

G.L. Schetky Residence: 225 Vancouver Avenue

Built around 1898, the Schetky residence is an excellent example of a transitional late Victorian/Edwardian style bungalow. The Edwardian style, popular from about 1898 to 1910, is recognized for its simplicity and balance compared to the sometimes over complicated look of Victorian architecture. Less complex and decorative, this style tends towards a more symmetrical and classical appearance as embodied in the Schetky Residence.

The square-plan house has a central front entry with square chamfered columns, and a bell cast pyramidal roof. The long, low proportions mark the change in style at the end of the Victorian era, when tall, asymmetrical houses with highly decorated surfaces and complex rooflines went out of fashion. The ornamentation is limited to scroll-cut eave brackets, banded and corbelled chimneys, and a rear window flashed with coloured glass.



All the elements of this transitional style are expressed in the symmetrical massing, simple form, shingle cladding, board and batten foundation skirting, double-hung wooden sash windows, bell cast pyramidal roof, partly inset central entry porch, square chamfered columns, grid balustrade, scroll cut eave brackets, flashed glass panel at rear with coloured glass; and banded and corbelled chimney.

The Schetky residence's grounds also represent the type of landscaping that was favoured for Nanaimo's upscale neighbourhoods in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The mature Chilean Pine (Monkey Puzzle Tree) on the site is a neighbourhood landmark and listed on the City's register of heritage trees. These trees were a popular fad before World War I and were often brought in by ships' crews as souvenirs when they stopped to refuel in South America. Often given as gifts, they were planted singly or in pairs in front yards. Other landscape features include mature holly trees, lilac bushes, rose bushes along the walk, and a Japanese Plum. The grounds have a historical and physical relationship to the building and, as such, are an important component of the site's value.

Who lived at 225 Vancouver?

1. **George Littell Schetky and Ellen Katherine Cross 1897-1905**
2. **David Stephenson and Mary Randle 1906-1916**
3. **Frederick Jepson and Neita Estelle Walker 1916-1937**

1. GEORGE LITTELL SCHETKY & ELLEN KATHERINE CROSS: 1897-1905

George Schetky was born Jun 10 1867 in Philadelphia USA the son of Rev George Paterson Schetky (1824-1882) and his second wife, Eliza Burr Oliphant (1835-1921). His father had graduated from The Nashotah Theological Seminary in Wisconsin in 1851 and in 1853 was attending to an Episcopal parish in Louisville Kentucky when he married his first wife, Mary Robinson. They moved to Mount Holly, New Jersey where Mary Robinson Schetky died in 1861.¹ The Rev Schetky married his second wife, Eliza Burr Oliphant of Medford, New Jersey on Jan 26 1865 and was subsequently in charge of parishes in Philadelphia, Indiana and Michigan. In the *1880 US Census*, the family is living in Paw Paw, Michigan when George Littell Schetky was just 12 years old. In Dec 1881, the Reverend Schetky was taken ill in Michigan and suffered several cerebral hemorrhages in the middle of 1882 and died Nov 19 1882 in Philadelphia at the age of 57. He was buried in Mount Holly, New Jersey.²

¹ PAM 1887-7: Holiday circular Ogle, Campbell & Co., Columbia Street, New Westminster 1887

² The Schetky Family: A compilation of letters, memoirs and historical data by Laurence Oliphant Schetky, 1942, page 134

After his father's death, George, then just 15 years old, was employed in the Corn Exchange National Bank in Philadelphia for nearly three years and in June 1885 went to British Columbia, where he was employed at various occupations for about a year.

In 1886, he teamed up with an Edmond Ogle to start a dry goods business in Vancouver on Cordova Street as a partner along with Alfred Oliver Campbell and Eliza Jane Campbell. The company was called Ogle, Campbell & Co. The store opened just one week before the disastrous Vancouver fire of Jun 13 1886. Ironically, George was one of the founding members of the Volunteer Fire Brigade which was formed on May 28 1886.

George's partner, Edmund Ogle, was the nephew of Ruth Morton whose husband, John Morton was one of 3 Englishmen who founded Vancouver's West End. After his Vancouver store was destroyed, Edmund set about buying a business from a Dan Drysdale in New Westminster and reopened his own business again with Schetky as a partner. Ogle, Campbell & Co., was located on Columbia Street in New Westminster.³ Ogle also had another business called Ogle, Campbell & Freeman which appeared to sell textiles and Butterick patterns as advertised in *The Delineator: A Journal of Fashion, Culture and Fine Arts* published monthly.⁴



George apparently brought his mother to Canada as in the *1891 Census of Canada*, Eliza B Schetky, age 55, is living in New Westminster with her son, then 24 and a couple of lodgers by the name of A.O. Campbell and his sister, L.J. Campbell who were the other two partners of George. George lists himself as a "retired dealer in goods" while A.O. Campbell is a "retired dealer in hardware".

On Aug 12 1891 in New Westminster, George married Ellen Katherine Cross born April 18 1862 in Chelsea, England. She was the only daughter of John Hyde Cross, Esq., late of Her Majesty's war office and of Greenhithe, Kent,

Married, at the Holy Trinity church, New West Minster, British Columbia, Wednesday, Aug. 12th, 1891, by Rev. H. Irwin, George Littell Schetky, eldest son of the late Rev. Geo. P. Schetky, D. D. of West Michigan, to Ellen Catharine, only daughter of John Hyde Cross, Esq., late of Her Majesty's war office and of Greenhive, Kent, England.

