines run 127 poles on each side (2,095.5 feet), and a 2 degree eastward tilt forms a slight parallelogram encompassing 100 acres. Today's approximate boundaries are Hillside to the south, Charlotte to the east, Evelyn Place to the north and just west of Henrietta to the west. An article in the 7-24-1949 *Asheville Citizen* recalled the Murdoch house *stood about where Edwin Place runs into Murdock Avenue, on a knoll among fine old oak trees and big sycamores, near the branch.*



The Asheville tax map shows 12 Kimberly Avenue at the center of an elevated piece of land known as Bryan's Knoll, near Reed Creek. It's my understanding Kimberly Avenue was built as an extension of Edwin Place and it seems, in this area, Reed Creek and Glenn's Creek are one and the same.

There is one reference to this area being called "Murdoch's Knoll." The 9-15-1917 *Asheville Citizen Times* ran an advertisement for real estate broker Henry T. Sharp who announced: *The purchase of our eminent citizen of the Murdock knoll in Grove Park West, was a splendid one...* The "eminent citizen" was William Jennings Bryan 1860-1925 who purchased multiple lots in the area. Directly after the sale to Bryan, Mr. Sharp started advertising the area as Bryan's Knoll, capitalizing on the fame of Mr. Bryan and, consequently, the name Murdoch's Knoll was lost to time.

William's occupation in the 1850 and 1860 Asheville census is "farmer." The slave schedule for 1850 reports one female, age nine. In 1860, William reported one 39 year old female and one slave house. (Compare to his friend Nicholas W. Woodfin who owned 120 enslaved people in 1860.)

In 1847, William placed notices in the local newspaper advertising his Circular Sawing Mill; he was "ready to supply any description of lumber." He also offered Saxon sheep for sale. William partnered with Nicholas W. Woodfin, offering the service of their wool carding machine. Another Woodfin collaboration was growing grapes. In 1860 they advertised a position for a German vinedresser.

By 1860, William was appointed secretary of the Asheville Mutual Insurance Company. In 1862, William and his son Dr. William H. Murdoch opened a Segar Manufactory.

**ASHEVILLE**  
**Mutual Insurance Company,**  
CONTINUE to issue POLICIES OF INSURANCE ON  
**WHITE AND SLAVE LIVES**  
On more favorable terms than any other Company in the State; giving the insured perfect security against loss. Also POLICIES against  
**Loss by Fire**  
On as fair and reasonable terms as any other solvent Company can fairly do it.  
WM. MURDOCH, Secretary.  
Asheville, Jan. 30, 1862. tf.

**ASHEVILLE**  
**SEGAR MANUFACTORY.**  
HAVING opened a Segar Manufactory in Asheville, N. C., we wish to employ a  
**NUMBER OF GIRLS**  
To learn the business, to whom we will give  
**CONSTANT EMPLOYMENT**  
And pay them LIBERAL WAGES. For further particulars, apply to Dr. W. H. Murdoch, North end of Main street.  
WM. MURDOCH,  
W. H. MURDOCH.  
April 3, 1862. tf

There are no extant Asheville newspapers for the period around February 1865, the month William died. This death notice is in the 7-29-1865 *Northern Standard*, letting the folks back in County Monaghan know of William's death. The notice was also placed in the *Belfast Newsletter*.

On the 14th of February last, at Asheville, North Carolina, America, William Murdoch, Esq., late of Annaroe, Ireland, aged 70 years.

William directed in his will that his "body should be interred in an adequate but unostentatious manner." William's burial site is unknown.



## The Letters of William Murdoch

William Murdoch had a short tenure (probably two years, 1833 to 1835) as agent for the estates of the Marquis of Conyngham in County Donegal. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Marquis, Francis Nathaniel Conyngham 1797-1876, was an absentee landlord with little interest in his landholdings. During the famine of the 1840s, Conyngham's County Donegal tenants suffered greatly. "He was often regarded as one of the most infamous examples of the heartless absentee landlord."



While he worked for the Conynghams, William and his family lived part-time at Salthill House in Mountcharles. The residence, specially built for the land agents of the Conyngham family, is located about four miles southwest of Donegal.

Salthill House stands today. The property includes a beautiful walled-in garden.

The Murdoch family slept here!  
Salthill House, built 1770s  
<https://maps.nls.uk/view/246835253>

Information about the Murdochs' residency at Salthill is drawn from a letter to the Marquis of Conyngham published in the 12-25-1838 *Londonderry Journal*. The author, using the pseudonym "A Tenant," sarcastically vented his ire at his Lordship's short-comings (neglect and disregard of his tenants, absenteeism, etc.) and specifically decried the dismissals of William Murdoch and a prior agent, Mr. Mansfield, for not living full-time in County Donegal.

"A Tenant" writes: *He (meaning William Murdoch) was not a perpetual resident, though his family resided six months in the year at Salt Hill and he was two out of the other six on the estates; but even so he was guilty of non-residence and he must be dismissed. The inconsistency of these dismissals would not be sufficiently apparent were I not to state that Mr. Murdock is a gentleman of very extensive experience as an agent and one who has given proof of his ability as such.* The letter noted William had *laid out money in improving and ornamenting Salt Hill house and grounds* and though it was a loss to Mr. Murdock, it would make Salt Hill House a comfortable residence for his successor.

The citizens of County Donegal deeply regretted William's departure and 74 men signed a testimonial which was printed in the January 30, 1836 *Londonderry Sentinel*.

"We, the undersigned, take this opportunity of expressing our sincere regret on your departure from this part of the neighbourhood. As an active and impartial Magistrate, you have gained the good wishes of the public; as a resident Gentleman, you have given employment to a very considerable number of the working classes, and you have set an example of improvement worthy of imitation. From all we have seen of your public conduct, you have given us good ground to expect that if you had resided for some time longer you would have contributed still more to the improvement of this part of the country."



William Murdoch's reply:

*Clergy, Gentry, Merchants, and Inhabitants of the  
Town and Neighborhood of Donegal.*

*Gentlemen:*

*I have had the honour of receiving the address you have been so kind as to present me with on my ceasing to be Agent of the Most Noble the Marquis of Conyngham. Most sincerely do I thank you for the esteem you have manifested towards me in a manner so highly gratifying.*

*I cannot but feel flattered at the terms in which you have expressed your approbation of my public and private conduct, as a Magistrate and a Gentleman, during my residence in your interesting and improving county; and whilst I cannot disguise from myself that your kind feelings towards me have led you to overrate my humble services, yet I can say with truth that my first wish through life has been to endeavour to improve the condition of the humbler classes of my fellow countrymen, and to raise them permanently in the scale of society--not by agitation, not by giving them false notions of themselves, but by devising, what appeared to me, rational plans of improvement, and thus placing within their reach the means of bettering their own condition, by honest industry, whilst, at the same time, they contributed to increase the wealth and comfort of our common country.*

*That I have been so fortunate as to obtain the approbation of so large a body of intelligent and independent men, is an ample compensation for all the sacrifices I have made; and this public expression of your opinion of my conduct, will furnish sufficient evidence to others who may be situated as I have been, that a similar desire to use their talents for the improvement of the country and the condition of the people, coupled with honest zeal and perseverance in carrying forward the good work, will be certain of obtaining that invaluable reward--the esteem and approbation of the good and generous, and the intelligent.*

*I shall always rejoice to hear of the prosperity of your county; that it may continue to advance rapidly in its present career of improvement is my most ardent wish and desire, and I shall consider it a privilege, if, at any time, any exertion of mine may contribute to its welfare.*

*Permit me to say, in conclusion, that I shall never forget the kind hospitality which has characterized the conduct of all those with whom I was in habits of intimacy whilst I resided amongst you; to each and all I take this opportunity of tendering my warmest and most sincere thanks, and I remain, Gentlemen, ever and always your grateful and obedient servant.*

*Wm. Murdock  
Annaroe, 18<sup>th</sup> January 1836*

This exchange of flatteries brought about some editorial comment.

**WM. MURDOCK, ESQ — Our readers will observe, in our advertising columns, an address to this gentleman, on his retirement from the agency of the Conyngham estates, in the County Donegal, together with his answer. Both are creditable in the highest degree, to Mr. Murdock, and the gentlemen who have thus addressed him. We have reason to know, that Mr. Murdock is well entitled to the flattering compliment which has been paid to him.—though his reply to the address does smack a little of the Tory.**

The following letter, written by William when he was on the job for the Marquis of Conyngham, is among the papers of the Chief Secretary's Office 1818-1852, catalogued at the National Archives of Ireland, and we only get a synopsis. "The Hall" was the Conyngham family country house, located about one mile from Salthill House.

