

## Hoggan's Store: 404 Stewart Ave: 1914

When constructed in 1914, Hoggan's Store on Stewart Avenue was considered one of the most modern and best equipped business blocks in Nanaimo. It was built using Gabriola bricks and is substantially intact. The store featured a wharf at which fishermen could dock and load up on supplies.

The store is a very good example of a vernacular Edwardian Commercial style building. This restrained, symmetrical style was very popular after the exuberant eclecticism of the Victorian era. All of the elements of Edwardian Commercial style are evident as expressed in the simple form and massing, symmetrical façade, overall restrained appearance, brick cladding, wooden sash windows, stained glass transom panels in the upper floor arched windows, pressed metal cornice, the cast iron columns, and the recessed storefront with obscure leaded glass panels.



Hoggan's Store is also significant because it was, for many years, the only commercial building in Newcastle Townsite. Its presence is a tangible reminder that this area was, from its initial development in the early 1900s to the 1960s, a prestigious, almost exclusively residential neighbourhood. Due to its corner lot location, Hoggan's Store has a prominent street presence and is a highly visible neighbourhood landmark.<sup>1</sup>

### Who lived here?

1. **William Hoggan and Agnes Pender 1914-1926**
2. **William Herdman and J.T. Williams: 1926-1953**
3. **Harmon Chester Lewis & Blanche Ada Bowick 1953-1974**

### 1. WILLIAM HOGGAN & AGNES PENDER 1914-1926

William Hoggan was born Jan 1 1881, on Gabriola Island the son of Alexander Hoggan, 51 and Mary Elizabeth Bradbury, 39. To get a complete picture of William Hoggan, one has to have an appreciation for his father, Alexander Hoggan (1829-1902), and his two uncles: David Hoggan (1832-1908) and William Hoggan (1836-1912).

William's father, Alexander Hoggan, was born Nov 3 1829 in Dunfermline, Fife, Scotland the son of James Hoggan (1791-1846) and Janet Beveridge (1802-1891) who had married on Jul 2 1826 in Dunfermline, Fife, Scotland. Janet Beveridge Hoggan, had raised four boys from her husband's, James', previous marriage to Bridget Moran (1788-1826) and then had six of her own, four of whom survived, and one daughter. The family had worked hard in Scotland and raised potatoes for their main food. Disaster struck when the crop was hit by the blight that had caused the famine in Ireland. James suffered a stroke that ended his life on Oct 18 1846.

Alexander married Agness Provan on Dec 7 1851 in Glasgow. Unfortunately, Agness developed tuberculosis from the dust in the linen mill where she worked and passed it on to their young children.

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<sup>1</sup> Supporting documentation: City of Nanaimo Development Services Department, file #6800-20-H01-02/404 Stewart Avenue; and Nanaimo Community Archives Building Plans collection.



day some plants on Gabriola can be traced to her original cuttings. After landing in San Francisco, Janet had to wait for weeks for a sailing vessel to take her to Nanaimo. It was getting close to winter and she was going on seventy years old. Her sons greeted her and built a log cabin for her. They bought her chickens and sent to San Francisco for other farm animals. For many years she would provide their stores with meat and produce, which they sold to the inhabitants of Nanaimo.

Mrs. Martha Holm who was a daughter of Alexander Hoggan recorded the following story of her grandmother, Janet Beveridge Hoggan:

*“My Grandma was a large, strong woman but you could not call her fat. She was all bones and not frightened of anyone or anything. Here is an experience that she had that might give you a kick. Uncle Dave was staying in Nanaimo and Uncle William had gone over to get groceries and he didn’t get back that night. She put away the cows and calves in the barn and after milking and feeding them went back to the house. Some hours later she heard the cows bellowing like mad, so she got her wrap on and a lantern and pitchfork and went down to the barn. When she got close, she saw that the hayloft door was open. So, she went into where the cows and calves were and up on the rafters above was a big panther ready to spring on the cattle. She hung the lantern up and took her pitchfork and jabbed that panther till he finally jumped out the loft door. Then she climbed up and fastened the door and went home with her fork and lantern.”<sup>2</sup>*

