

Robert Monro of Flanders, New Jersey

By R. Robert Mutrie

In central northern New Jersey lies a small community named Flanders, the colonial birthplace of three Monro brothers and their niece who settled in Norfolk County, Upper Canada. This community of a few hundred souls lies in rural Roxbury Township, Morris County west of Dover and east of Hackettstown.

In the Flanders Methodist Church Cemetery stands the gravestone of the Scottish immigrant ancestor Robert Monro who died 1 Jul 1804, aged 87 years. His will, dated 28 Jun 1803, named his wife Mary, their sons John, William, Robert and James and daughters Ann, Mary and Elizabeth. John, Robert and James were all pioneering in Norfolk County at the time. Only William continued at Flanders; even his daughter Elizabeth (Monro) Douglass, also named in the will, followed her uncles on the 450 mile trek northwest. We have not learned what became of the daughters named in Robert Monro's will.¹

A number of Norfolk's pioneers came from this area of New Jersey: from Schooley's Mountain (a short distance to the southwest) came Reverend Jabez Collver, Timothy Collver and Frederick Sovereign. About 12 miles southeast of Flanders lies Basking Ridge, the former home of the Donald McCall family.

The Will of Robert Monro

There is an interesting aspect to the signed date and the probate of the will of Robert Monro of Flanders when compared to his gravestone. The date of death on the stone is clearly July 1, 1804. Yet his will was probated nearly a year earlier on August 4, 1803. This could be an early example of a living will.

The probate includes an inventory that indicates a man of modest means. However, the occupations chosen by his sons indicate a father who was able to provide them with a top grade education.

Oldest son John Monro held the rank of Lieutenant in the New Jersey Volunteers, a Loyalist force in the American Revolution. He was subsequently a substantial landowner in Upper Canada.² His pioneer home in Walsingham Township, Norfolk County is reputed to have hosted an early school.³

William Monro, the second son, stayed in New Jersey, where he served as a Judge of the Common Pleas in Morris County. He bought and sold a number of properties in the county between 1805 and 1844.⁴

Robert Monro Jr., the third son, was a physician, a much needed occupation in the backwoods of early Norfolk County.⁵

¹ Transcript of the will of Robert Monro received from family researcher Charles C. Monro III

² Archives of Ontario, Upper Canada Land Petition "M" Bundle 1, Document Number 31

³ Madeline C. Mutrie, Compiler. "Tweedsmuir History of St. Williams." The St. Williams Women's Institute, 1967. Undocumented family lore passed down in the Gillaspy, Woodward and Mutrie families.

⁴ Charles C. Monro III photographed a page in the Morris County Register of Deeds with entries for Judge William Monro

⁵ E. A. Owen, *Pioneer Sketches of Long Point Settlement*. William Briggs & Co. (Toronto: 1898) referred to him as "Dr. Robert Monro"

Youngest son James Monro, a merchant, erected a substantial public house in Charlotteville Township, Norfolk County. This served as the earliest seat for the London District Courts which governed the area.⁶

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The following was researched and provided by Charles C. Munroe III from a transcript viewed by him.

In the name of God Amen I Robert Monro, of the township of Roxbury and county of Morris in the State of New Jersey, being weak in body but of perfect and sound mind, blessed be God, do make and publish this my Last Will and Testament in manner following –

- 1) It is my will that my son John Monro and my son William and my son Robert and my son James shall have two shares of all my real and personal estate. It is my will the heirs of my daughter Ann, deceased, and my daughter Mary and my daughter Elizabeth shall have one share of all my estate, real and personal.

It is also my will that my granddaughter Elizabeth Monro, the daughter of my son William Monro, shall have out of my estate as followeth – one two year old mare, one cow, six sheep and one feather bed and bedding- also I bequeath and give to my wife Mary one third of all my real and personal estate during her life and after her death then it is my will that her third shall be deemed as above mentioned.

Lastly I appoint my wife Mary executive and my son William Monro executrix of this my last will and testament. It is my will that my executive shall sell my lands.