England (1813-1897) and his second wife, Eliza Guerrier (1817-1912). In the *1881 England Census*, Ellen was 19 years old working as a school mistress and living with her mother, Eliza, in Lewisham in London. In the *1891 Census of Canada*, Ellen Katherine Cross and her mother, Eliza, were now living in New Westminster at the home of Ellen's brother, Gerald Cross, an accountant. Although in this census, Eliza is noted as a widow, according to the *1891 England Census*, they seem to have left her husband, John Hyde Cross aged 78 years, behind in England living with Susan Alice Cross another daughter by his first wife.

In the 1894 *Williams Official BC Directory of Vancouver*, G. L. Schetky is listed as manager of Ogle, Campbell & Co. with a residence on Royal Avenue in New Westminster. That same year, the company provided towels to some provincial government office for about £2 as listed in the *1893-1894 Public Accounts*.

On Apr 4 1894, notices appeared in the *British Columbia Gazette* announcing the dissolution of the partnership between Alfred Oliver Campbell, Eliza Jane Campbell, George L Schetky, Ralph P Freeman and Edmund Ogle for both companies: Ogle, Campbell & Co., and Ogle, Campbell & Freeman.

In Re OGLE, CAMPBELL & COMPANY.
ASSIGNEE'S NOTICE.
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:—I hereby give notice that having, with assent of the creditors, sold the stock in trade, fixtures, and good will of Ogle, Campbell & Company, gents' furnishing merchants, of this city, to EDMUND OGLE, all debts owing to the said firm are now payable only to the said Edmund Ogle, or his duly authorized agent. And I give further notice that Alfred Oliver Campbell, Eliza Jane Campbell, George L. Schetky, and Ralph P. Freeman have ceased to be partners in the said business.
WM. SKENE,
Assignee.
New Westminster, 4th April, 1894. ap12

³ PAM 1887-7: Holiday circular Ogle, Campbell & Co., Columbia Street, New Westminster 1887

⁴ <https://archive.org/details/delineatorvol3838unse>

In 1895 and 1896, although George Schetky does not appear in directories for Vancouver, New Westminster or Nanaimo, it is probable that he did move to Nanaimo as early as 1895 because his son, Gerald Laurence Schetky was born in Nanaimo on Sept 24 1895. Perhaps he was not sufficiently established to be picked up in the local directory for 1895 or 1896.

By 1897, George and the family had moved into 225 Vancouver as he is listed in the *1897 Henderson's BC Gazetteer and Directory* as an insurance agent on Commercial Street with residence at Newcastle townsite. The *1899 Williams Official BC Directory* pinpoints his house as: "cor. Second st. and Vancouver avenue, N.C. townsite".

In the *1901 Canada Census*, the family is living at 225 Vancouver in what is called the North Ward of Nanaimo where George's occupation is listed as USA Consul with earnings of \$1200 for the year. The family is composed of: George 33; Ellen 38; George (Jr) 8; Lionel 7; Gerald 5; and John one month who was born in Nanaimo on Oct 11 1899. The *1901 Henderson BC Gazetteer and Directory* notes that George L Schetky is the US Consul as well as being an Insurance Agent etc. with a residence in Newcastle Townsite. A man of many talents, George also seems to have had the rights to selling a cream separator as advertised in the *Nanaimo Free Press*, Jul 29 1903.



In 1906, George resigned his position as US Consul apparently because by 1905 mines were closing in Nanaimo and no ships entered or needed to be cleared from that port. The position of consul was still deemed necessary however, as George would be followed by Joseph H. Pashley as agent from 1906 to 1916 and then Archibald C Van Houten from 1918 to 1932.

That same year, George returned to Vancouver and made a name for himself in the insurance business spending eight years with the insurance firm of Ross and Shaw before going on his own. His experience in the Vancouver disaster of 1886 and the uninsured aftermath was no doubt a motivation. In 1918, he was the first president of the first organized group of Vancouver insurance agents; and was also the first secretary of the Insurance Institute of BC. He resided in Vancouver until his death on Dec 26 1938 from coronary occlusion at the age of 71. Ellen

Katherine Cross Schetky died Jun 12 1946 in Vancouver. He and his wife had five children:

1. George Bernard Schetky, born Oct 27 1892 in New Westminster
2. Lionel Hugh Schetky, born Jan 24 1894 in New Westminster
3. Gerald Laurence Schetky, born Sep 24 1895 in Nanaimo
4. John Littell Schetky, born Oct 11 1899 in Nanaimo
5. Helen Isabel Schetky, born Feb 6 1906 on Salt Spring Island.

2. DAVID STEPHENSON & MARY RANDLE: 1906-1916

In 1906, 225 Vancouver Ave was acquired by David Stephenson, the Chief Provincial Constable and the man for whom Stephenson Point was named.

David Stephenson's background is a bit hazy. Some say that he was born in England on Dec 8 1858 while David Stephenson, himself, notes in various census records and on the marriage certificate of his son, Albert, in 1910, that he was born "at sea". Others say that he was raised in Missouri and returned to England at the age of 15 and joined the Metropolitan Police Force in 1878. During his service with that Force, he is said to have served as guard to the Royal Family, including Queen Victoria and her son the Prince of Wales. and, he didn't arrive in Nanaimo

until Sept 1879 at the age of twenty.⁵ However, the records of the Masonic Lodge note that David Stephenson was initiated in Caledonia Lodge, No. 6 in Nanaimo on Sept 20 1873.