*1833 Letter from William Murdoch, The Hall, Donegal, [County Donegal], reporting that [Rev] John Barrett, Inishkeel, falsely claimed tithes from government.*

*Letter from William Murdoch, The Hall, Donegal, [County Donegal], to Lieut Col [Sir William] Gosset, [Under Secretary, Dublin Castle], as agent to the Marquis of Conyngham, owner of the greater part of the parish of Inniskeel [Inishkeel, County Donegal], reporting that the incumbent, [Rev] John Barrett, falsely claimed tithes from government for persons who had in fact paid them.*

\* \* \* \*

In 1824, William Murdoch offered up a plan to manage the beggars in Ireland. This letter is among the papers of the Chief Secretary's Office 1818-1852, catalogued at the National Archives of Ireland. The letter is summarized as follows. (Note: the first workhouses were opened in Ireland around 1840.)

*June 21, 1824, letter from William Murdock, Glaslough, offering observations on control and management of mendicity in Ireland.*

*Offering observations on control and management of mendicants in Ireland. Remarks on lack of success in containing traveling beggars within parish boundaries through use of license and laments that as well as being carriers of disease, 'the great evil is that they train up their children to Idleness, Robbery, and every kind of vice'.*

*Recommends establishment of a house of industry in every county with almshouse and school facilities; admission to be instigated through the clergy and church wardens of each parish and confirmed before local magistrates. Proposes financial support for such institutions be apportioned on a proportional basis, subject to the number of inmates from each parish.*

*Annotation on back of letter indicating lack of concurrence by Chief Secretary with suggested measures.*

## Agricultural Correspondence



As reported by John S. Skinner 1788-1851, founder/editor of the *American Farmer*, William Murdoch of Ireland had been in correspondence with “a gentleman of large fortune in Philadelphia” regarding improving the stock of the gentleman’s hogs. When this fellow in Philadelphia turned his attention to other matters, he passed along William’s correspondence to Mr. Skinner.

Mr. Skinner lived in Baltimore, Maryland, and was looking for swine and sheep “best adapted to the region of country in which this paper chiefly circulates.” “After much careful inquiry,” Mr. Skinner contacted William in Ireland. Mr. Skinner published this extract from William’s reply. The flour mill William writes about is probably Emy Mill in Killycooly.

[American Farmer 1839-11-20: Vol 1 Issue 26](#)

*Dear Sirs,*

*I received your esteemed-favor of the 19th of Sept. [1839] and in reply beg leave to say, that the sheep and pigs you have ordered shall be forwarded from Liverpool. The sheep I could not replace at our national show for double the price I charge you. They are bred from a ram that cost one hundred guineas, I trust they will turn-out fully to your satisfaction.*

*I write you these particulars by the Great Western, to let you know I received your order, and if the vessel for Baltimore should sail about first of November, most likely I will see them fixed myself, as I intend being over about that time.*

*If you would send us a quantity of your good wheat, we could use it, and it would, at market price, pay well enough. I generally get ground at my flour mills two thousand tons of two thousand two hundred and forty pounds per annum, and some years may do double that quantity. I will have to use half that quantity of foreign, to mix with the native wheat, the quality of which is so inferior. I paid last year £18 per ton of 2240 lbs. for nearly two hundred tons.*



The Great Western  
Fast mail service - 16 days across the Atlantic

Mr. Skinner ordered nine sheep and three pigs. William sent along two pigs and three shorthorn Durham cattle to be sold on his own account.

In his most flattering manner, Mr. Skinner now refers to William as “a distinguished agriculturist and flour manufacturer in Ireland.” Here is William’s next letter to Mr. Skinner.

[American Farmer 1839-12-11: Vol 1 Issue 29](#)

*October 26, 1839, Ireland*

*Dear Sir,*

*I received the duplicate of your last letter, and answered it by the Great Western. In answer to yours I beg leave to say, have not yet found a vessel either for Baltimore or Philadelphia, but have no doubt of succeeding shortly, when the 9 Sheep and 3 Pigs on your account, and 2 Pigs on my own account shall be sent out; the latter you will please advertise and sell for me by public auction. They are the first of their kind, and both in pig to the best boar—the smallest of the two being the best breeder I ever saw—she has had two litters, the large one only one.*

*They are “Murdochs,” or the “Annaroe improved Irish breed,” of pigs, which by a judicious cross from an excellent boar of the best English breed (which was short, broad, fat, and easily fed,) and an Irish sow of the best description, long, large and heavy, has produced a breed of pigs not now to be surpassed in the world. They are alone in this neighborhood, one belonging to a neighbour of mine at 3 years old, weighed 1044 lbs., and at 5 years old weighed 1360 lbs. and from getting a fall and dislocating its shoulder was obliged to be killed. I have had them at 12 months old to weigh 476 lbs. These of course are live weights. Pigs are very dear here at present—I may have to charge you a little more, but if I can avoid doing, I shall not—in fact the prices I have mentioned to you are exceedingly low. At the Dublin show £10 [each] cash for a lot of Ewes would not be taken, not better in my opinion than those I now send you, and they are all covered by my best ram, for which I get one guinea a ewe.*

*My stock of Durhams, of which I have 86 at present, are as pure breed as any Mr. Whitaker or any man in England has, part are of his stock. Of course the herd book pedigree I can give with almost all I have. There are a few, however, as well bred as any in the world, which a gentleman got the stock over a few years past, and neglected to keep their descent properly registered; but any ordered out from me shall be all right in every respect.*

*The two sows I send on my own account, you will please advertise and sell by public auction, and the net balance you can at your convenience send me an order for. I think it most probable I may see them on board myself; the boar I send you is a real beauty, none to surpass him. If he goes out safe and thrives as he has done, he should be a magnificent animal of the kind; and my small sow you may recommend to any friend; her last litter when 8 weeks old, if all sold, as part of them were, would have produced £22.*



Annaroe, 31<sup>st</sup> January, 1840

Dear Sir:

*At last I have got a vessel to take out the stock ordered by you and have added to the order on my own account, a black Sow, a great favorite of mine, and three cows and heifers, all prime as ever reared in this country. I lately saw Mr. Whitaker's stock and hesitate not to say, he has not in his possession three such; and if they were in Tennessee or Kentucky, they would bring from 1000 to 1500 dollars each. The freight is very high to Baltimore, £18 each. I send only three on trial, and except the prices come up to my expectations, I will not send any more.*

*You need not hesitate to recommend them to any person whatever--their pedigrees you will see are taken carefully from the Herd Book. The second one is considered one of the finest ever produced in this country. You will dispose of them and the sow for me as you think best. I have a great many young bulls, and one of the best five year old bulls I ever saw, Bampton; I will in autumn send him out, but where to I cannot at present say.*

*When sold and paid for you can remit me, after paying your commission and charges, besides the £18 each. The expense of provender is very great, also insurance. I will hope to hear from you on their being landed. I need say no more. How they may all stand the voyage I cannot say. The ram was bred from a ram that cost 100 guineas, and a famous ewe, and nothing can be better bred than the sheep. Take good care of the boar, and he will repay you.*

*Believe me, yours truly,  
W. Murdock*

William listed the full pedigree for the shorthorn Durham cattle, Loo Choo, Sophy and Pheobe.

Shorthorn Durham Cow

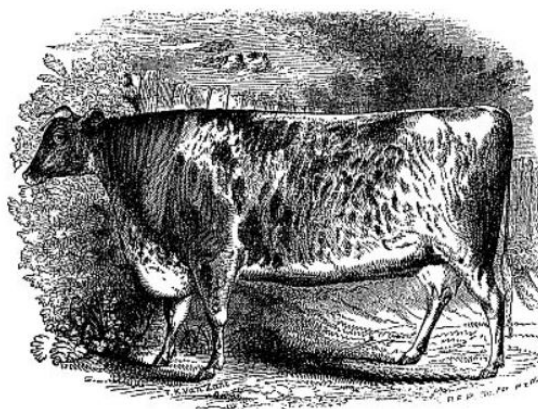


Fig. 2.  
Short-Horned Cow.