In witness whereof set my seal sea subscribed my name to the same this twenty-eighth day of June one thousand eight hundred and three.

Signed, sealed, delivered and published by the said Robert Monro this my Last Will and Testament. In the presence of us the subscribers.

His mark Robert Munro (an X mark)

Thomas Lanadon,
Robert R. Henry
Benjamin F. Bird

Morris County

To wit : Thomas Lanadon, one of the witnesses to this will being duly sworn doeth depose and say that he saw Robert Munro, the testor therein named, sign and seal the same and heard him publish, pronounce and declare the within writing to be his last will and testament and that at the doing thereof the said testor was of sound and disposing mind and memory as far as this informant knows and as he verily believes, and that Robert R. Henry and Benjamin F. Bird the other witnesses were present at same time and

⁶ Fraser, Alexander, “Minutes of the Court of General Quarter Sessions of the Peace For the London District, 1800-1809, 1813-1818, in *Twenty-second Report of the Department of Public Records and Archives of Ontario*, 1933 (King’s Printer, Toronto, ON: 1934)

subscribed their names as witnesses together with this informant in the presence of the said testator.

Thomas Lanadon

Sworn at Morristown the 4th of August, AD 1803 before me

Jaber Campfield Turngate

Morris County to wit :

Mary Monro and William Monro the executors of the last will and testament of the within named Robert Monro, deceased, and being duly sworn severally depose and say that the within writing contains a true and perfect inventory of all and singular the goods chattels and credits of the said deceased as far as have come to their knowledge or possession or to the possession of any other person or persons for their use.

Sworn at Morristown the 4th of August, 1803 before me

Jaber Campfield Turngate

Signed by her mark Mary Monro

Signed William Monro

Morris County, to wit:

Thomas Lanason, one of the appraisers of the within inventory, being duly sworn doeth declare that the goods, chattel and credits in the said inventory set down and specified were by him appraised according to their just and true respective rates and values, after the best of his judgment and understanding and that Benjamin Condit, the other appraiser was present at the same time and consented in all things to the doing thereof and that they appraised all things bought to their view for appraisement.

Sworn at Morristown the 4th day of August, 1803 before me Jabon Campfield Turngate

Inventory of the Estate of Robert Monro

Morris County

To Wit : Mary Monro and William Monro the executors in the within testament named being duly sworn depose and say that the within instrument containing the ---- last will and testament of Robert Monro the testator there in named, so far as they know and as they verily believe that they will well and truly perform the same, by paying first the debts of the said deceased and then the legates in the last will and testament specified, so far as the goods, chattels and credits of the said deceased can thereunto extend; and that they will make and exhibit into the prerogative office of New Jersey true and perfect inventory of all and singular the goods, chattels and credits of the said deceased that have or shall come to their knowledge or possession, or to the possession of any of the person or persons for their use, and render a just and true account As an hereinto lawfully required.

Sworn at Morristown the 4th day of August AD 1803 before me

Jaber Campfield Turngate

**Inventory of Robert Monro of Flanders, New Jersey
Died 1 July, 1803**

(Description)	Dollars	Cents
Wearing apparel consisting of the following articles		
One deep blue broad cloth coat	6	-
One deep blue homespon suit cloth coat	3	-
One old deep blue homespon suit cloth coat	-	75
One great coat	2	
One pair of velvet breaches and vest	2	-
One pair old woolen trousers	-	50
Two pair linen trousers and one silken vest	-	75
Five pair of woolen stockings	2	-
One Boram hat and one woolen	1	75
One new flannel shirt and one old flannel shirt	1	50
One pair of shoes	-	25
One yard homespun mint broadcloth	-	75
12 yards of black broad homespun cloth	15	-
One mare and suckling colt	80	-
One red cow	15	-
One brown cow	15	-
four sheep	4	-
Two barrow hogs	7	-
One barrow shoat	1	25
Five hive of bees	10	-
One chopping axe	-	25
Three old hoes	-	25
The wooden work of one light plow	-	50
One collar and hames	1	50
One large clevis and one small clevis and trail chain	-	50
One light horse sled		25
One feather bed	5	-
One feather bed	2	-
One winter bed and bedstead and cover	1	-
One boalster and two pillows with cases	1	-
Two lining sheets	1	50
One woolen blanket	1	50
One lincey woolen blanket	1	-
One calico bed spread	3	-
One set of bed curtains and spread of the same	7	-
One feather bed and two bedstead and one cover	3	-
Five green Winsor chairs	5	-