Fortunately, on his marriage certificate, David noted that his parents were: Thomas and Jane Stephenson and that his place of birth was the United States. With this information, it is possible to somewhat firm up his early life. On Mar 28 1853, Thomas Stephenson, age 22, son of John Stephenson, carder, married Jane Broadbent, age xx, daughter of Miles Broadbent, turner at Rochdale, St Chad, Lancashire.

In the *1860 US Census*, Thomas Stephenson, age 29, and wife Jane, age 28, were now living in Tennessee Township, McDonough County, Illinois along with their children, Ellen, age 5; John age 3; and David who was one year old. There were several coal mines in McDonough County and Thomas was working as a collier. Living with them was Jane's brother, Thomas Broadbent, age 30.

In the *1870 US Census*, we find a Jane Stephenson, age 39, now living 135 miles west in Bevier, Macon, Missouri, the centre of that state's coal mining. With her were children: Ellen Stephenson 16, born in England; John T Stephenson 13 born in England; David Stephenson 11; Margaret (possible mistake for Myles) Stephenson 3; and William Stephenson 1, all born in Missouri. Father, Thomas Stephenson, appears to have died sometime between 1868 and 1870. On May 20, 1874, daughter Ellen Stephenson married John Davis in Macon, Missouri so it must have been after this date, that Jane Stephenson left Missouri for Canada with the rest of her children.

By the *1881 Canada Census*, Jane Stephenson is now married to miner, John Foster and they are living in Nanaimo with sons: John Thomas Stephenson 24; Miles Stephenson 14; and William Stephenson, 12. In the *1891 Canada Census*, the Fosters, with son John Stephenson, are now living on Gabriola. John Foster, born in Northumberland England, died Sep 20 1893 at 67 years and is recognized as a Gabriola farming pioneer. On the day before his funeral, the *Nanaimo Free Press* advertised that the "steamer *Esperanza* will leave foreman & Campbell's wharf at 9am Sunday for Gabriola Island to accommodate those desiring to attend the funeral of the late John Foster."⁶

John Foster's old farmhouse is seen at the end of the bay on the right in a picture of the first tourists ever to visit the Gabriola galleries on Oct 15 1903.⁷ The bay used to be known as Foster's Bay, and is now known locally as Bob's Bay. The cliff on this side of the bay, beyond the end of the main gallery, is riddled with more than half a dozen large cavities that are eroding internally in exactly the same way as the main gallery. This series of cavities may one day be connected internally to form a cloister-like structure. The tide indicates the photograph was taken around three o'clock in the afternoon.



After arriving in Nanaimo, David Stephenson worked for the Vancouver Coal Company at the Wellington Colliery in Departure Bay for two years. On Aug 14 1880, he married Mary Randle born Sep 2 1859 in Nanaimo. She was the daughter of Joseph Randle (1828-1900) born in Foleshill, Warwickshire, England site of a declining coal industry; and Mary Ann Birch (1827-1907) also born in Foleshill. Her parents arrived in Nanaimo in the spring of 1859. They had originally been drawn to the gold fields of California but were too late for the great rush of 1849 so proceeded to coal town Nanaimo. The Randle's lived in a large house on Crace Street. Mary Randle's brother, Joseph Randle Jr would start working in the Nanaimo coal mines at age 11.



⁵ History of Departure Bay by Carol Davidson

⁶ Nanaimo Free Press, Sat Sept 23 1893.

⁷ Gabriola Museum Archives: BCARS1-67692

By 1881, Nanaimo had a population of 2,803 including the surrounding countryside; Mark Bate (1837-1927) was into the sixth year of his eleven-year reign as mayor; and the steamer *Cariboo Fly* provided bi-weekly communication with Victoria. The Government buildings on Front Street (consisting of a court house and jail) were wooden structures and consequently of only a temporary character. A new post office was about to be erected on Front Street and would be the first public building in the city provided by the Dominion Government for the transaction of federal business.⁸

On Nov 15 1864, the new Governor of Vancouver Island, Sir Arthur Kennedy, had laid the cornerstone for the Mechanics Literary Institute located at the east end of Bastion Street bridge on the present site of 235 Bastion at Skinner Street. It was one of the largest buildings in Nanaimo with room for 250 persons in its hall and used for theatrical entertainments, balls, soirees and public meetings of various kinds until it became City Hall in 1886. It was demolished in 1972 and a new building was built on the site.

In the *1881 Census of Canada*, David Stephenson and Mary Randle were living in Nanaimo just a few houses away from Mary's brother Joseph Jr. David classified himself as a miner, born in the US. They had a son, William O Stephenson, born in 1881 and who unfortunately died that same year.

David joined the provincial police force in 1881 and on Dec 11 of that year, was appointed Special Constable to replace William Jack, who for some unrecorded reason had been suspended. A month later, on Jan 9 1882, having proved himself an efficient officer, he was appointed Constable at Wellington. His address in the *1882-1883 British Columbia Directory* is Departure Bay. On Sep 17 1884, it was noted that: "policeman, Dave Stephenson, had just been provided with a novel 54-inch wheel bicycle."



The supervision of magistrates, police, and the constabulary fell under the British Columbia Attorney-General's Department established in 1871 when BC became a province of the Dominion of Canada. In 1899, the duties and powers of the Attorney-General were expanded to include: management and direction of correctional institutions; the British Columbia Police; and administration of justice within the province. In 1867, W.R. Spalding had been appointed county court judge in Nanaimo and was still on the bench in 1881 at an annual salary of \$2250.