It was an arduous journey for the livestock. One sow was killed on board the boat from Ireland to Liverpool. The cattle (Loo Choo, Phoebe and Sophy), sheep and pigs were then loaded onto the *Ship Pocahontas* which arrived in Baltimore 40 days later, on March 27, 1840. One sheep died at sea and William's prized Black Sow gave birth as the *Pocahontas* reached the wharf. The cattle were a bit worse for wear; particularly *Pheobe* who was bruised and lacerated.

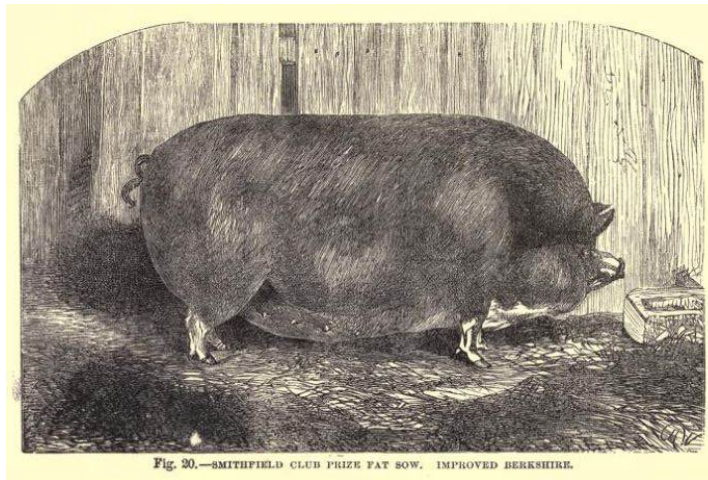
Mr. Skinner placed this advertisement for the sale of William's Durham cattle and the Black Sow.

#### Imported and Very Superior Live Stock

Two Cows and a Heifer, of magnificent size and shape, and of the pure "improved short horn" blood, and an Irish Sow of the "improved Ulster" breed, will be offered for sale on the 5<sup>th</sup> of May next at Baltimore, on account of a gentleman in Europe, who has sent them to the Editor of the *American Farmer* as specimens of the best to be had in Europe. The cattle trace regularly through the Herd Book to the highest of the purest sources, as may be seen in the *American Farmer* of this date--and about the Sow, those who see her will admit there can be "no mistake!"

In the coming years, *Sophy* "the Irish giantess" was much admired at agriculture shows. "When in the prime and freshness of her milking powers, we are informed by her owner that she yields 32 quarts a day." One of her offspring was named *Paddy O'Rafferty*.

William's Black Sow was a cross of Woburn and Irish Grazier, which William re-branded "improved Ulster." Here is a picture of a sow of the same proportions.



9-15-1841 *American Farmer*

**FOR SALE—AN IRISH GRAZIER BOAR,**  
Bred by that distinguished breeder, Wm. Murdoch, Esq. of An-  
naroo county, Monaghan, Ireland, and imported by J. S. Skinner,  
Esq. in the ship *Pocahontas*, in the spring of 1840—he is about 2  
years old, and well formed—price \$75. Apply to  
S. SANDS.

THE  
**FARMERS' LIBRARY**  
AND  
MONTHLY JOURNAL OF AGRICULTURE.

John S. Skinner's day job was post-master of Baltimore. After 23 years on the job, he was abruptly relieved of duty by a new political administration and had time on his hands. So, now, in addition to the *American Farmer*, he edited a new *Farmers' Library and Monthly Journal of Agriculture* which included "original contributions from eminent farmers and statesmen."

Mr. Skinner and William had stayed in touch since their initial correspondence in 1839 at the great importation of William's livestock to Baltimore. Mr. Skinner knew William had moved to America and was living in Asheville. In an article about shorthorn cattle, dated September 1845, Mr. Skinner writes: *We should have been glad now, as we shall at any time, to give the likeness of a Cow of this breed, imported from Ireland--sent out by Mr. Murdoch, a gentleman possessing a large share of various and useful knowledge, now residing at Asheville, N.C. The Cow to which we allude is Sophy.*

In 1846, a fellow wrote to the *Journal* looking for information about sheep husbandry. Mr. Skinner noted: *There are some strong reasons to believe that for our mountain ranges the Cheviot sheep of Scotland would be most profitable; we hope some one will import them; we are not sure that it has not been done by Mr. Murdock, near Asheville, N.C.--no one better qualified than he to answer many of the points in this letter; will he?* William took on this request.

THE SORT OF SHEEP FOR OUR MOUNTAINS.

ASHVILLE, N. C. 7th August 1846

My Dear Sir:

*I this day received THE FARMERS' LIBRARY, and proceed to answer the inquiry, about sheep, made by your correspondent. I consider the ridge of mountains running through Virginia and North Carolina particularly well suited for sheep husbandry, and the principal obstruction to its being carried on profitably is the want of fencing.. The elevation is in no part too great for the Cheviot sheep, which in my opinion are better suited than any other; they are active and hardy, requiring less care and attention, and they will endure more hardship and feed themselves in snow by scraping it away with their feet, and thereby feeding themselves where the more tenderly brought-up sheep would perish. Even on the top of the Black Mountain, in summer, the sheep feed well and thrive; and I know no ground better fitted for feeding sheep than the Bald Mountain in this State.*

*As to fencing, I have agreed for putting up 12,500 rails at 64 cents per panel of 10 rails, and can get any number put up at that price, and for which they are well paid--only it requires them to cut the rails as near as possible to the line of fence. Otherwise the hauling has to be added [at their expense, we presume the writer means]. Until the ground is fenced in, it is, in my opinion, quite useless to attempt feeding sheep; twenty shepherds could not attend to 600 sheep on the mountains; unless fenced in they will wander off and never return; and among under-brush who could watch them?*

*Once fenced in, and part of the ground cleared for giving some food for winter-as hay, or rowen, which I consider better still, with some rape, which I prefer to turnips, as easier cultivated, a better crop, and a hardier vegetable, and one which sheep are fond of and thrive well on-I see nothing to prevent any person, with tolerable care and attention, from feeding sheep.*

*I apprehend little danger from wolves-much more from dogs; but either can be disposed of with some strychnia, and which I would have no hesitation in using, if annoyed by either. I have been told if I did so the whole country would be up in arms on account of having their dogs destroyed; but I see no reason in any man keeping dogs to injure his neighbors' sheep or property.*

*I consider this range of mountains far preferable to the prairies of the west, particularly for winter feeding. You are aware that I did not succeed in my first attempt at sheep feeding; but that I consider owing to the grossest neglect in my absence in Pennsylvania. But what sheep I have now are doing almost as well as I could wish, requiring little care. I consider that sheep should yield 3 lbs. of wool each, worth 20 cents per lb. and each ewe a lamb worth half a dollar; so that each ewe would, all things considered, yield a dollar yearly. Wethers or wedders would produce as much, from the additional wool they will produce and the increase in value for mutton; they can be driven a great way to market, at a small expense, to the eastern cities, and where I believe any quantity could be profitably disposed of.*

*I intend increasing my present stock, as I find I can do it with advantage, having the ground fixed to answer it, and I feel satisfied that for the capital embarked and the care required, nothing would pay better. I think you will admit I have put down the quantity of wool and price at a low figure.*

*I think, all things considered, if a person was once well fixed, sheep could be fed in this district at a quarter of a dollar a head, all expenses included-not certainly if they get over-high priced shepherds, put up handsome and expensive sheep-houses and one hundred other things they don't require in this country. In Scotland, where the snows are deep in winter, and lie for a long time, it is rarely they lose their sheep-I mean the Cheviots; they are a hardy, thrifty animal, and could live the winter through here, five years out of six, except the flocks were very large and the bounds small, with little or no winter food, such as turnips or hay-with both they would no doubt be better.*

*I think I have given all the information requisite. There is another thing to be guarded against: that is, choosing a laurel district; for in winter when the ground is covered with snow, and also the lambs are subject to eat of it, and although there are many effectual remedies, if applied in time, the chance is, they will not be discovered in time to save their lives. Folding at night I consider unnecessary and rather injurious than otherwise.*

*If there is any farther information I can give you, it will give me pleasure. If your friend wishes to import Cheviots, I can put him in the way of doing it safely-I mean without his running the risk of his being taken in. I would recommend the importation of a few bucks and half a score of ewes, and crossing the native ewes with the Cheviot bucks. From all I have observed, the last winter has been the severest there has been here for twenty years, and from all the information I could collect, I feel no doubt in my mind, that very little winter food is necessary here for sheep in general.*



*They suppose here they can do in winter, like the bears, without food, from all they provide for them, as far as I have observed.*

*Believe me yours, truly,  
W. MURDOCK.*

This was followed up by William's specific advice on feeding sheep.