The Nanaimo Free Press of May 9, 1874 had this comment about Gabriola: *“many who see these grey beetling cliffs facing Nanaimo might think it inhospitable, barren island with nothing but gloomy pine trees on its surface. But this is not so, and though not above seven miles on its longest line, two or two and a half on its broadest, there are many patches of rich swamp and alder bottom. It contains no less than nineteen settlers: Messr. Degnen, Dick, Gray, Martin, Martin, Kemp, Edgar, Chapple, McGuffie, Eastthom, Hoggan, Hoggan, McLay, Hall, LeBoeuf, Goss, Caulfield, White, and Heath...”* David Hoggan was also treasuring his Scottish roots as a member of the organizing committee for the 119th Burns Anniversary celebration on Jan 25 1878. Price of admission for supper and the ball was \$3.00 with ladies admitted free.

Meanwhile, Alexander Hoggan and Mary Elizabeth Bradbury Hoggan were still living in Cow Bay, Cape Breton at the time of the 1871 Canada Census. Alexander was working as a coal miner. On Oct 1875, they arrived by schooner from Cow Bay to New York with the intention of returning to Great Britain but instead appeared to have made their way across the United States arriving in Nanaimo sometime before 1877. Their son Robert was born here on Aug 18 1878. Their journey from Nova Scotia across country and up the coast had been grueling and included an attempted abduction of their infant daughter by a lonely woman they met on the train, and a long delay waiting for a northbound ship in San Francisco.

Alexander worked briefly at the sandstone quarry on Newcastle Island while it was shipping stone for the building of the United States Branch Mint in San Francisco.<sup>3</sup> He then moved his family to a Dunsmuir

**BURN'S Anniversary**  
 The 119th Anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns, will be celebrated on  
**FRIDAY, JANUARY 25th, 1878,**  
 With a GRAND  
**BALL and SUPPER**  
 Dancing to commence at 8 o'clock; and Supper at 9 o'clock sharp.  
 Price of Admission for Supper and Ball—\$3 00. Ladies Free.  
 Committee of Arrangements—Messrs. J. Bryden, J. Hamilton, J. Fraser, J. Crossen, A. McKinlay, J. Linn, R. Gibson, T. Stevens, J. Phillips, J. Stewart, W. Morton, D. Hoggan, G. Riddall, R. Aiken, W. McTaggart, A. Easson and W. Horne.  
 No Tickets will be disposed of after the 22nd Inst.

<sup>2</sup> Jenni Gehlbach, Alexander Hoggan & family, SHALE 19, pp.46–8, November 2008. June Harrison’s book, pp.71–81. Also, in SHALE No.25 March 2011

<sup>3</sup> Jenni Gehlbach: Gabriolans and the sandstone quarry in SHALE No 19 November 2008, page 49

mining company house while he worked as a foreman at the Wellington coal mine with his sons, John and James. In 1877, working conditions were rough at the mine and Alexander was declared by Dunsmuir to be a ringleader in discussions among the miners about potential strike actions. On Apr 13 1877, Alexander's wife was removed from the company house and he was found guilty of "unlawfully and without legal authority compelling diverse persons...from lawfully performing their work" and jailed for over four months.<sup>4</sup> Issues about the house must have been resolved as in the 1881 Canada Census, the family is living in a mine house while Alexander is working as a miner. William Hoggan is just 3 months old having been born on Jan 1 1881; Alexander is 51 and Elizabeth is 40. William has 8 brothers and sisters: John Hoggan, 17; James Hoggan 15; Mary Hoggan 11; Janet Hoggan 9; Elizabeth Hoggan 7; Sarah Hoggan 6; David Hoggan 5; and Robert Hoggan 3.

