

Mill & Distillery Customers Hon. William Allan of Moss Park (1837)

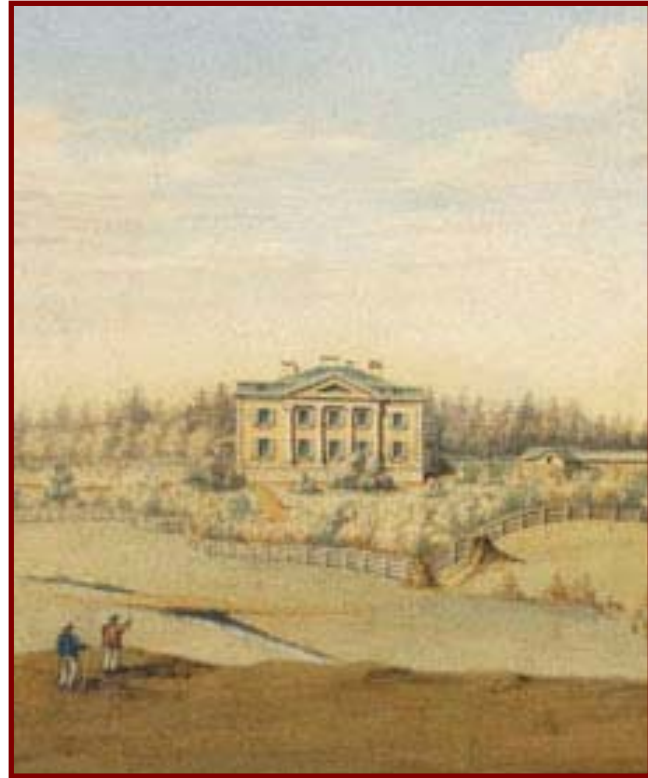
Wind Mills, CITY OF TORONTO, 14th Mar 1837
Hon. Wm. Allan

Bought of WILLIAM GOODERHAM.

	s.	d.
1836 Oct 21 - 2 1/2 cwt. Lbs. -	14	0
— 24 - 3 1/2 cwt. do -	5	3
Nov 16 30 cwt. Man -	17	6
Dec 28 13 - 11 -	9	0
1837 Jan 25 - 18 - do -	15	0
Feb 15 - 30 - do -	5	1
	4	5 9
March 15 By Cash	4	5 0
		9

ppm Wm Gooderham
J. Smith

Receipt dated March 14, 1837 TPL
oldest surviving document for G&W



Moss Park by John George Howard, 1834 ROM
Howard designed a portico and surveyed a street

Customers for the mill and the distillery came from all classes – from soup-kitchen patrons and ordinary store-keepers to the highest-and-mightiest, including lieutenant governors, bishops, and men of wealth-and-position. Among the wealthiest and best-connected of customers was the Hon. William Allan, whose receipt for purchases from William Gooderham’s “Wind Mills” is the oldest known business record directly associated with Gooderham & Worts. Dated March 14, 1837 and signed by an employee of William Gooderham, the receipt covered regular purchases of flour made in 1836 and 1837 and amounted to £4 5s 9p. Obviously, Mr. Allan didn’t make the purchases himself, but the flour ground beside Toronto Bay and collected by one of Allan’s servants, made its way up to the ovens and then the tables of Moss Park overlooking Taddle Creek.

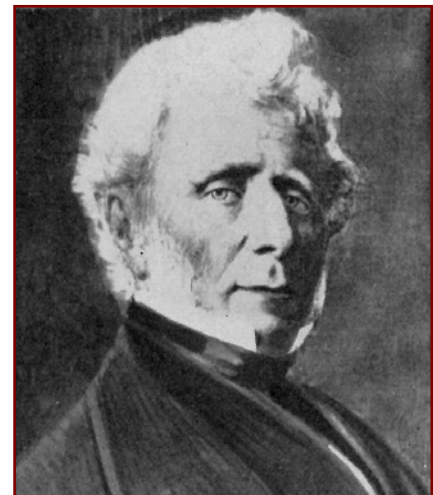
William Allan was born in 1770 at Moss farm, near Huntly, Aberdeenshire, Scotland. The impecunious young Scotsman emigrated to Canada around 1787, first to Montreal where he joined a firm headed by countrymen (including one from his native village), and then to Niagara (later Niagara-on-the-lake). He arrived in 1787 or 88, before Lt. Governor John Graves Simcoe ... or the founding of York in 1793.