*Excellent swards of grass are grown in this district from Orchard grass or Cock's-foot. Timothy and Italian Rye grass I have found to thrive remarkably well. I never saw them do better in any country. I received my seeds from England, and they succeeded admirably, and in ground by no means favorable to a fair trial. Turnips succeed remarkably well here, and even 150 miles farther south, as I am informed by Mr. Edward Calhoun--the kinds I don't know--but here the Globe, Aberdeen, Norfolk, &c., do well. If grounds were reserved as you suggest, for the winter feeding of sheep, the fall growth being underpastured, and if some of the stubbles were plowed up and sown broadcast with turnips mixed with rape or colza, very little fodder will be required, in fact only when snow is on the ground, which seldom exceeds fifteen or twenty days during the year.*

*I think that Curled Kale would be excellent for the winter keep of sheep, or cattle of any kind. I got some seed from England and sowed it like any cabbage seed. I put out the plants two feet asunder in but tolerable ground. It grew three feet high and two feet in diameter. That I planted in the open field the sheep got at in October, and ate it, stock, branches and all, to the ground. That planted in the garden has, like the rape, stood the severe frosts uninjured. It is a delightful vegetable all the spring, and stands a warm or a cold climate. This and rape are, I think, all the green food necessary to keep sheep through the winter, with the addition of a little hay. Rape may be sown broadcast in moist weather in May or June, and mown off for the sheep, when required, about six inches above ground. If the shoots are not required for pasture, let them go to seed, and the feed will pay better than any other crop, for making oil and rape cake.*

A reader of the *Monthly Journal of Agriculture* sought advice about managing sheep dogs. William's suggestions were printed in the March 1847 issue.

#### Advice on Sheep Dogs

BEDFORD (near Augusta), Ga., Jan. 7, 1847.

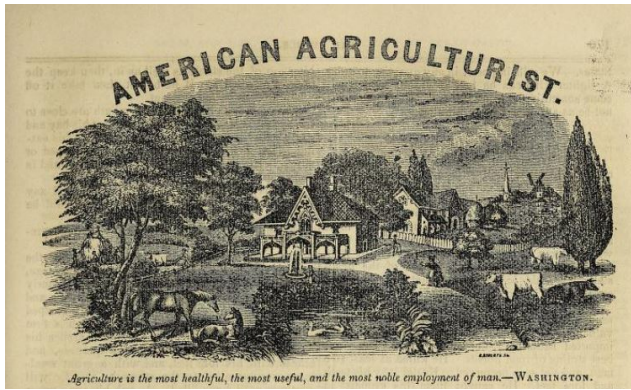
Dear Sir: Your kind favor of the 16th December came to hand in regular course of mail, and I return you my grateful acknowledgments for your attention. Since its receipt, I have received one from WM. MURDOCH, Esq., of Asheville, giving me such directions as will aid me much in the management of my Shepherds' Dogs.

*He advises kind treatment, with suitable punishment, administered with judgment, when the dogs are too rash with the sheep; and observes that the dogs possess great sagacity-will watch every look and gesture of the owner-and the government must be left to the judgment of the shepherd, as each shepherd has his peculiar management of his dog, as each sportsman has his peculiar mode of treating his pointer or setter. Young dogs should at first be coupled to well trained old dogs.*

It will give me great pleasure to add to the number of subscribers to your valuable work. If my agricultural ideas are worth anything to me (and I think they are), am much indebted to you, and therefore owe you the exertion to increase your list of subscribers. Your "American Farmer" was the first agricultural paper that ever fell into my hands; and I only regret I did not read it with more care.

Most respectfully,  
J. L. C.

[https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Monthly\\_Journal\\_of\\_Agriculture](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Monthly_Journal_of_Agriculture)



The *American Agriculturist* was designed to “Improve the Planter, the Farmer, The Stock-Breeder, and The Horticulturist.” It was also printed in German.

### OVERSEERS AT THE SOUTH

Asheville, Buncomb Co., N.C., March 27, 1846.

*On page 24 of your January No., I observe a paragraph about overseers of farms and plantations; and on page 17, Mr. Norton’s letter, in which he mentions the Agricultural School of Templemoyle.*

*Sir Robert Ferguson I know personally, and he recommended two young men to me as stewards or overseers from that school, when I resided in Ireland, ten years past; and two better overseers, or more unexceptionable young men I never met with — perfectly competent to do their business.*

*Mr. Jas. Anderson, Sir Robert’s agent, and also one of the trustees or managers, is at present sending over at my desire, a young man from there as an overseer for a friend of mine here Mr. Woodfine. If you want for your friends proper overseers, who know their business, I recommend their getting them from there. The salary mentioned, viz., \$500, is ample for trial. One servant is quite enough to wait on one of them in the house, for they are brought up plainly, and will not be above helping themselves, giving such assistance as is necessary — such as sowing grain, showing the farm servants how to manage horses, plows, &c.; and I venture to say they will raise as much grain off of half the land as is at present done, and keep it clear of weeds and the soil from deteriorating. Indian corn they know nothing of; but a little instruction will put them in the way of raising as large crops as any one can on the same kind of ground. They are well versed in the care and management of cattle of all kinds. If any friend of yours should require an overseer, I will write to Mr. Anderson to do so, if certain of their being employed when they arrive.*

Wm. Murdock

[American Agriculturist](#)

Vol. 5, 1846

In 1855, William wrote to the US Department of Agriculture.

11-23-1855 *Daily Dispatch*

AGRICULTURE.—Mr. Murdock, of Asheville, N. C., writes to the Agricultural Department at Washington to the effect that the Buncombe giant grass yielded this season four pounds of dry hay to the square yard. At this rate it would produce twenty thousand pounds of hay to the acre. It is said to be much relished by the cattle.

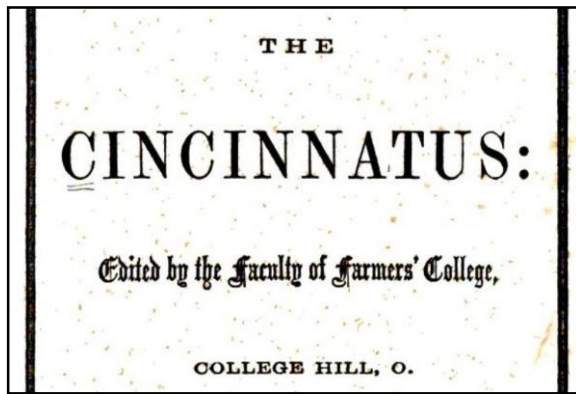
11-22-1855 *Fayetteville Observer*

*Letter from North Carolina.*—Mr. Murdock, of Asheville, North Carolina, writes to the effect that the Buncombe giant grass yielded this season *four pounds* of dry hay to the square yard. At this rate it would produce *twenty thousand pounds* of hay to the acre! It is said to be much relished by cattle. A neighbor told our correspondent that his horses pick it out from other hay.

Mr. M. adds the following statement of the amount of corn raised on an acre of land by Mr. Woodford, of the same locality, and the profit realized from its sale:

149 bushels of corn, at 50 cents per bushel	\$74 50
Outlay for cultivation, &c.	23 25
Profit	51 25





*The Cincinnatus* was published in Ohio. Each year, the subscribers could return their monthly copies to the publisher to be bound into one volume. In 1860, William offered the use his insurance office in Asheville as the collection point to consolidate mailing.

*The Cincinnatus*, Volume 5, 1860  
<https://books.google.com/books?id=PRCqkh1gQYkC&newbks>

*The Cincinnatus* January 1860

Excerpt from an article on the subject of grape culture in the South-West Alleghanies.