In the 1891 Canada Census, the family has moved to Gabriola where William Hoggan is now 10 years old; Alexander is 61 and Mary E Hoggan is 50. Alexander Hoggan had by then achieved his objective of becoming a fulltime Gabriola farmer.<sup>5</sup> On Sep 9 1885, he pre-empted 62 acres in the S ½ of the NE ¼ of Section 20 around Cox Bay (originally Hoggan's Bay, called Paradise Bay by the Cox family, and later known as Peacock Bay). The wharf he built there was much used by north-enders in the early days, and he used his boat to carry mail and produce for his neighbours. In those days, people travelled to Nanaimo by their own boats, or had a ride with someone else who had a boat. *There were also no roads anywhere when the first Hoggans came and it was really something to move farm equipment and cattle. You had to take the cattle down to the wharf and down over the steep bank into the boat. The sheep would get down too far over the high bluffs, down into the wharf area, and then we'd have to climb down and either rescue them or shoot them. It would be impossible to get them up.*<sup>6</sup>



Black and white photo of the Hoggan homestead. People are standing outside on the porch  
From left to right: Caleb James Deeming, Albert James Deeming, Alexander Hoggan, Christina Hoggan and Sarah Deeming (nee) Hoggan.

In the meantime, the Hoggan Lake farm provided produce and meat for the uncle's Nanaimo store although their commercial fortunes varied.



On July 15 1874, the *Nanaimo Free Press* reported: "Several farmers of Nanaimo & District have formed...a club for the purpose of disposing of their rapidly increasing stock. They will to-day open a new butcher shop on Commercial Street...under the management of Mr. David Hoggan of Gabriola Island". The Hoggan brothers then bought out the Farmers' Market in 1875, and in 1881, David was selling beef, mutton, veal, and spiced beef and pork sausages there. In 1885, they sold the Farmer's Market to E. Hodgson. In 1891 the paper reported that William Hoggan had closed his small store near the Millstone Bridge because it was losing money.

<sup>4</sup> Daily British Colonist, Jun 1 1877 "Obstructing a Peace Officer".

<sup>5</sup> Jenni Gehlbach, Alexander Hoggan & family, SHALE 19, pp.46-9, Nov.2008. June Lewis-Harrison, The People of Gabriola, 1982, pp.71-81.

<sup>6</sup> Jenni Gehlbach: Gabriola's wharves – Descanso Bay in SHALE No 27 December 2013, p 49



In the *1891 Canada Census*, Alexander's mother, Janet Beveridge Hoggan, was now living with her sons William and David on Departure Bay Road having decided to give up island life after 15 years.<sup>7</sup> She died May 13 1891 in Nanaimo at the age of 88.



In *1893 William's Official BC Directory*, uncles David and William Sr were still living on Departure Bay Road with William being recorded as a general merchant. On Jun 13 1894, uncle David Hogan arrived in Quebec on the vessel *Pomeranian* returning from a trip to Glasgow.

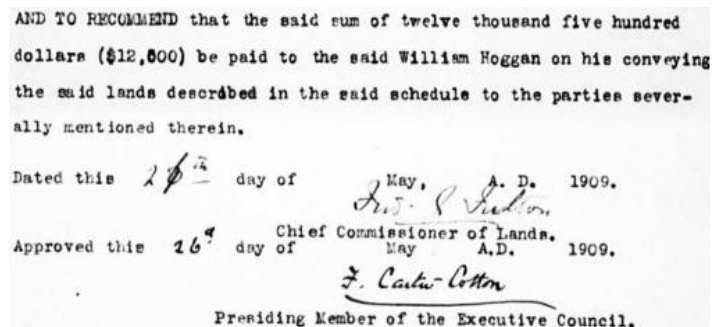


In the *1901 Canada Census*, Alexander and Mary Hoggan continued to live on Gabriola with four of their children still at home along with one grandson. Mary Elizabeth Bradbury Hoggan died on Mar 13 1901 in Nanaimo at the age of 59. Alexander Hoggan died Nov 3 1902 on Gabriola.

Young William Hoggan seems to be missing from the *1901 Census* and may have been off somewhere attending school. The *1901* and *1902 Henderson's BC Directories* note that

uncles David (1832-1908), clerk and William (1836-1912), grocer have a residence in Newcastle Townsite. In 1903, **William Hoggan, at the age of 22, officially joined his uncles in their store in Newcastle Townsite as a clerk although he had been working there since 1898.** In 1904, his brother Robert also joined the merchants as a clerk.

