

LANDMARKS

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*Street name honors Canadian army's first full general***Geoffrey Castle**

Arthur Currie Lane in Victoria West is named in honor of the first full general in the Canadian Army. During the First World War, Currie was in command of the force which captured Vimy Ridge and became one of Canada's most decorated soldiers, having received, among other awards, the Distinguished Service Medal, Croix de Guerre and a knighthood.

Arthur William Currie was born at Naperton, Ont., in 1875 and raised on his father's farm. Currie decided to go west in 1894 when he was 18 years old. He entered the teaching profession and taught at Sidney Elementary School. It was a one-room structure. He also taught for a while at Boys' Central School in Victoria. In 1900, he entered into a partnership in the insurance and real estate field with J.S.H. Matson who also owned the *Colonist* newspaper.

In August 1901, Currie married Lucy Sophia Chatworth Musters of Comox. The marriage took place at St. Savior's Church, on Henry Street in Victoria West. The couple had two children, Marjorie and Garner. Currie's spare time was spent with the militia and he demonstrated exceptional aptitude in military matters. In 1906, he was made provincial manager of the National Life Assurance Company, later joining R.A. Power in another partnership.

From 1904 until the onset of the war, the Curries lived in a delightful Victorian Queen Anne-style cottage which had a number of Italianate features. The lower part of the structure was red brick with horizontal wood siding above. Prominent features highlighted in a colorful manner are the roof brackets, turned wood posts, fretwork, window frames and porch details. Most prominent are the front stairs which became badly deteriorated and had to be reconstructed faithfully from old photographs. A complete restoration of the building was carried out a few years ago along with neighboring homes overlooking Selkirk Water.

By 1912, Currie was a lieutenant-colonel. In the war, he commanded the 50th (Gordon Highlanders) Regiment, composed of four militia groups consisting of eight officers and 226 men. This led to the formation of the 16th Canadian Scottish Battalion. Currie's aide-de-camp was another Victorian, Major Cecil Roberts, who became a B.C. land surveyor.

From 1920 until his death in 1933, at age 57, Currie served as vice-chancellor of McGill University. Lady Currie outlived her husband by 36 years and died in Montreal.

The house in Victoria West, originally owned by Jane Warner but best known for the general, is now a heritage designated structure.

Geoffrey Castle is president of the Victoria Historical Society.