*That there is great uniformity in the productiveness of orchards and vineyards, in elevated positions in these mountains, is a fact well attested. On this point, William Murdock Esq., of Ashville, N. C., in a letter to me, of October, 1848 (sic: 1858), says:*

*I have been thirteen years in this neighborhood, and two in Pennsylvania, and during that time have always found peaches in the mountains when there were none in the valleys. I believe that at three hundred feet above the valleys, apples and peaches rarely, if ever, fail in a crop. Grapes, in the same situations, would be equally likely to be constantly fruitful, and free from rot and mildew.*

*There are situations in this district, high upon the mountains, where the European grapes have for twenty years borne twenty consecutive crops, without mildew or rot; and I know of many around me which they call English grapes, that do constantly bear; but on examination, I have never been able to trace out to be English or European grapes, and think the odds are much in favor of their being native. I feel quite satisfied that at certain altitudes the frost does not injure in late spring or early winter.*

William Murdoch had apparently turned his attention to viticulture. From the April 23, 1857 issue of the *Asheville News*:

### *The Culture of the Grape*

*We invite the attention of the reader to the communication below, from Mr. William Murdoch, of this vicinity. Mr. M. is a practical man, and his suggestions are eminently worthy of consideration.*

*Editor of Asheville News:*

*My attention having been called to the cultivation of the Grape in this District, for the purpose of making Wine, I have made every inquiry North and South, East and West, and now feel satisfied that there is nothing so profitable for the proprietors of Buncombe as their turning their attention to the cultivation of the Grape. For the same quantity of ground, with the same labor and capital, there is no employment in*

*the way of farming to be compared to it. It can be commenced on a small a scale as they like. One dollar will buy ten rooted plants of the Catawba Grape, and with one hour's labor they can commence. The value of the land occupied would not be worth speaking of. They can increase it each year, and in a short time can make not only hundreds but thousands of dollars yearly. Five acres and a half last year produced five thousand gallons of Wine, worth ten thousand dollars at lowest valuation. Five hundred gallons per acre, annually, is not above an average crop. That Buncombe is well suited for the purpose there can be no doubt.*

*I have made inquiry and find native Grapes. I hear of them in many quarters; and if a good Red or Black Grape can be found here to produce Red Wine of equal quality with the Catawba Grape, the value cannot be estimated. I will give from five to twenty five dollars for the rooted plant of any such Grape. That many native Grapes may be found, equal if not superior to the Catawba, (which is a native of this country) is the decided opinion of Mr. Longworth of Cincinnati, one of the best authorities on this subject in the States. [note: Nicholas Longworth 1783-1863]*

*Once planted, slightly manured, dressed, and the ground kept clear of weeds, is all that is necessary. Boys and girls can pull and gather the grapes and the women can make the wine better than the men would. One person in this neighborhood sold, I think he told me \$10 worth of Grapes off one vine last year, and that not a large one.*

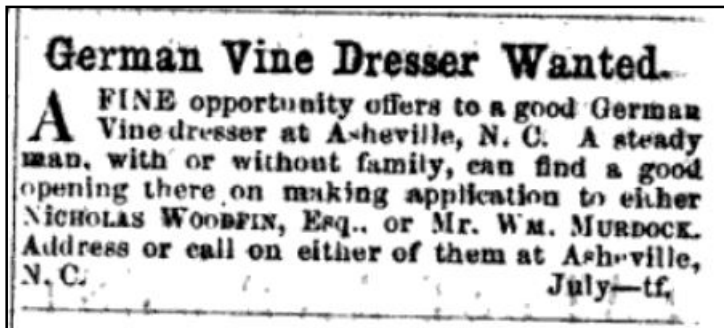
*I have received the best instructions for preparing the ground, planting the vine, dressing them in the spring and making the Wine, and will take pleasure in giving any information in my power. I will thank any person for sending me cuttings of any good Grape vine, natives of their neighborhood, which shall receive every attention, to test them; and if they send me half a peck or more of their ripe Grapes, I will make the Wine and give them all the advantages of the value.*

*W. MURDOCH*

*N.B. The Catawba Grape will not rot, no matter where placed, and is a sure and abundant crop.*

In the lead up to the Buncombe County Agricultural Society Annual Fair held in October of 1859, William offered a prize for new grape stock.

**NOTE.—Wm. Murdoch offers \$50 reward to any person who will procure for him a new native Grape of superior quality to the "Catawba." This to be left to the opinion of sufficient judges.**



In 1860, William and his friend Nicholas W. Woodfin placed an advertisement in *The Cincinnati* for a vinedresser.

William is noted in the journals of Henry William Ravenel, planter, botanist, and diarist. In 1860, Mr. Ravenel sent letters to William Murdoch and others about procuring grape cuttings of new varieties. William sent Mr. Ravenel cuttings of a native grape called "Johnstone" as well as cuttings called Platt, McHoeffy and Brindle.

One November 7, 1860, William stopped in at Mr. Ravenel's plantation in South Carolina. Mr. Ravenel wrote in his journal:

*I had a visit this morning from Wm Murdock of Asheville N.C., the same person who sent me grape cuttings last year from the Mts. of N.C. He is on a tour on business connected with an insurance company of Asheville & was on his way to Edgefield C.H.*

*By the papers received today it appears certain that Lincoln is elected! Pennsylvania & New York (upon which last, rested the decision) giving each of them large majorities for the Black Republican electors. The issue is now fairly presented to the South. Resistance or Submission*

Henry William Ravenel 1814-1887

<https://digital.library.sc.edu/collections/henry-william-ravenel/>

## Civil War Letters

On August 6, 1861, Wm. Murdoch of Asheville, North Carolina, wrote to General Polk outlining a plan for militia troops.

*I am induced to trouble you with a few lines thinking perhaps they may be of use in these times of trouble and anxiety. I have thought to show Mr. Lincoln and his party that the South was in earnest and determined to a man that it should be free. William then proceeds to give suggestions for recruiting and training militia.*

I found this letter at Fold3.com in the Confederate Papers Relating to Citizens or Business Firms, compiled 1874 - 1899. I think it was mistakenly put in the file of one William Murdock associated with the Sapona Iron Company in Fayetteville, NC. I think this original letter is written by William of Asheville--same handwriting, same methodical organization of a plan.

In Volumes 7 and 8 of *The Papers of Jefferson Davis* are synopses of three letters from William Murdoch. As always, William is a man with a plan.

April 18, 1861

*From William Murdoch, Asheville, N.C., farmer, recommends establishing a government bank similar to the Bank of England, with states sharing capital and choosing one director each; believes Lincoln's proclamation "has completely dispelled every Union man in this neighborhood."*

September 3, 1861

*From William Murdoch, Asheville, N.C., farmer, just returned from visiting various military camps in Va., recommends that molasses be issued regularly and ration of fresh meat be diminished to prevent typhoid; notes deficiencies in medical attention and recommends appointment of medical board to examine surgeons; proper medicines scarce.*

March 6, 1862

*From William Murdock, Irish-born Asheville farmer, presents plan to raise more troops; suggests dividing states into districts of about twenty counties each and requiring the services of one man for every sixty white inhabitants; also would raise militia under command of state brigadier generals; militia would use their own arms, pikes and knives; anyone volunteering would receive extra pay.*

William may have fired off a letter or two to North Carolina Governor Zebulon B. Vance in 1863. The letters are archived on microfilm and are only referred to, so I can't tell if "W. Murdock" is our William. But I'm sure William would have had a few things to say to the Governor, who went to school with William's kids in Asheville.



## Margaret Nixon 1807-1883

Margaret's father, James Nixon, and William Murdoch's father, Robert Murdoch, were long-time acquaintances and both worked as land agents for Charles Powell Leslie II. There are many references to James Nixon in Anthony Doyle's work on the Charles Powell Leslie Estates and in the Leslie Papers archived at the National Library of Ireland.

The family of Margaret's mother, Jane Savage 1782-1846, is included in the *Savages of the Ards* by George Francis Savage-Armstrong, 1888 (Chapter XI - Prospect Branch). This compilation presents a list of Margaret's siblings: her brothers James, Jr. and William (maybe called Henry) and sisters Grace, Eleanor, Jane, Padina, Georgina, Martha, Ann and Henrietta.

Margaret's paper trail in Ireland is sparse. Her 1829 wedding was announced in several newspapers. A deed dated June 1, 1839 (Deed 1840/3-9) lists Margaret, her parents, and living siblings.