In 1872, the Hon H.L. Langevin, Minister of Public works for Canada had made a visit to the new province of British Columbia. He visited the principle court-houses at Victoria, New Westminster and Nanaimo and satisfied himself that: "they are sufficient for the requirements of the province." He noted that at Nanaimo specifically, the building, without being a model of architecture, is sufficient for the present. Nanaimo also had a local jail which appears to have been built with care out of wood. Langevin recorded that the jail: "without being, as secure or as strongly built as those in certain other Provinces of the Confederation, do not appear to allow of the escape of the delinquents confined in them more frequently than is the case in the older Provinces. They are managed with care and economy, and presented, at the time of my visit, an appearance of remarkable cleanliness."

Langevin did have a concern that the structures were too scanty and that perhaps there should be a penitentiary built at New Westminster to handle convicts with longer sentences and leave shorter sentence criminals to Victoria and Nanaimo. In 1878, a new federal maximum-security prison opened in New Westminster and was built out of stone from Newcastle Island, Nanaimo.

The Nanaimo jail, located next to the court house, was intimately described in the *First Annual Report of the Superintendent of Police Respecting the Prisons of British Columbia for the year ending Oct 31 1879*:

"The gaol building is 51 feet long by 20 feet wide, two storeys high, with cellar and attic. The lower storey is built of sawn logs, 12 inches square, and consist of an armoury, 10'6" by 7'; six cells 10'6" by 6'; water-closet,

⁸ 1882-1883 British Columbia Directory: good description of Nanaimo and where the mines are located.

7' by 3'; and corridor 46' by 7'4"; and is fitted with bunks in five of the cells and falling tables in the corridor. The upper storey contains Gaoler's room, 10'6" by 10'8"; six cells, 10'6" by 6'; and corridor, 50' by 8'5" and is built of diagonal two-inch planking. A kitchen, 13'9" by 8'6", and wash-house, 12' by 8'7", are attached to the building, which is in a good state of repair and is well ventilated."⁹

The report also noted that "the clothing of the prisoners is nearly worn out and will have to be replaced, none having been bought this year, with the exception of shoes and socks."

The report was submitted by warden, William Stewart (1834-1904) after whom Stewart Avenue would be named. For a time, Stewart was the only provincial policeman in town. He arrived in Nanaimo in 1874 and began a long career in the police force as a warden, constable, then chief constable. As warden he was responsible for the Nanaimo jail and in 1879, his annual salary was \$900 per year. Samuel Drake was the convict guard at \$720 per year. In 1893 Stewart was made chief jailer at a salary of \$100 per month plus the use of the new eight-room house built within the new jail yard on Stewart Avenue. He was appointed chief constable in 1899.



Wor. Bro. W. Stewart 1893-1894

Both William Stewart and David Stephenson were charter members of St John's Masonic Lodge No 21 formed on Jul 7 1894 and originally located in Wellington. Stewart was Worshipful Master in 1893-1894 and David would be Worshipful Master in 1895, 1896, and 1899. The Worshipful Master is the principal officer of the Masonic Lodge and is typically held for a one-year term and elected by the members of the Lodge. In 1901, the lodge was moved to Ladysmith to closer serve the coal mining community there. In 1905, David became affiliated with Ashlar Lodge, No 3 in Nanaimo.



Freemasonry started in Nanaimo in 1865, when English and Scottish Freemasons began to meet in informal Lodges, since there were no constituted Lodges in what was then the Colony of Vancouver Island. In 1867, Nanaimo No. 3 Lodge was formed by English businessmen, labourers and miners while Caledonia No. 6 Lodge was formed by Scottish and American residents. These two lodges amalgamated in Dec 1872 to become Ashlar Lodge No. 3 (Nanaimo). On Oct 21 1874, the Ashlar Masonic Temple was opened on Commercial Street at Skinner Street. The building was demolished in 1923 and replaced the same year by the current Ashlar Masonic Temple, a landmark building in downtown Nanaimo and listed on the Canadian Historic Places Register.

At the time, church and Masonic Lodge were the only games in town. A Mason picked up his small black case and, if he told his wife anything it was just that he would be out. Men walked to Lodge, often several miles, if they had no horse. The Lodge room was lit with coal oil lamps, heated of course by coal stoves. Masons tipped their hat to ladies and seniors. There was no competition for a Mason's time as we experience it today, from a proliferation of service clubs, twenty-four-hour television programs, rental videos, organized sports and many other attractions.

In the *1891 Census of Canada*, David, age 32, is a policeman, born in England and still living in Wellington with his wife Mary Randle 32, a dressmaker, and children: Albert Thomas Stephenson 8; Mary Nora Stephenson 6; and Ethel Stephenson 3. He continues to be the provincial constable for Wellington, reporting to the Chief Constable of Nanaimo District, William Stewart.

Nanaimo was growing and transitioning from temporary wooden buildings to stone and brick structures. In 1884, the new Post Office was completed on Front Street. On Aug 15, 1885, surveys began on 800 acres north of

⁹ First Annual report of the superintendent of police respecting the prisons of British Columbia for the year ending Oct 31 1879

downtown in what was called the Newcastle Townsite where Stewart Avenue was a continuation of Bridge Street and meandered down to Departure Bay. On Sep 17 1887, the construction of the Globe Hotel on Front Street began and the erection of the Palace Hotel on Skinner Street started on Oct 27 1888.