Uncle David Hoggan died on Apr 16 1908 at the age of 76. At the time of his death, David was in possession of a quite valuable Crown Grant of Lot 96 G Nanaimo District issued to him in 1904. Lot 96G appears to cover lands on both sides of the E & N railway from Stewart to as far west as Sunderland and north to Cypress Street. A large portion was within Newcastle Townsite. The E&N railway claimed ownership of the land and had already sold and conveyed it in parcels to 22 individuals including quite a number to a Thomas Kitchen and members of his family. On May 26 1909, William Hoggan, as David's brother and heir, agreed to convey the lands in consideration of \$12,500 paid to him by the government as compensation.



Young William fully took over the store in 1908. In the *1909 Directory of Vancouver Island*, Wm Hoggan is now the manager of "Wm Hoggan" while uncle William Hoggan is responsible for general merchandise. Both are living above the store at what was then 410 Stewart Avenue, corner of 4<sup>th</sup> now Rosehill.

On Apr 14 1910, young William Hoggan "one of Nanaimo's leading merchants" married Agnes Pender the eldest daughter of James Pender (1856-1940) and Hannah Elizabeth Dand (1867-1946). "At the close of the marriage ceremony the wedding party retired to the home of the bride's parents where breakfast was

<sup>7</sup> 1889 William's BC Directory

partaken of, after which Mr. and Mrs. Hoggan left on the morning train for Victoria, en route to California, where the honeymoon will be spent. On their return to this city, they will take up their residence on Newcastle townsite.”<sup>8</sup>

Agnes was born Mar 4 1889 in Nanaimo. Her father, James Pender was a miner of both coal and gold born Oct 7 1856 in Glasgow Scotland, arrived in Canada in 1883, and had married Hannah Dand on May 23 1888 in Nanaimo. Hannah was born Sept 26 1866, a native of Whickham, Durham, England and daughter of John Dand (1832-) and Jane Cartner (1835-1877). She, along with several brothers and sisters had arrived in Nanaimo sometime between 1881 and 1888. The Penders lived at 604 Prideaux Street. Picture: Jim Pender and Hannah Dand Pender standing 2<sup>nd</sup> from left along with Hannah’s sisters.



On Aug 12 1911, William and Agnes arrived at Ketchikan Alaska for a vacation or maybe they were searching out sources of fish for the grocery store? They would take another trip to Ketchikan on Jul 7 1926, this time with their son, William Pender Hoggan, age 11.



On Dec 20 1912, uncle William Hoggan died, at the age of 77, while he was in Oakland, California. The two bachelor brothers are buried together in the Nanaimo Municipal Cemetery.

In 1914, the year his son, William Pender Hoggan, was born, William built the grocery store anew, achieving “one of the most modern and best equipped business houses in Nanaimo”. It was described in the *Nanaimo Free Press* as a two-storey brick building on a concrete foundation at what was then number 410 Stewart Avenue, and “the only store in the Newcastle Townsite”. It cost \$15,000. The bricks, apparently, came from Gabriola.

“Bill” Hoggan, as he was known, was a prominent member of the Nanaimo Gun Club having joined that organization in 1898 and was one of the best trap shots and most enthusiastic supporters. On Sep 15 1920, the *Daily Colonist*, Victoria BC reported that W. Hoggan captured the club championship cup of the Nanaimo Gun Club for the third time since 1913. He was also an ardent hunter and fisherman.

In the *1921 Canada Census*, the Hoggans were presumably living above the store at 410 Stewart Avenue. William is 40; wife Agnes is 32; and son William Pender Hoggan is 6.

In 1926, Hoggan sold his business to J.T. Williams and William Herdman. Just two years later, on May 23 1928, William Hoggan died, at the age of 47, in the Vancouver General Hospital after a very brief illness. Agnes Hoggan and her son, William P, continued to live above the store at until at least 1949. Her mother, Hannah Elizabeth Pender was also living with them in 1945.