In May of 1840, there's a veiled reference to Margaret in the newspaper: "William Murdoch Esq. and family" attended a gathering to see the laying of a foundation stone for a monument to the late second Earl of Caledon DuPre Alexander. William, of course, had been the secretary/treasurer of the committee in charge of organizing the monument.



In 1842, the contents of Annaroe House were listed in the newspaper prior to the auction. On the auction block went Margaret's scarlet Damask Morocco draperies, "a long set of Stone China of the best description," the Clementi piano, ladies' work tables, mahogany dressing tables, two fourteen-foot dining tables, 18 mahogany chairs, carved mahogany bedsteads, etc.

The death of Margaret's two youngest children in Perryville, Pennsylvania, in July of 1844, must have been exceedingly hard. The children died within two weeks of each other. Two-year-old little Mary, who had come across the ocean. The nine-month-old little boy, Henry Smyth Murdock, was born in mid-October 1843, which tells us Margaret was pregnant during the voyage to America. And there must have been concern for five-year-old Daisy, the child left in England to be educated.

The Murdoch babies are buried in the Milroy Presbyterian Church Cemetery.



Mifflin County Historical Society

Margaret is in the 1850 and 1860 census in Buncombe County, North Carolina. But it is only with the advent of the Civil War that the Murdoch women appear in print.

4-10-1862 Asheville News

BUNCOMBE SUBSCRIPTIONS TO THE N. C. FIELD BATTERY.	
Mrs. William Murdoch,.....	\$10 00
Miss Lizzie Murdoch,.....	10 00
Mrs. N. W. Woodfin,.....	10 00
“ Z. B. Vance,.....	8 00
“ W. A. Patton,.....	8 00
Miss F. L. Patton,.....	3 00
Mrs. J. W. Patton,.....	5 00
Miss C. Kerr,.....	3 00
Mrs. G. H. A. Adams,.....	5 00
“ W. H. Murdoch,.....	5 00
“ Armstrong,.....	2 00
“ A. T. Summey,.....	30 00
“ W. W. McDowell,.....	10 00
“ Geo. T. Spears,.....	10 00
“ J. Thomas Weaver,.....	20 00
“ A. W. Cummings,.....	10 00

SUMMEY, SPEARS & CO.

Asheville, April 7, 1862.

The Books are still open, and contributions are still needed. Roll on the ball.

The Murdoch women and their neighbors at work during the Civil War.

Mrs. William Murdoch--wife Margaret  
Miss Lizzie Murdoch--daughter Henrietta

Mrs. G.H.A. Adams--daughter Jane  
Mrs. W.H. Murdoch--daughter-in-law Jane Wells

7-31-1862 Asheville News

Letter to Mrs. Murdoch, president of the Soldier's Aid Society.

In the same issue is a list sent to Margaret from John S.E. Summey of local men who were sick, wounded or dead in Richmond, VA, hospitals.

**Soldier's Aid Society of Buncombe.**

CONTRIBUTION OFFICE, No. 11 Pearl Street,  
MEDICAL PURVEYOR'S DEPOT,  
RICHMOND, Va., July 11, 1862. }

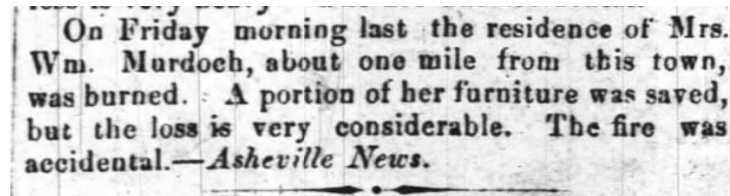
MRS. WM. MURDOCH,  
President Sol. Aid Society,  
Asheville, Buncombe, N. C.:

Madam:—I have the honor to acknowledge, on this date, the receipt of one Box and Trunk from your Society by J. S. E. Summey, Esq., containing valuable and necessary articles for the sick and wounded, for which you will accept the best wishes and thanks of our soldiers, and of

Very Respectfully,  
Your ob't servant,  
H. T. BANKS,  
Ch. Con. Office, C. S. A.

William died in 1865. He left all his property to Margaret for her own use and to support and educate their uneducated children and he gave her the right to dispose of the property as she saw fit after her death. *I thus leave all in her power from the very high opinion I have of her good sense, sound judgment and the equal affection she bears to each of our children whose welfare and happiness seem the great object of her life, and to her care and training they owe more than to any other person whatever.*

A few months after William's death, the house in Asheville was damaged by fire. The house was repaired. The Murdoch daughter Jane lived there for a while and then it was leased to a farmer.



A year after William's death, Margaret signed her will on June 26, 1866 and boarded a steamer on the 30<sup>th</sup>, bound for Europe. Margaret, daughter Henrietta and the youngest child Rollo, age 14, went to Europe for two years. On June 30, 1866, the screw steamer *City of New York* sailed to Liverpool with Mrs. Murdock, Miss Murdock and Master Murdock of Charleston, South Carolina on board. The trip took just 14 days. On August 28, 1868, Margaret, Henrietta and Rollo arrived back in New York City on the *Steamship Virginia* from Liverpool. What did Margaret and the children do in Europe?

- It's likely there were some family reunions. Three of Margaret's sisters were still living--Eleanor, Jane, and Georgina Wolseley.
- Margaret must have looked into concluding William's business interests in Ireland. The 2-29-1868 *Northern Standard* ran a legal notice advising creditors to submit claims they may have against William's estate, which had a £488 credit.
- Rollo's obituary reported: "Soon after the war he went to Europe with his mother and received his early training in some of the best schools in the old country." Rollo had a "mechanical turn of mind" and took up the study of machinery and engineering.
- If Margaret visited Annaroe during this trip, she may have found Edward Kentish Evans 1830-1892 and his family in residence. Mr. Evans had brought his bride Jane Bury home to Annaroe in 1860. By 1868, the auctioneer was selling off all of the Evans' personal property and by 1869 the family had moved to America and Annaroe was once again up for lease.

The 1870 and 1880 census for Charleston, South Carolina, finds Margaret living with her sons Robert, James, John and Rollo, daughter Henrietta, and John R. Reed, long-time member of the household.



Margaret's death was reported in the 11-8-1883 *Charleston News and Courier*.

Friends and acquaintances of Margaret and of her sons were invited to attend the funeral at St. Phillip's Church.

Margaret is buried with four of her sons and daughter Henrietta in Magnolia Cemetery in Charleston.

The writing on the base of the headstone reads:

*Until the day break and the shadows flee away.*

Findagrave Memorial:

Margaret Nixon and her nine children who lived to maturity have been linked. The grave of Margaret's husband William Murdoch is unknown.

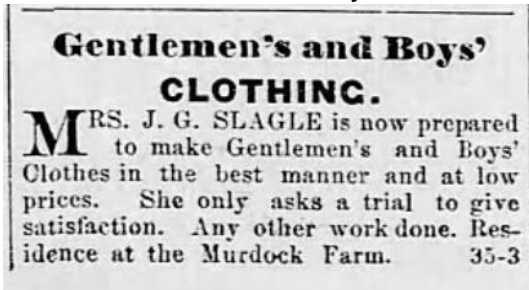
[https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/42935461/margaret\\_murdoch](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/42935461/margaret_murdoch)



## The Murdoch Children

### Jane Georgina Murdoch 1832-1899

1-14-1875 *Asheville Weekly Citizen*



Married 1<sup>st</sup> GHA (Augustus) Adams  
2<sup>nd</sup> Malcolm Slagle

In 1886, Jane purchased her own farm near Asheville, 117 A on the Swannanoa River. This farm was her legacy to her children.