In Niagara, he learned the basics of trade and cultivated some of the contacts that would help him flourish when he moved to the new capital of Upper Canada, York, in 1797. There, both in partnership and on his own, Allan prospered as a merchant, with his own store, his own wharf, and an increasing number of appointments. Before long, he held an impressive array of posts, summarized by Dr. Henry Scadding in the first history of Toronto (1873):

... on the east side of Frederick Street, was the first Post Office, on the premises of Mr. Allan who was postmaster; and southward, where this street touches the water, was the Merchants' Wharf, also the property of Mr. Allan; and the Custom House, where Mr. Allan was the Collector. We gather also from Calendars of the day that Mr. Allan was likewise Inspector of Flour, Pot, and Pearl Ash; and Inspector of Shop, Still, and Tavern Duties. In an early, limited condition of society [such as York], a man of more than ordinary aptitude for affairs is required to act in many capacities.

One of these capacities was as an officer in the York militia. During the American capture of York in April 1813, Allan played a major role, quite literally. Major Allan was one of the senior officers left to negotiate terms of surrender after Major General Sir Roger Hale Sheaffe retreated with the British regulars to Kingston. During this fraught period, Allan's store was looted by the enemy (he later received substantial compensation) and he irritated the Americans sufficiently to be regarded as "obnoxious." All in all, along with fellow Anglican-Aberdonian, Rev. John Strachan, Allan became "one of the heroes of capitulation," according to the somewhat strange phrasing of the [Dictionary of Canadian Biography](#). He also made substantial profits by supplying the garrison with grain and other necessities of life in the wartime wilderness of Upper Canada.

After the war, Allan moved on to ever more important roles, increasing his personal fortune and influence in the process. From being the town's leading merchant and holder of multiple local offices, he became the "unquestioned doyen of Upper Canadian business" and holder of sundry provincial offices. Among other things, he was a founder and long-time president (1822-1835) of the Bank of Upper Canada, which started in his store and grew to occupy the elegant quarters still at the northeast corner of George and Adelaide (then Duke) Streets. It was here, in fact, that William Gooderham and James Worts later made their large deposit on July 27, 1832 to establish the milling business of [Worts & Gooderham](#).



William Allan, TPL

Like many of his contemporaries in the new-world wilderness, Allan speculated in land. Over a period of 60 years, Allan acquired thousands of acres located throughout the province. His most valuable property, however, remained the “park lot” that he had purchased just north of the town settlement in 1819. This pine-wooded area occupied the area bounded by streets later known as Queen, Bloor, Jarvis and Sherbourne.

Around 1827, Allan began work on what would become the splendid Moss Park mansion. On the west side of today’s Sherbourne Street, Allan’s grand Greek Revival residence presented its backside to Samuel Jarvis’s Hazelburn, a fact not appreciated by Mary Jarvis who sniffed in a letter to her mother, Mrs. Powell:

Mr. Allan’s new house is quite a palace and puts us completely in the back ground being three times the size of this and we think Mr. Allan promises himself some amusement in viewing the improvements made on Mr. Jarvis’ premises as he has put twelve windows in the end of the house next to us – which gives it a very odd appearance.

Mr. Allan’s “palace” reportedly cost the princely sum of £3,248 for construction and a similar amount for alterations and furnishings. The dining room was 18 by 24 feet, the library was 18-foot square, enormous columned pediments stood at either end. Orchards and gardens lay to the south, while dense woods stretched northward.

During the 1830s and 40s, Allan continued to make improvements to the house. Architect, surveyor, and artist John George Howard designed additions, including a portico for the front entrance and then a bath with running hot and cold water that was installed in 1841 ... the year when gas street-lighting arrived in Toronto and most residents were still using outside privies. In 1845, Howard surveyed a new road along the eastern boundary and laid out building lots that would be developed – at great profit – by Allan’s son, and only surviving child, George William Allan. The new road, Allan’s Lane, later became Sherbourne Street.



Moss Park (top), Windmill (bottom) & Taddle Creek from 1842 Cane Map (highlighting added) CTA

Howard-the-artist painted at least two views of Moss Park that give us some idea of the grandeur of the estate and pastoral charm of nearby "[Vale Pleasant](#)" at about the time that Messrs. Gooderham and Worts were establishing themselves on the lakefront just east of where Taddle Creek entered the bay.