On Nov 17 1940, Agnes’s father, James Pender died and on Dec 16 1946, her mother, Hannah Elizabeth Dand Pender, died. The late Mrs Pender was described as kindly and with an optimistic personality which attracted a host of friends to her. She was a member of the Pioneers Society and a valued member of the

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<sup>8</sup> Vancouver Province, Monday April 18 1910

Baptist Church. Agnes was still living at 410 Stewart up to 1954. Her son, William Pender Hoggan was a clerk at Fletcher Music and living at 750 Connaught with his wife, Sylvia Berwick.

Agness Pender Hoggan died Dec 4 1979 at the age of 90 while apparently living on Newcastle Avenue. She was a life member and past president of the Nanaimo Hospital Auxiliary and a Native Daughter.

Son of William, William Pender Hoggan, a real estate agent, later resided in Nanoose with his wife, Sylvia. He died, in Nanaimo, Jul 24 1994.

## **2. WILLIAM HERDMAN AND J.T. WILLIAMS: 1926-1953**

New owner, William Herdman was born Mar 9 1884 at Newcastle-on-Tyne, England, the son of John William Herdman and Mary Cassidy. He arrived in Canada via Winnipeg in 1903 at the age of 19 and in the *1911 Canada Census* was working in Victoria as a grocery salesman presumably in the store of William Acton whose family he was lodging with. On Nov 29 1911 at the age of 28, he married Mary Davidson, 24, at the Dunsmuir Hotel, Vancouver. Mary was born Feb 12 1887 in Haydon Bridge, England, the daughter of John Davidson and Hannah Carr. In the *1912 Henderson Greater Victoria City Directory*, the Herdmans are now living in Nanaimo.

John Thompson Williams was born Apr 17 1884 at Nanaimo. His father, James Williams (1862-1919) was born in Australia after his grandparents, John and Janet McKinnell Williams, had emigrated there from Ayrshire, Scotland to work in the Queensland coal mines. In the meantime, Janet's family had moved to Nanaimo so John and Janet joined them. Young James went to school in the "old school house" on Haliburton Street before joining his father in the mines. In 1883, James married Margaret "Maggie" Joan Thompson and had two sons: John "Jack" Thompson Williams in 1884 and James Cecil Thompson in 1887. In the 1890's, the James and Maggie Williams decided to settle in Nanoose but eventually separated and Maggie Williams went back east with her younger son, Cecil. She would eventually return to Nanoose and inherit a house from her aunt where she lived until her death in May 1949. In the meantime, son John T Williams stayed with his grandparents and attended school in Nanoose.

On Sep 3 1913, John T Williams married schoolteacher May Barbara Grant (1883-1954) who was born in Cape Breton. They would have four children: Margaret Alexandria; Grant; Gordon; and Campbell. John's mother, Maggie Williams, was running out of money so in order to save the farm property, he and his family moved to the farm. In 1920, he and his wife opened a general store across the road from the house. John T Williams became a school trustee in Nanoose serving to 1936. He was also a Mason and a Rotarian. He and May were keen bridge players.<sup>9</sup>

Both William Herdman and John T Williams worked for George Pearson under the banner of Vancouver grocery wholesalers Malkin-Pearson. George Pearson was also the employer of John Trevor Dudley who started with the company in 1921 and who lived at 184 Mount Benson, another Newcastle Heritage Home, from 1942 to 1953. **By 1926, Herdman and Williams were ready to go out on their own and they purchased the Hoggan store on Stewart Avenue.**

The new store owner's names first appeared in the *1927 Wrigley's BC Directory* as J.T. Williams & Co general store at 410 Stewart Avenue in Townsite. Both the Herdmans and J. T. Williams are living at 410 Stewart or at least gave this address as their residence. Williams is also listed in the Nanoose directory