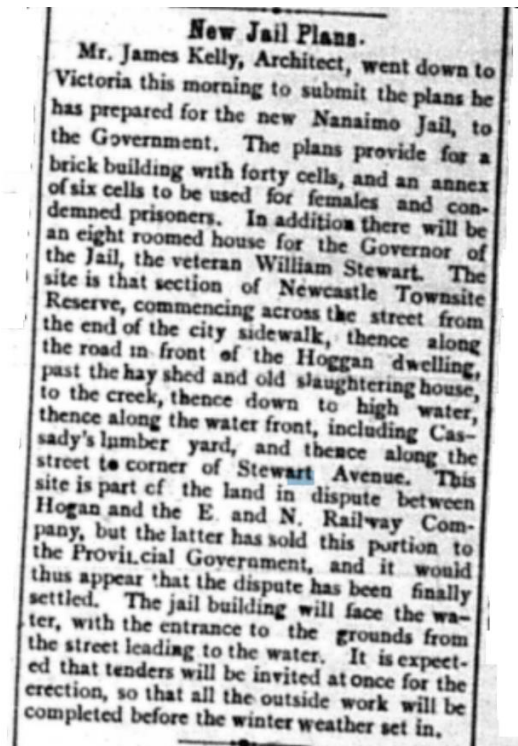
By 1892, there were two active police forces in Nanaimo: the city police under chief constable, Thomas O'Connell; and the provincial police under chief constable and jailer for the district, William Stewart.¹⁰ City Hall was housed in an old institution where public meetings were held and the Salvation Army conducted its services. By 1892, the provincial jail could no longer accommodate the number of prisoners assigned to it. The previous year, because of lack of space, the city had established its own lockup in the lower part of the Bastion and would use that until 1897. The city was ripe for a new hall and civic buildings.

In the *1893 Annual Report on the Police Service*, Superintendent of Provincial Police and Warden of Gaols, Frederick S Hussey, noted that the "Nanaimo prison is no longer suitable for the requirements of the growing county of Nanaimo as it has not sufficient accommodation for the large number of prisoners which are confined therein."¹¹ He recommended the construction of a modern, larger, and more secure jail away from the business area.

By October 1893, provincial police staff had also increased significantly at Nanaimo with: William Stewart, Chief Constable and Gaoler; Samuel Drake constable and 2nd Gaoler; William H Boyd, constable and 3rd gaoler; Alexander McKinnon Constable; Archibald Hamilton 1st convict guard; Moses H McIndoo 2nd convict guard; and Louis T Davis medical officer. David Stephenson is still the provincial constable in Wellington.

The *1894 Annual Report to the Superintendent of Police* respecting prisons of BC indicated that: "A new modern gaol is now in course of construction at Nanaimo and will be completed and ready for occupation about the end of February 1894." In 1893, James Kelly of Vancouver had been commissioned as architect for the new Nanaimo jail along with a residence for the governor of the Jail, all to be built in the Newcastle Townsite at the corner of Stewart Avenue and Townsite Road, then called Fifth Street.¹² The plans provided for a brick building with forty cells and an annex of six cells to be used for females and condemned prisoners. In addition, there would be an eight roomed house for the governor, specifically William Stewart. According to a *Nanaimo Free Press* report of June 8 1893, the new jail would be similar to that of the New Westminster penitentiary originally constructed in 1878. No pictures remain of the Nanaimo version.

The site for the jail "is that section of Newcastle Townsite Reserve, commencing across the street from the end of the city sidewalk, thence along the road in front of the Hoggan dwelling past the hay shed and old slaughtering house to the creek, thence down to high water, thence along the water front, including Cassady's lumber



¹⁰ 1892 William's Illustrated Official BC Directory Part 1 (Extensive description of Nanaimo including history of 5 acre lots by the New Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company)

¹¹ Annual Report of the Superintendent of Police respecting the prisons of British Columbia, year ending October 31 1892.

¹² (Nanaimo Free Press, 8 June 1893, 1; 26 June 1893, 1; 23 Sept. 1893, 4; B.C., Sessional Papers, 1894-95, Public Accounts, 88) Kelly advertised himself as a "practical architect and builder".

yard, and thence along the street to corner of Stewart Avenue.”¹³ The jail building was to face the water, with the entrance to the grounds from the street leading to the water. Under the management of Stewart, the resident prisoners were tasked with undertaking community work, which included activities such as tree planting within the immediate neighbourhood.

On Jul 1 1895, David Stephenson was appointed senior provincial constable at a salary of \$76 per month with residence at Wellington. At the time, David had charge of the police at Wellington and Northfield under the direction and control of Chief Constable and Warden, William Stewart. The towns were part of the Nanaimo District which ran as far north as Alert Bay. In 1896, Constable David Stephenson reported in the *Annual Report to the Superintendent of Police* that: “everything quiet at Wellington; several minor offences were tried in the Police Court at that place during the year, and about \$400 fines paid into the revenue.”

On April 10 1889, a telephone system was initiated and lines were strung to many businesses and residences. On Nov 23 1891, electric lights were used on Nanaimo streets for the first time. The original plant of Nanaimo Electric Light, Power and Heating on the banks of the Millstone had a capacity of 100 horsepower to serve 218 customers including the new provincial jail. Remnants of one of the old dams that was used for power generation on the Millstone River in Bowen Park, near the Quarterway Bridge still remain.

By 1896 the city also had a fine new courthouse on Front Street designed by Victoria architect Francis M Rattenbury.¹⁴ It too is on the Canadian Register of Historic Places.