What may be Taddle Creek flows past Moss Park toward Windmill, John George Howard, 1834 ROM

For all their worldly success – which was considerable – William Allan and his wife Leah suffered dreadful personal losses. Nine of the couple’s eleven children died by 1832: four in 1822, one in 1823, two in 1830 and two in 1832. Another daughter died in 1850 at the age of 31. Only one child survived his father: George William Allan, who inherited Moss Park, became extremely successful, and died at the ripe old age of 79. George’s own twin brother had died at 14 months.

Moss Park, therefore, became the scene of repeated sorrow as one, after another, of the couple’s children succumbed to consumption, scarlet fever, whooping cough and other diseases. The death of their “lovely,” eldest daughter Elizabeth in January 1832 was felt particularly acutely, according to social commentator, [Mrs. Anne Murray Powell](#), who saw it as

lamentable proof of the insufficiency of wealth to promote or rather confer happiness; Allan from a state of indigence is one of the richest men in the community; his house as you know is a Palace; its splendour has become desolation.

Allan's wife died in 1848. Five years later, William died in 1853, reportedly the oldest and wealthiest, but certainly not the happiest, man in Toronto.

Over time, the relationship between the Gooderhams and the Allans evolved from customer to colleague. Wealth and proximity ensured that their paths crossed in business, society, and even local politics. In 1855, for example, William Gooderham served as Alderman for St. Lawrence Ward on a City Council headed by Mayor George William Allan of adjacent St. David Ward. By the end of his life in August 1881, William Gooderham, the new immigrant who had sold flour to the Hon. William Allan in the 1830s, was one of the wealthiest men in the city, was survived by 11 of his 13 children, and was buried in St. James Cemetery ... where he shares eternity with his wealthy predecessor and other members of the Allan, Gooderham and Worts families.



William Allan's flour bill came to £4 5s 9p ... perhaps he paid with currency like this 1838 two-dollar note from "his" bank *National Currency Collection, Currency Museum–Bank of Canada.*

For more about William Allan and Moss Park, see: "Allan, William," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*; Liz Lundell's 1997 "Moss Park," in *The Estates of Old Toronto*, pp. 56-57; John Ross Robertson's 1894 "Moss Park," in *Landmarks of Toronto*, volume 1, pp. 559-561. Note that the quotation from Mary Jarvis's letter about Moss Park is found in Liz Lundell's book; and the quotation from Anne Murray Powell comes from the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*.

Sources differ on when William and Leah Allan's children died. To clarify these matters, Nancy Mallett, archivist at St. James Cathedral, and volunteer researcher Bill Britnell compiled the toll based on church records. The picture is more complicated, but just as tragic as others have suggested. As indicated, nine of the Allans' eleven children had died by 1832, of various causes, including scarlet fever, consumption, water on the brain, and whooping cough. 1822, 1830 and 1832 were particularly harsh, with multiple deaths.

Family of the Hon. William and Leah Tyrer (Gamble) Allan
Married at Kingston July 24, 1809

1. William George Allan – born 1810, died Jan. 11, 1822 of water on the brain. Aged 11.
2. Elizabeth McGill Allan – born 1812, baptized at St. James 17 January, 1813, died 10 January, 1832 of scarlet fever. Aged 19.

3. John Allan – born 1814, baptized at St. James July 10, 1814, died June 2, 1822 of consumption. Aged 8.
4. Margaret Monet (?) Allan – born 1816, baptized at St. James May 30, 1816, died August 20, 1822 of consumption. Aged 6.
5. Isabella Allan – born 1818, baptized at St. James July 18, 1819, died April 23, 1850 of disease of the lungs and heart. Aged 31.
6. Hannah Allan – born about July, 1820, baptized at St. James August 15, 1820, died January 17, 1822 of water on the brain. Aged 18 months.
7. George William Allan – born January 9, 1822, baptized at St. James May 28, 1822, died July 24, 1901 of syncope. Aged 79. Married Louisa Matilda Robinson and later Adelaide Harriet Schreiber.
8. Morris John Allan – born 1822, baptized St. James May 28, 1822, died March 17, 1823 of water on the brain. Aged 14 months.
9. Prideaux Selby Allan – born about June, 1825 in Hackney, England, died February 11, 1832 of consumption. Aged 6years and 8 months.
10. David William Allan – born about April, 1830,baptized at St. James June 17, 1830, died June 25, 1830 of whooping cough. Aged 2 months.
11. Catherine Magdalene Allan – born about April, 1830, baptized at St. James June 17, 1830, died July 16, 1830 of whooping cough. Aged 2 months.

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