FAG Memorial

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/81815133/jane-georgiana-slagle>

### Robert Murdoch 1833-1884

Obituary: 8-27-1884 *New York Herald*, Page 10  
[New York NY Herald 1884 - 1334.pdf](#)

### James S. Murdoch 1835-1908

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/27575203>

Obituary: 5-23-1908 *The Charleston Evening Post*, Page 1 (GenealogyBank.com)

### William H. Murdoch 1836-1917

[https://books.google.com/books/about/Biographical Souvenir of the States of G. html?id=xO4xAQAAMAAJ](https://books.google.com/books/about/Biographical_Souvenir_of_the_States_of_G.html?id=xO4xAQAAMAAJ) Page 606

Obituary: 10-5-1917 *The Ralston Tribune*, Page 6  
<https://gateway.okhistory.org/ark:/67531/metadc908390/>

### Margaret "Daisy" Murdoch 1838-1917

<https://ancestorsandothers.net/Murdoch.htm>

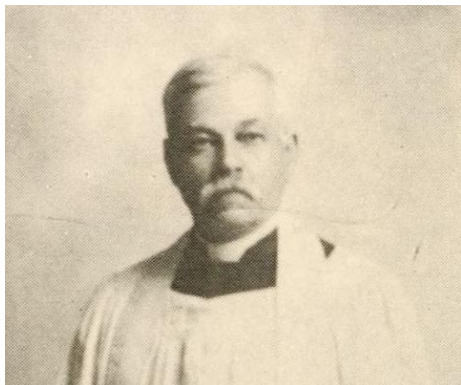
### Henrietta Anne Murdoch 1840-1917

This photo was for Henrietta's season pass to the South Carolina Inter-State and West Indian Exposition of 1901/1902. Henrietta was treasurer for the committee that developed the Woman's Building.



In fact, Henrietta was secretary or treasurer for a host of organizations like the Kings Daughters, the Ladies Auxiliary of the Episcopal Church and Daughters of the Confederacy. She gave generously to Charleston museums, libraries, etc.

## Francis Johnstone Murdoch 1846-1909



<https://divinityarchive.com/bitstream/handle/11258/11122/religioneducatio00rayn.pdf?sequence=1> Pages 39-45

<https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/murdoch-francis-johnstone>

Photo

<https://archive.org/details/saintpaulschestn00josl/mod/e/2up>

## John Hamilton Murdoch 1848-1898

Obituary: 8-16-1898 *The News and Courier*, Page 8 (GenealogyBank.com)

## Rollo George Murdoch 1852-1885

Obituary: 1-12-1885 *The News and Courier*, Page 8 (GenealogyBank.com)

The biography of William H. Murdoch states that his mother had twelve children, nine of whom lived to maturity. A family tree at Ancestry.com (username: Ann Hornthal) includes the names of three children who died early.

- Mary Murdoch 1830-1831, born Annaroe, Ireland
- Mary Elizabeth Murdoch 1841-1844, born Annaroe, Ireland
- Henry Murdoch 1843-1844, born Perryville, PA

Mary born 1830 would be the Murdoch's first child. She was born and died in Ireland.

Perryville, now called Milroy, is located in Armagh Township in Mifflin County, Pennsylvania. There are two sources for burials in the Milroy Presbyterian Church Cemetery:

FamilySearch, *United States Cemetery Abstracts*, Volume 42, 1962 (Film 007897012)

United Presbyterian Church Cemetery Records - Milroy, Mifflin Co. PA

Eleanor Murdock, d. 4 July 1844, ae. 2 yrs., 5 mos. (calculated birth date 2-4-1842)

Henry Smyth Murdock, d. 20 July 1844, ae. 9 mos. (calculated birth date 10-20-1843)

*The Cemeteries of Mifflin County, PA*, published 1977 by the Mifflin County Historical Society (this data is used at Findagrave)

Mary Murdock, died 7-6-1848, age 9 mos

Henry Smyth Murdock, died 7-20-1844, age 9 mos

It's likely Eleanor and Mary are one and the same and the death date of 1848 is an error. The Murdoch family moved to Asheville, North Carolina in 1845.

## END NOTES

FindMyPast.co.uk

For all things Ireland, especially newspapers

Townlands in Ireland

<https://www.townlands.ie/>

Links to 1901 and 1911 Irish Census

Link to Griffith's Valuation 1847-1864

Link to townland of Annaghroe

<https://www.townlands.ie/tyrone/lower-dungannon/aghadoo/caledon/annaghroe/>

Ireland Valuation Records, 1824-1856

<https://census.nationalarchives.ie/search/vob/home.jsp>

Ancestry.com is the most useful for searching.

Griffith's Valuation

<https://www.askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation/>

Ireland Ordnance Maps

<https://maps.nls.uk/os/>

Ordnance Map for the area of Murdoch's mill and Annaroe

<https://maps.nls.uk/view/247942563>

Northern Ireland Ordnance Maps

Annaroe/Annaghroe, Co. Tyrone (Aghaloo Parish)

Overlay today's Google Map

<https://apps.spatialni.gov.uk/PRONIAApplication/>

Transcripts of Memorials of Deeds, Conveyances and Wills, 1708-1929

<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/185720?availability=Family%20History%20Library>

About Memorials

<https://arborealis.ca/records/irish-deeds/>

Photos of the ruins at Annaroe/Annaghroe, Co. Tyrone

[https://www.flickr.com/photos/stephen\\_paskin/albums/72157604408915809/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/stephen_paskin/albums/72157604408915809/)

Anthony Doyle, *Charles Powell Leslie (II)'s Estates at Glaslough, County Monaghan, 1800-41: Portrait of a Landed Estate Business and its Community in Changing Times*, 2001

<https://archive.org/details/charlespowellles0000doyl>

National Library of Ireland

Leslie Papers: 106 boxes, 182 volumes, 32 sketchbooks, and 12 large folders.

Example: One file contains consolidated rentals and accounts for the estates of

Charles Powell Leslie near Glaslough in Co. Monaghan and Co. Tyrone prepared by

William Murdoch, dated 1832-1839.

Emy Mill photos by Glenn Murphy Photography

<https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=418438598251839&set=a.418438514918514>

Mullan Mills

*Life in Mullan - A Look Back at the History of Mullan Mills*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uz0V6A62YPO>

Charles McCluskey

<https://paddymcquaid.wordpress.com/>

The Mullan Mills poem was printed on Page 15 of the 4-12-1958 *Wicklow People*

Mullan Village

<https://www.mullanvillage.com/>

William Murdoch's Naturalization

Mifflin County (Pennsylvania) Naturalization Papers 1810-1912, images 508 and 509,  
Viewed at FamilySearch

I don't know for a "fact" the relationship between William and the Mississippi Murdochs. One tree at Ancestry.com (user name: msaxton2) links William and John as half-brothers.

Murdoch Wills

William and Margaret Murdoch's wills can be viewed at Ancestry, North Carolina Wills, Buncombe County, Original Wills.

Asheville, Buncombe County, North Carolina Land Records

<https://www.buncombecounty.org/governing/depts/register-of-deeds/recording/default.aspx>

Purchase of Mountain Farm on Beaver Dam Creek

In June of 1863 William paid Daniel Reynolds \$400 for 75 acres (known as the Davis Place) on the waters of Beaver Dam Creek (Deed 28/120). The Murdoch family sold the parcel in 1891 to H.A. Gudger (Deed 78/276).

Salthill House, Mountcharles, Co. Donegal

<https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/buildings-search/building/40909909/salthill-house-mountcharles-salthill-demesne-donegal>

*1835 Dublin Almanac and General Register of Ireland.* William served as coroner when he lived in County Donegal.

**Coroners, William Murdock, esq. Salt-hill, Donegal, John Miller, esq. Ballintra**

September 1836 - William selling Leicester Rams, Ewes and Durham Cattle.

**Leicester Rams and Ewes.**  
**M**R. MURDOCH, has for Sale at ANNAROE, thirty Rams and a few Ewes, of the above breed, bred from the best Stock in England or Ireland, and which he will dispose of on reasonable terms. Also, a few thorough bred Durham Cattle; none superior in the kingdom.  
Annaroe, Post-town, Glasslough.  
10th September, 1836. 31 661

**RAILWAY.**—A small Iron Railway, of about 130 Perches length, with Metal Seats and 13 Waggon, all complete, and the best of their kind, and on the most approved of principle, will be disposed of. For any persons concerned in making canals, sea or other embankments, quarries, mines, coal pits, or extensively concerned in road making, cutting down bogs, excavating or improving bogs or waste lands, nothing could possibly be better suited.

Application to be made to Mr. W. Murdoch, of Annagh Post town, Glasslough. If by letter post paid.

Dated 31st October, 1838.

October 1838 - This railway would be handy for working Lord Templetown's mines or maybe digging the raceway from Emy Lough to William Murdoch's mills.