On Aug 16, 1900, as the mines closed in Wellington, Constable Dave Stephenson was transferred to the new mining community of Ladysmith along with the Masonic lodge of St John’s. In 1904, David was appointed Deputy Grand Master for the district.¹⁵

In the *1901 Canada Census*, David Stephenson and family are still living in the Wellington, Nanaimo North district. David is a constable with annual wage of \$900. Living with him are wife Mary, 41 and children: Albert T 18; Nora M 16; and Ethel M 13. Daniel’s mother, Jane Stephenson Foster, born Sep 7 1831, is still living on Gabriola as a widow with her son John and she notes that her immigration date to Canada was 1876. In Dec 1907, Jane Foster made a trip to Macon City, Missouri no doubt to see her daughter Ellen Stephenson Davis who was still living in Bevier, Missouri.

The *1904 Henderson’s BC Directory* notes that David Stephenson, constable is still living in Wellington but it seems that by Dec 6 1905, David was back in Nanaimo since he was now affiliated with Ashlar Lodge No. 3. He would be Worshipful Master of Ashlar Lodge, No.3 in 1908. ¹⁶

The reason for David’s return to Nanaimo was that Chief William Stewart had died suddenly when at his post in the court house on May 18 1904. On Aug 29, 1906, David Stephenson was appointed Chief of the local Provincial Police. **That same year, he and his family moved into 225 Vancouver right around the corner from the Provincial Jail on Stewart Avenue and Townsite Road for which Stephenson was now responsible.** The *1909 Directory of Vancouver Island*, however, notes that David Stephenson as chief provincial police is actually living at the provincial jail in Newcastle Townsite. Salary for the Warden in 1902 was \$95 per month.

In the *1911 Canada Census*, David Stephenson is living on Vancouver Avenue with his wife Mary and daughter Nora. His earnings during the year were \$1200. By this time, his son, A.T. Stephenson was also a policeman and

¹³ Nanaimo Free Press, 26 June 1893

¹⁴ Hub City: Nanaimo 1886-1920 by Jan Peterson, page 76

¹⁵ <http://www.ashlar3.com/david-stephenson/> <http://www.saintjohnslodge21.ca/david-stephenson/>

¹⁶ <http://www.ashlar3.com/david-stephenson/> <http://www.saintjohnslodge21.ca/david-stephenson/>

currently was the provincial constable at Cumberland. A.T. Stephenson would play a role in the miners' strike at Cumberland from 1912 to 1914 and the death of labour activist Ginger Goodwin.

With the onset of war, rumours of espionage and suspicion fell on the many Germans, Austrians and Croats living in Vancouver Island communities. On Sep 20 1914, the Nanaimo Internment Camp officially opened in the Newcastle Townsite's jail building on Stewart Avenue. The jail overlooking Newcastle Island Channel was enclosed by strong wire fencing and described as "a stockade style compound of heavy lumber, logs and wire, some 14 feet in height". Imprisoned, not because of anything they had done but because of who they were, immigrants in Nanaimo's WW1 internment camp had no idea when they would be released. Many were coal miners active in that fierce strike which began in 1912 and was winding down with the arrival of war.

As Nanaimo's chief constable, David Stephenson was responsible for apprehending all aliens with the help of special constables and occasionally, the Royal North West Mounted Police.¹⁷ Reportedly they were well-treated and allowed to go to church or compete against outside teams in soccer. Some of the trees along Stewart Avenue were planted by internees. The camp closed on Sept 17 1915 when the prisoners were transferred to the interior of BC. In 1997, a memorial to the camp was unveiled on a cairn near the Nanaimo Yacht Club. In 2014, a plaque was added to it thanks to the Ukrainian Canadian Civil Liberties Foundation.



On Oct 31 1916, David Stephenson, Chief of Provincial Police, at Nanaimo, retired at his own request. He was noted as "being incapacitated by bodily infirmity" from properly performing his duties and was superannuated and paid a retired allowance of \$90 per month to date from the 1st day of October 1916. He had obviously been staying in the governor's resident at the Stewart Street jail as on Oct 11 1917, it was deemed that: "the moneys paid as rent for quarters in the old gaol at Nanaimo occupied by David Stephenson, late Chief Constable at Nanaimo during the months of November and December, 1916, and January, 1917 be refunded to him through the Deputy Clerk, Executive Council, Victoria."

It was during this period, or just prior to it, that 225 Vancouver might have been sold to Frederick Jepson who wanted to settle his newly arrived parents from England into the residence.

On Jan 19 1917, David's mother, Jane Ann Stephenson Foster, at the age of 86, died in Nanaimo survived by her two sons: David and Myles Stephenson of Vancouver. By 1918, David's son, Albert Thomas Stephenson had taken over his old job as Chief of Provincial Police in Nanaimo. Albert and his wife, Gertrude Kirkman, lived in the Cleland apartment block in Townsite on 4th street at the corner of Union.

By 1919, David Stephenson had moved out of Newcastle Townsite to Departure Bay and was noted in *Wrigley's BC Directory* of that year as "superannuated chief of Provincial Police, Nanaimo District." The family had built a home on the north-eastern shoreline of Departure Bay, which they named "Kahklutter", meaning good luck.¹⁸ The point and the road leading to it would be named after him.

In the *1921 Canada Census*, David now 62, his wife Mary 51, and daughter Nora Mary Stephenson are living in the Nanoose/ Wellington District noting again that he was born at sea and had immigrated to Canada in 1879. David Stephenson died Feb 3 1937 at the age of 78 in Vancouver. His wife, Mary Randle Stephenson, died Nov 16 1937, also at the age of 78, at their home in Departure Bay, Nanaimo.

