

Victoria pioneer was soldier, bank teller, reporter . . .

Geoffrey Castle

Beaumont Thomas Frederick William Boggs returned to Vancouver from the Similkameen gold fields just three days before the Great Fire, which started near the railway roundhouse June 17, 1886, consumed the city. He had 75 cents to his name.

Born in Halifax, N.S., in 1863, Boggs was descended from United Empire Loyalists. After completing his education, he worked for his uncle in the wholesale drug business. Later, he joined the 66th Battalion, Princess Louise Fusiliers, became a lieutenant, and volunteered to serve in the Northwest Territories during the North-West Rebellion.

After working for a while at the Royal City Mills in Vancouver, Boggs moved to Victoria where he became a reporter for the *Standard* newspaper, owned by controversial and fiery Amor de Cosmos.

He took a job as a bank teller before entering the real estate business of F.G. Richards and then Crane, McGregor and Boggs. This firm started the Oak Bay Land Improvement Company, which built the Mount Baker Hotel, sold land in Oak Bay and promoted the early development of Gordon Head where fruit growing was introduced.

On June 23, 1890, Boggs married Louise Mary Richardson, daughter of George Richardson, who came from Kent, England, to work for the Hudson's Bay Company in 1858. The couple had a fine Queen Anne-style home built for them on Alston Street, now Arthur Currie Lane, overlooking the Gorge in once-fashionable Victoria West. The hipped roof has two main gables; one of them angled at the corner of the house. A veranda overlooks the water and above is a balcony with railing. The slope of the land emphasizes the height of the house, built with clear, well-seasoned lumber.

In 1892, Beaumont Boggs branched out into the insurance and sealing business. He continued to specialize in the sale and financing of farm lands on Vancouver Island, became president of the Victoria Real Estate Exchange, Shore Hardware and Canada Mosaic Tile Company and was involved with numerous other enterprises. He was busy in politics, school board affairs, the Royal Victoria Yacht Club, Independent Order of Foresters and Independent Order of Odd Fellows. By 1913, when Victoria's population was 46,000, Boggs's realty interests were foremost among some 300 others.

By the 1970s, "Maplewood," the home where Louise and Beaumont Boggs had raised their four children, was on the point of demolition. Fortunately, it became a painstaking restoration project, was designated a heritage building and received the Hallmark Society Award in 1986.

Geoffrey Castle is president of the Victoria Historical Society.



Maplewood, 1140 Arthur Currie Lane

Barry F. King