

Andrew in Kimball – The Andrew Family of Kimball, Ontario

Introduction

Paul Morden, a reporter with *The Observer (Sarnia)* provided this article about a branch of his family who settled west of the hamlet of Kimball, in historic Moore Township, Ontario.

The Andrew Family farmstead was located at Lot 18 on the 4th Concession of Moore Township. This site is near the northeast corner of Courtright Line/County Road 80 and Tecumseh Road -- what the locals call the "S bend". The "S bend" was constructed to make passage over the tracks of the New York Central Railway safer. (The irony of that is that the county road [formerly provincial Highway 80] was re-configured just a couple of years before New York Central ceased operations in May, 1960 of the St. Clair Branch [from St. Thomas to Courtright].) There are no longer any buildings on the former Andrew property.

(Just to make things a little bit confusing, there were two hamlets with the name of Kimball in what is now St. Clair Township. One was located in Sombra Township and one in Moore Township. The Kimball in Sombra Township was the north half of the village of Wilkesport -- only the south half of the village, below Concession 13 (Main Street), was known as Wilkesport. Both the Kimballville in Sombra Township and the Kimball in Moore Township were named for William Kimball, the proprietor of the first store in Sombra Township's Kimball. William Kimball was the person responsible for shifting the original village of Wilkesport (afterwards known as East Wilkesport) westwards to its present location when he established the first store and became the postmaster in 1852.

William Kimball later moved north into Moore Township and established a store and post office in 1878 at the corner of the 4th Line of Moore Township [now Courtright Line/County Road 80] and the Kimball Road/County Road 31 [the present site of Kimball].)

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William Isaac Andrew was born in Lincolnshire, England in 1797. He grew to be six foot, four inches tall and was said to have the eyes of a dreamer. He married Elizabeth Ann Sharpe, born 1802 at Fishing River, England. She was just five foot. They had 11 children.

William and Elizabeth's middle son George was 19 when he boarded a ship for New York and fled the desperate poverty of 1800s working class England. The crossing took 16 weeks because of storms that tore the sails away at one point. When the captain forced sailors at gun point to climb the masts and

repair the rigging, some were washed away by icy waves. The ship survived and George arrived in New York with 50 cents in his pocket and one change of clothes.

George worked in New York to save enough money to bring his younger brother Jake across the ocean. Then, they both worked and saved to bring over William and Elizabeth, and siblings Matt, Sam, John and Lucy. William was 57 when he landed in the new world in 1854. The family moved to Hamilton and worked there for several years in the hospice and stove business.

George, Jake and Sam heard about railway jobs in New Orleans and left Hamilton, walking south to reach one of the northern branches of the Mississippi River. They worked their way the rest of the way south on riverboats. On the way, Jake survived a bout of yellow fever and an attempt by some of the crew to rob and toss him overboard. Once the brothers reached New Orleans, they discovered a glut for workers had lowered wages to eight cents an hour plus three swigs of whiskey.

When the American Civil War broke out, Sam and Jake joined the Union army and later settled in the U.S. but George headed back to Canada.

Once George made it back to Canada, he headed west from Hamilton, travelling by horseback along rivers and creeks. While staying overnight with one settler, George's horse killed the settler's horse. He left his animal as a replacement and continued on by foot. Eventually, he reached Moore Township and bought 100 acres on the fourth concession. William, Elizabeth and the others joined him, travelling by wooden scow along Lake Erie, the Detroit River, Lake St. Clair and the St. Clair River to Mooretown. The road only went inland as far as Moore Centre [corner of 6th Concession of Moore Township, now Moore Line, and Kimball Road/County Road 31] and four men had to carry the Andrew family stove through the thick timber to the homestead. There, at the age of 65, William began clearing his land and turning it into a farm.

Later on, Elizabeth and a neighbour woman would walk from Kimball to Sarnia to sell the farm's butter and eggs, always tucking a bottle of whiskey for William into the bundle of groceries they brought home. William died in 1884 at the age of 87 and was buried at Union Cemetery, Mooretown. Elizabeth died in 1901 at the age of 99.

George married Ann Elizabeth Painter of Waterdown, Ontario, the granddaughter of Lord and Lady Whitmarsh of Sussex, England. George and Ann had three children, Isaac, John and Elizabeth. Ann died of a ruptured appendix when Isaac was only four. George later married Elizabeth Shepherd and they had two more children.

Isaac grew up and began to farm in Moore. He married Margaret Johnston in 1896. They had nine children, William, Nellie, Janet, Ethel, Lillie, Mabel, Marguerite, Arthur and Leslie. Isaac became a successful farmer but Margaret was eager for a taste of city life so they packed up the family and moved to Windsor. Isaac built houses there until the Great Depression hit. When the housing market went bust, he returned to Moore Township and farming.

Ethel married Orlo Green, an auto plant worker and they had two children, William and Shirley. The family lived in Windsor, Toronto and then Guelph.

There, Shirley married a newspaper printer named George Morden. They moved to Kirkland Lake and then Sarnia. They had four children, Marnie, Kim, Cindy and Paul.

Paul grew up and became a reporter.

Acknowledgement: Paul Morden credits his great-aunt, the late Janet Tye of Brigden, Ontario, who died in 2010 at the age of 108, for researching and writing this family history.

Source: Paul Morden. "Digging Up the Family Roots", in *The [Sarnia] Observer*. Tues. June 20, 2000, pg. B3.