¹⁷ Hub City: Nanaimo, 1886-1920 by Jan Peterson, page 214

¹⁸ <http://www.ashlar3.com/david-stephenson/>

3. FREDERICK JEPSON & NEITA ESTELLE WALKER 1916-1937

Frederick Jepson was born Dec 31 1881 in Mumbai, Maharashtra, India the son of Henry Jepson (1846-1921) and Fanny Rothwell (1860-1891) who had married Mar 20 1879 in Mumbai. His father was originally from Hulme, Lancashire England and was an officer in the British Indian Army for thirty-two years retiring as a Lieutenant around 1901.



When he was 18 years old, Frederick continued his family's military traditions by joining Queen Victoria's Lifeguards. In the 1901 *England Census*, Frederick, 21 years, was in New Windsor, Berkshire, England as a Trooper with the Life Guards. His father and second wife, Ellen Ford (1857-1951), were living in Harrogate, Yorkshire with his younger brother, John A Jepson, age 14. Henry and Ellen Ford had married in Bombay on Dec 28 1895 after the death of his first wife, Fanny.

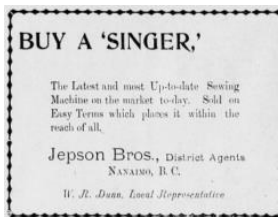
Fred wasn't keen on the military life, however, and, according to his granddaughter, after 8 years he'd had enough.¹⁹ In 1906, Frederick arrived in Canada at the age of 24 to join his two brothers: Henry Rothwell Jepson, born May 6 1880 in Aden, Yemen; and John Alfred Jepson, born Mar 19 1887 in Poona India, who had emigrated in 1905 and were now living in Nanaimo. His father, Henry Jepson and wife Ellen Ford also arrived at Montreal on Oct 7 1906 aboard the *Victorian*, perhaps for a visit to their sons.



By 1909, Frederick and brother Henry had established themselves as the Nanaimo Book & Music Company which they had acquired from a Mrs. Rose Campbell on Jul 3 1909. In the 1911 *Census of Canada*, the three brothers: Henry, Frederick and John Alfred, all storekeepers, were living in the Middle Ward of Nanaimo on Commercial Street. Their stated earnings from the store were between \$1100 and \$1200 per



year for each of them. The store, at 70 Commercial Street, was listed as a stationery store, but sold so much more, including sewing machines evident from a photograph taken about 1911.



By the 1913 *Henderson's Greater Victoria City Directory*, the Jepson Brothers were the official Singer Sewing Machine agents along with their other products of books, stationery and sporting goods. They now had a Nanaimo telephone number: #332. According to his granddaughter, machinery was in Frederick Jepson's blood. His own grandfather, for example, was listed on a birth record as a mechanic in a cloth-making mill.

By 1914, Nanaimo's population was 8,168 and the Jepson Brothers had made it into the *International Directory of Booksellers and Bibliophile's Manual*. On May 14, 1914, the brothers' father, Henry Jepson age 68, his wife Ellen 56, and son Frederick, 32, were incoming passengers on the *Empress of Britain* arriving at Quebec 1914 having departed from Liverpool. The parents were now emigrating to Nanaimo to make their home with sons Fred, Henry and John. **It was not too long after this that the Jepson brothers bought the residence at 225 Vancouver Avenue for their father and stepmother.**

On Aug 20, 1914, less than three weeks after Britain declared war on Germany, 19 British Army reservists from Nanaimo prepared for the trip to England. The Brigade band led a parade from city hall to the wharf with half the

¹⁹ <http://seamlybehaviour.blogspot.com/2020/02/continuity.html>

city's population following behind to wish the men a safe return. Wives, families and friends held the men tight until the very moment they had to board the steamer. Dozens of men followed including Henry and John A Jepson.

On Sep 29 1915, Henry Jepson enlisted at the age of 34 at Vernon BC. His brother John Jepson signed up on Nov 7 1915 in Vancouver at the age of 25. Neither brother had yet been married. That same year, the brothers moved their residence from 70 Commercial to the Cleland block of apartments at the corner of 4th and Union very close to their parents at 225 Vancouver. Coincidentally, this was the same apartment block that A. T. Stephenson, son of chief of provincial police, David Stephenson, was living in during 1918. A photograph of Henry Jepson leading his troops out of Nanaimo on horseback may have been taken on Vancouver Avenue.



Tragedy struck on Aug 5 1917 when Lieutenant Henry Rothwell Jepson, age 36, of the 47th Battalion BC Regiment was hit hard by a hand bomb while fighting at the battle of Vimy Ridge and a splinter perforated his lung. He died of his wounds and is buried at Boulogne Eastern Cemetery. *The Nanaimo Free Press*, said of Henry on Aug 7 1917: "A sportsman to the finger tips ... whether in his business connections, on the cricket field, or in the social life of which he was such a welcome member, he invariably 'played the game'".

Meanwhile, Fred Jepson was left alone in Nanaimo to mind the store. One of his employees was Neita Estelle Walker who is standing on the right in the photograph of the Jepson Brothers. She was born Mar 23 1893 in Victoria BC to Quentin Lorimer Walker (1853-1914) and Eliza Jane Bullen (1853-1931). Quentin Walker, a blacksmith, carpenter and carriage maker, was born in Belleville, Ontario; eventually made his way to the west coast; and then married Eliza Jane Bullen on Mar 10 1881 in Victoria. Eliza's father was from Devon England and her mother from London. Their families had both emigrated to Ontario and then to British Columbia. In 1899, Quentin Walker moved to Nanaimo with his family and they resided at 439 Milton Street where Quentin, unfortunately, died on Dec 14 1914 at the age of 61.