Long Point Settlers: The Pre-Norfolk Series

Three red Winsor chairs	2	50
Six common chairs	2	-
One chest of drawers	1	25
one looking glass	1	25
One mahogany tea table	2	-
One common table	-	50
One old cupboard and one pair of old dressers	1	50
Three old sheets and one table cloth	1	75
One large spinning wheel, one small spinning wheel & one reel	1	75
One old converted and one bedspread and one sheet	2	-
One mans saddle, one womans saddle and one bridle	8	-
22 pounds of wool	8	25
Meal chest and 2 bags of flour	2	12
One bread tray, one sieve, 3 spoons, one foot stool	-	62
Beef & pork	1	50
One salt box with salt, sole leather and two small baskets	1	12
Two tubs with soap, 5 old casks, 3 glasses	2	12
One pair stilyards, one band box, one callender, one bake pan	1	75
Two iron pots, one fry pan, one copper teakettle	3	50
One pair of hand irons, fire shovel & tongs	1	75
Two iron trammels, one hand bellows, one old fry pan	1	75
One washing tub, one churn and three pails	2	12
Two smoothing irons, two tin cansters, 2 funnels & coffee pot	1	-
Tin candle mold, pepper box, grater and tin skimmer	-	37
Six earthen platters, five earthen pots, salt mortar	-	90
Eight white Delphi plates, three white delphi bowls	1	-
One earthen teapot, seven cups & saucers, one milk cup	-	80
One glass decanter, one half pint tumbler	-	50
Case with two sissors and shaving box, two iron candlesticks	-	77
One old sinter teapot and three small earthen jugs	-	90
Six silver teaspoons and glass bottle	3	
Two pair wool cards, three and one half pound of yarn	1	10
Upper leather for pair of shoes, one pitch fork and rake	-	29
One old brush sythe, hatchet and blind bridle	-	25
Nine oak boards, two ladders	-	85
Seven case knives, four forks & one drawing knife	-	60
Green grapes on the ground	3	
Green oats on the ground	4	
Green corn on the ground and potatos and flax	6	

One large Bible	2	
One pair of large sissors	-	6
A debt due from Col Jacob Drake by an agreement for one barrel cider spirits	16	12
One bond for five hundred dollars against Josepeh Scuder and Noah Scuder dated the 18th day of May 1796 interest and bond due from the first day of May, 1803	500	-
	796	37
Thomas Lanason Benjamin Condit Appraisers		

Articles found by the executor since making the within inventory which have not been inspected by the appraisers.

a quantity of spirit at the still house of Thomas Dickson	-	-
a hachet	1	-
a whittening pot	-	25
spoon mold and iron ladle	1	-
	2	25

***Robert Monro in the Petition of his son James
By R. Robert Mutrie***

In Canadian records there is one mention of the father of the Monro brothers. On 31 Mar 1797 James Monro filed an Upper Canada Land Petition stating that he married a daughter of Daniel (*sic*: Donald) McCall and brought his family to the province. He had received a grant of 200 acres of land. *James noted that his father served His Majesty during the American Revolution and was expected in the province during the following summer.* James requested additional land for himself and a grant for his wife, the daughter of a Loyalist. An attached certificate of Samuel Ryerse, JP dated 22 Mar 1797 stated that James was aged 25 years, born in New Jersey, a farmer.⁷

⁷ Archives of Ontario, Upper Canada Land Petition "M" Bundle 2, Document Number 89