

PROMINENT FAMILIES OF THE PERIOD

PETER MCCALLUM 1805-1892

A shrewd businessman and a Cobourg-builder



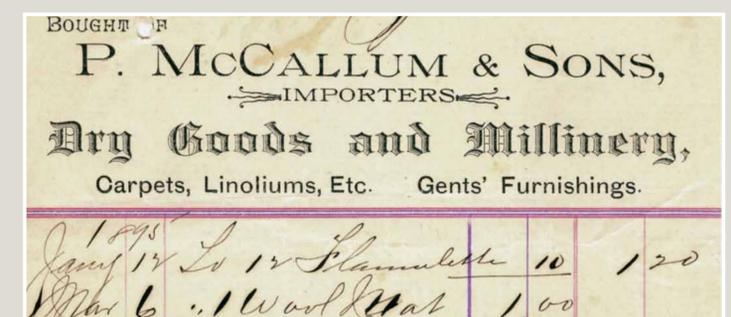
McCallum & Sons Store (middle of photo)

In 1844 McCallum built a large three storey brick store. A shrewd businessman, he could foresee economic opportunities. At the outbreak of the American Civil War, he bought up all of one wholesaler's stock of "grey cotton." It filled the entire basement of his Cobourg store. Over the course of the Civil War the price of cotton soared and **the canny merchant made a small fortune on cotton alone.**

When his original store was destroyed by fire, McCallum immediately replaced it in 1871 with a large elegant building at 23-29 King Street West. The first floor was the "goods room," the second housed floor carpets, oil cloths and millinery. The third floor was storage and the basement housed up to 20 tailoresses who worked to produce goods and special orders.

WHO HE WAS:

In 1831 Peter McCallum, a recent Scottish immigrant, established a small store in Cobourg. By the time of his death it was **one of the largest dry goods and millinery businesses in the area.** The family business graced Cobourg's main street for 98 years.



Invoice from McCallum & Sons Store

WHAT HE DID HERE:

McCallum funnelled his profits into local real estate, eventually becoming the largest landowner in Cobourg. Bernard McAllister, who worked in the tax office, said that **Peter McCallum “did more to build up Cobourg than any other man**, all with his own money and ...was the largest taxpayer in the town.” He also served as a Commissioner of the Town Trust with responsibility for overseeing finances of the harbour and railway.



351 William St. today...

With his wife, Margaret Ross (1813-1878), whom he married shortly after arriving in Canada, he had six children. In 1844 the family moved into a Georgian style home which he built on William Street. The attractive portico and veranda were added circa 1900.



23-29 King Street West today...

Two of the McCallum sons, Charles and Peter Jr., continued the family business. When Peter became a lawyer, Charles continued running the store on his own and was succeeded by his son, also Charles. When Charles Jr. died in 1929, the store was closed.

The children and grandchildren of Peter McCallum Jr. continued to live in Cobourg until the 1950s. Bernard McAllister wrote in his memoirs that he'd known five generations of McCallums and never heard anything mean or dishonourable about them.