**THE DURHAM BULL, "BAMPTON."**—This beautiful animal, which gained the first prize and medal, at the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland's Show, in Glasgow, last week, is now exhibiting in Belfast, having been purchased by Mr. Murdoch, Esq., of Glasslough, County Monaghan. He is one of the most splendid of the breed ever imported into this country; and Mr. Murdoch, already famed for his improvements in cattle breeding, deserves high credit for his enterprise in adding "Bampton" to his stock.—(See Advertisement.)

October 1838 - The splendid Bampton.

Land Agent in Ireland: You Might End up in a Folktale

William Murdoch, land agent for the Leslie estate, received his share of tributes from his contemporaries. He was toasted by the Trough Farming Society as *friend of the poor and industrious and the benefactor of the neighborhood he lived in...deserves and enjoys the gratitude of the tenantry on the extensive properties under his management.* William received accolades from the businessmen in Donegal: *you have given employment to a very considerable number of the working classes, and you have set an example of improvement worthy of imitation."*

But, the land agent's job was to manage properties for an all-powerful landlord. Tenant relations were bound to be difficult. An 1832 news article reported notices were served on Colonel Leslie's Agent "that he should be murdered unless he reduced the rents." In 1836 it was reported the house of an under agent was torched for retribution. It was said the under agent "acting by the orders of Mr. Murdock, the agent of Colonel Leslie, had levelled some houses belonging to persons against whom ejectments had been brought." On another occasion, a distraught Mr. Fox said if Murdock or Leslie came around his land he "would below them higher than the stars."

In 1937, school students were sent out into their communities to collect Irish folklore. Susan Reilly, a student at Baile i Meadhon Locha school (Bellanaman, Co. Monaghan) collected the story on the following page from Edward Furfey, age 69.

Though it's a folktale, there are corroborating facts. The 1911 census reveals one Edward Furfey, born 1874, living in Annaghbeg, Glaslough in County Monaghan. William Murdoch and his father Robert were agents for Colonel Leslie. The Earl of Caledon was the proprietor of William's home at Annaghroe, County Tyrone, and undoubtedly rubbed elbows with Mr. Leslie. One example of anti-Catholic sentiment can be seen in the formation of a Brunswick Club in Glaslough in 1828. This was a short-lived campaign to deny Catholics the right to enter both houses of the British parliament. Colonel Leslie was elected President, William Murdock Treasurer and James Nixon, Jr., William's soon to be brother-in-law, Secretary.

William Murdoch emigrated to America in 1843, two years before the famine, which makes the method of Agent Murdoch's torture and demise particularly interesting.

Read the story on the next page. Only with the internet could you possibly come up with this kind of a connection!



## A Story

Collected by Susan Rully Mullalio Glaslough

98

Told by Edward Turfey of Annalee  
Glaslough aged 69 years who heard it  
from his mother.

### A Story.

Once upon a time the Seslies, who were  
landlords at Glaslough, Co. Monaghan,  
had an agent named Murdock. He  
was cruel to the Catholics. One day  
the Seslies and Murdock were driving  
from the castle to Lord Baledons also  
a local landlord. Murdock said  
that they could not have any  
Catholic houses to be seen from the  
road. My grandfather lived in one  
and he was put out, and a  
Protestant put in his place.

Murdock did something wrong and  
he was put out of the country. He  
went to America and when the  
Irish saw him there, they tied  
him to a tree with a rope, and put  
loaves all around him, but he  
could not reach them. He was left  
there to die of hunger.

UCD Digital Library - link to the story of William Murdoch  
<https://digital.ucd.ie/view/duchas:4760216>

## The School House William Murdoch Built

Ordnance Survey Memoirs, Vol 40, Page 100:

*Derryhallagh schoolhouse, situated in the townland of Mullaghpeak, is a neat stone cottage, roughcast, whitewashed and slated. It is 33 feet long and 18 feet broad, built in 1823 and cost 30 pounds, which was defrayed by William Murdock, Esquire.*

A few other sources add a bit more information: The house was built of stone and lime. Wm. Murdock built the school aided by a grant of £5 from the Kildare Place Society.

Today, the Mullapike Protestant Hall (photo), opened in 1905, stands on the same spot as the schoolhouse. Was the hall a retro-fit of the old schoolhouse?



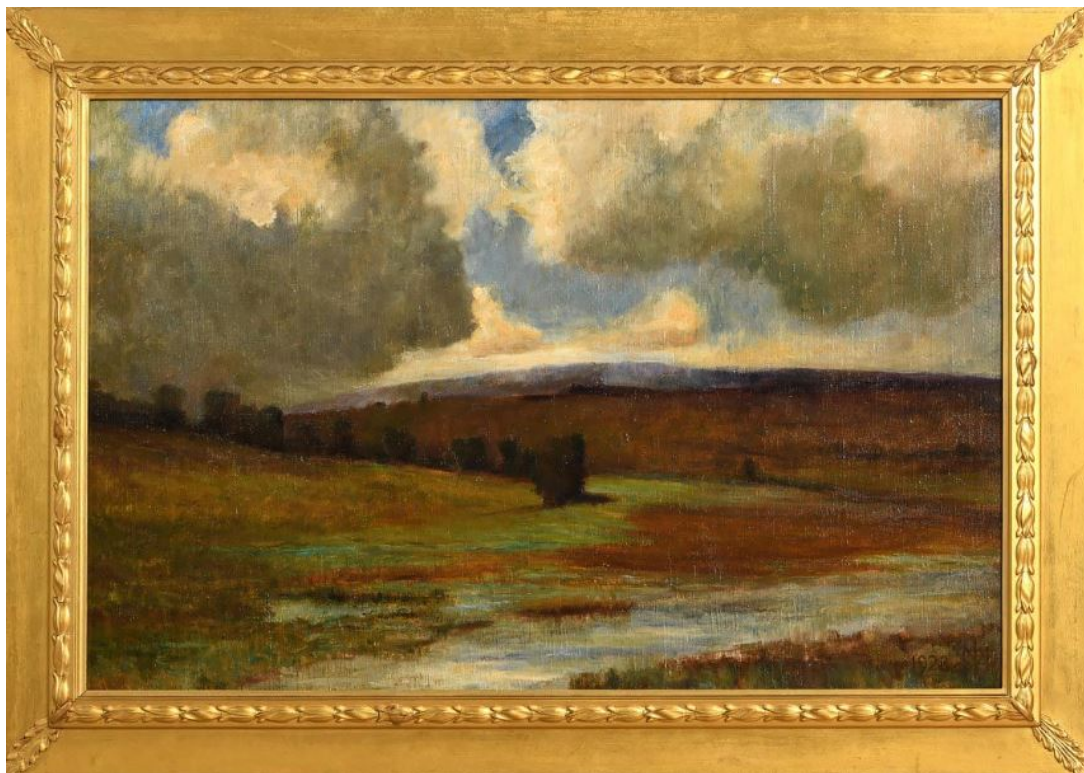
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Mullapike Protestant Hall

<https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/buildings-search/building/41400615/mullapike-protestant-hall-mullaghpeak-monaghan>



## Souvenir of Annaghroe by John B.S. Macllwaine



Artist and inventor John B.S. Macllwaine 1857-1945 lived in Annaghroe House. Macllwaine took up residence in 1919 and lived in the house until his death in 1945.

In his interesting biography of Macllwaine, Terry De Valera tells us Macllwaine was a tenant to the current Lord Caledon, who was described as *a rich, mean and unpopular landlord*. Macllwaine was friends with the Leslie family in Glaslough. Mr. Desmond Leslie 1921-2001 described Annaghroe House as *originally a charming 18<sup>th</sup> century "Squireen" building which was vandalized with monstrous Victorian barrack-like extensions*. When Mr. De Valera wrote this biography in 1989, he noted that Annaghroe House was almost derelict.

An 1849 advertisement to let Annaroe described the buildings: *The House is modern and commodious, containing Dining-Room, Drawing-Room, Breakfast Parlor and Seven Bedrooms, with Servants' Apartments, Pantries and Waterclosets. The Farm Buildings are most complete with Barns, Feeding Houses, Straw Yards, Thrashing Machine and Pumps.*

The house was said to be haunted by the figure of an old woman who appeared from time to time and always weeping.

---

J. B. S. Macllwaine, RHA Friend of Walter Osborne RHA by Terry De Valera  
*Dublin Historical Record*, Vol. 42, No. 2 (Mar., 1989)  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/30087189>