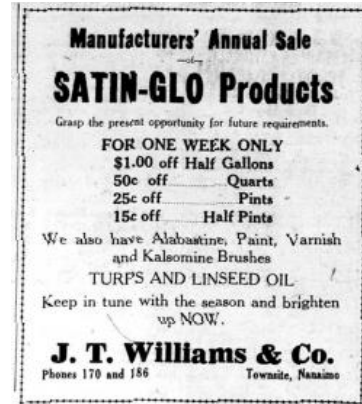
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<sup>9</sup> A History of Nanoose Bay First Edition 1958 by Margaret Williams Nicholls (daughter of John T Williams)

along with his mother, Mrs M J Williams, farming and his wife, M. B Williams, general store so that may have been his permanent residence.

In the 1929 *Wrigley's BC Directory*, William Herdman lists his home address as 266 2<sup>nd</sup> Street in Townsite whereas J.T. Williams continues to live above the store at 410 Stewart along with Agnes Hoggan. J.T. Williams also had a paint store in Townsite and one in Nanoose which was built in 1932.<sup>10</sup> The Herdmans would continue to live at 266 2<sup>nd</sup> Street in Townsite until 1935 when they moved to 501 Stewart Avenue.

This partnership went on until 1947 when Herdman took over the store alone running it as Herdman & Watson. The Herdmans continue to live at 501 Stewart while Agnes Hoggan and her son, William Pender Hoggan were still living above the store. William P was a salesman with H.A. Roberts Ltd real estate company.



By 1953, William Herdman had bowed out of the grocery business after selling it to Harmon Chester Lewis and was working as a salesman with Island Realty. William died Dec 26 1959 at the age of 75 still living at 501 Stewart Ave. His wife, Mary Davidson Herdman died May 1 1978, aged 91 in Nanaimo. John Thompson Williams had died on Sep 27 1958.

### 3. HARMON CHESTER LEWIS & BLANCHE ADA BOWICK 1953-1974

Harmon Lewis was born Oct 9 1908 at Tofield, Alberta the son of Allen Frank Lewis (1881-1972) and Edith May Parker (1880-1960). He was married on Apr 6 1927 at Edgerton, Alberta to Blanche Ada Bowick born Feb 16 1907 in Moody, South Dakota the daughter of William Watson Bowick (1873-1953) born in Montrose Scotland, a steam engineer by trade and Angeline Kneebone (1881-1952) born in Flandreau, South Dakota. In 1940, the Bowicks had come from Alberta to settle in Nanaimo.

By 1945, the Lewis's had also arrived in Nanaimo and were operating the Brechin Grocery Store at 221 St George with wife Blanche, working there as a clerk. They were living at 542 Vancouver in Townsite.

They took over the Hoggan's store from William Herman in 1953 and continued to live at 542 Vancouver for the remainder of their lives.<sup>11</sup> In 1962, Harmon was still a merchant living at 542 Vancouver Avenue.<sup>12</sup> In the 1963 *Canada Voters List*, Harmon classified himself as a "butcher" while in 1965, he was back to being a "grocer". By the 1972 *Canada Voters List*, Harmon is a manager; and in the 1974 *Canada Voters List*, Harmon was finally retired.

It might have been H C Lewis who joined the *Red & White* team of independent grocery stores. The *Red & White* was a national cooperative grocery chain providing centralized buying and distribution for small stores to allow them to compete against large chains. Many of the stores that did business under the *Red & White* name did so only briefly in the 1960s and 1970s after longer tenures as completely independent grocery stores, and later switched to other franchises or went out of business entirely. In Canada, the network of stores was managed by food wholesaler, Western Grocers Ltd which had some 700 *Red &*

<sup>10</sup> Advertisement is from the Nanaimo Free Press: Mar 27 1930

<sup>11</sup> Canada Voters List 1953

<sup>12</sup> Canada Voters List 1962



*White* stores throughout the prairies. Western Grocers was purchased in the 1940s by George Weston Limited, owner of Loblaws.

Harmon Lewis died Oct 12 1981 in Nanaimo at the age of 73. Blanche Bowick Lewis died Apr 3 1991 at the age of 84.