

McCormick

One of the most successful contractors in Newport during the period was Michael A. McCormick. His grandfather, Roger McCormick, had emigrated to the United States from Ireland with his young sons and established a grocery business in Newport.

Roger McCormick's son John, who had been born in Killarney, Ireland, served his apprenticeship as a mason in Newport. He worked on the building of Fort Adams, as so many Irishmen of his generation had done. Unlike many, he went on to become a contractor and in the Newport Mercury of 6 January, 1866, mention was made of a school built at the rear of St. Mary's Church by John and Michael McCormick. This school was three stories high, gray stone with granite trimming, and its total cost was \$30,000.

John married Eunice Gillen, a native of Roscommon, Ireland, who had come to the United States with her sisters. The two had eight children, including Michael A. McCormick, who was born 22 January 1858.

Michael McCormick attended Newport schools until he was 16 years of age, and like so many of his generation, sought out a trade. He worked as a plumber, a clerk in a grocery store, and finally was apprenticed to building contractor William S. Cranston for three years. He went on to become a journeyman carpenter in Taunton, and finally came back to Newport in 1884 to go into business for himself as a contractor. He was 26 years old at the time.

From the beginning, his business was a success and he constructed many public and private buildings through the area. These included not only his buildings in Newport, but work on contracts in Portsmouth and Jamestown as well. His was clearly one of the leading concerns of its kind in Newport.

For several years, Michael A. McCormick served as a representative of the Fifth Ward on the Newport City Council, and as a member of the Board of Directors of the State Home and on the Newport School Committee.

In September 1896, Michael McCormick married Ellen L. Maher. Her parents, William H. and Margaret Ryan Maher, owned and operated one of Newport's largest florist and landscaping businesses. Michael and Ellen McCormick had five children: Lillian, J. Harold, Margaret, Eunice and Eileen. Eunice (Conron) and Eileen (Lawton) were twins and both currently live in Middletown. Michael A. McCormick died October 21, 1931.

SELECTED BUILDINGS CONSTRUCTED BY MICHAEL A. McCORMICK IN NEWPORT

Public Buildings

Rhode Island Armory

The Rogers High School on Broadway

Carey School

Newport Historical Society (bricking-in the Sabbatarian
Meeting House and building the three-story addition in 1915)

Convent of the Cenacle

Hazard Memorial School

St. Joseph's Rectory

No. 6 Fire House

The Audrain building

The City Hall on Broadway

Newport Daily News Building on Thames Street

Private Residences

"Gray Craig" for J. Mitchell Clark

"Sea Edge" for Norman Whitehouse

"Sea Cove" for Norman Whitehouse

"By the Sea" for August Belmont

"White Lodge" for Lispenard Stewart

"Villarosa" for E. Rollins Morse