Neita was an expert seamstress and seems to have come by it naturally as no less than three of her aunts back in Ontario were dressmakers. She was also very attractive and on May 6 1918, she was nominated by the Jepson Brothers to vie for the title of May Queen as part of the community celebration of Empire Days (now called the Nanaimo Heritage Festival). Votes cost 10 cents each and were on sale at various places around Nanaimo including Jepson's. She didn't win as Queen but did come in fourth place thereby making it as one of the maids of honour. She also married the boss on June 26 1918 in Nanaimo.



According to their granddaughter, "Grandpa used to bring assignments back from the store for Grandma to complete. She'd cover buttons and buckles for customers. I can still smell the odour of hot adhesive as Grandma worked the machinery to cover them. Grandma made loose covers for the furniture, embroidered lovely tablecloths and of course, sewed beautiful clothes."²⁰

On Sep 5 1918, tragedy struck again with the death of brother, John Alfred Jepson at Coquitlam. He enlisted with the 29th Battalion, known as Tobin's Tigers and went to England with his battalion. While training there he contracted a severe cold which settled in his lungs and caused him to be sent back to Canada. He underwent

²⁰ <http://seamlybehaviour.blogspot.com/2020/02/continuity.html>

treatment at Kamloops, but while he showed some slight improvement, he was unable to throw off his affliction and passed away.²¹

Frederick busied himself with managing Jepson Brothers; with volunteer organizations as an inaugural board member of the Rotary Club of Nanaimo No 589 formed on Apr 30 1920; and with his family. Daughter Phyllis Jepson was born in 1919; and daughter Marion Jepson in 1920. In the *1921 Census of Canada* the family was living at 293 Machleary with Frederick, 39, whose occupation was merchant of stationary; wife, Neita, 28; daughters Phyllis 2; and Marion 5 months. Also living with them is Kate Hamilton, domestic, age 16. In 1955, this house would be purchased by real estate entrepreneur Mladen Giunio-Zorkin (1915-2007) and his wife, Joy Zorkin who continues to live there.

On Mar 25 1921, Frederick's father, Henry Jepson died at the age of 75. The funeral took place from the family residence at 225 Vancouver Avenue, Newcastle Townsite. Henry's wife, Ellen Jepson would continue to live at 225 Vancouver at least for the next five years while Frederick and his family remained at 293 Machleary. On Dec 3 1922, son Harry Rothwell Jepson was born in Nanaimo; and on Oct 7 1924, Frederick Glyn Jepson was born also in Nanaimo.

In 1927, Ivor Quentin Jepson was born, and it was probably in this same year that Frederick and his family closed up Jepson Bros and moved to Vancouver as they appear in the 1928 *Wrigley's BC Directory* living at 1933 E 41st in Vancouver. On Oct 10 1928, Frederick, 47, arrived in Ketchikan, Alaska on the Princess Alice as a salesman no doubt selling Singer Sewing Machines. The family would remain in Vancouver until 1936 with Frederick working as a salesman for Singer.

In 1937, Frederick Jepson returned to Nanaimo as manager of Singer Sewing Machines and the family moved into 470 Kennedy Street. From 1938 to 1940, Frederick and Neita would live at 21 Robarts. Daughter Phyllis, a manager at BC Telephone was also living with them while his stepmother, Ellen Jepson was living at 804 Wentworth.

By 1940 and nearing the end of the depression, things were looking up in Nanaimo generally. On Apr 6 1940, Fred Jepson was elected to preside over the affairs of the Nanaimo Cricket Club at the annual meeting held in the Canadian Legion Hall. The meeting was one of the largest held in many years and judging by the enthusiasm of the meeting a successful season was anticipated.²² Fred was a charter member of the Nanaimo Rotary Club and Nanaimo Golf Club as well the Nanaimo Cricket Club.²³ He also seems to have been a chess enthusiast and was a regular at the Nanaimo Chess Club into his 90s.

In 1941, Frederick, Neita, Marion, Phyllis and Ellen Jepson are all living, once again, at 225 Vancouver where they would stay, most likely the rest of their lives with Fred working as a distributor of Singer Sewing Machines. "Grandpa was the Singer representative in Nanaimo and my father told how during the Depression, Grandpa would pack his bags with sewing machine pieces and together with his bicycle and a sewing machine, would travel on the train to the end of the line on Vancouver Island and then make his way back down again by bicycle. He'd repair sewing machines and sell the machine he had with him as he journeyed back home. He ran the Singer store in Nanaimo until his retirement - that was back when Singer Sewing Machines were made to last!"²⁴

On Mar 27 1951, stepmother, Ellen Ford Jepson, died at the age of 93. She was known as a "pioneer resident of Nanaimo, born in Silkstone, Yorkshire England, Mrs. Jepson came to Nanaimo with her late husband Henry Jepson,

²¹ Nanaimo Daily News, Sep 9 1918

²² Nanaimo Daily News: April 6 1940

²³ Nanaimo Daily News: February 15, 1978

²⁴ <http://seamlybehaviour.blogspot.com/2020/02/continuity.html>

in 1914. She was a staunch member of St Paul's Anglican Church and a member of the Guild, and was also member of the Bastion Chapter IODE."²⁵

In the 1972 Voters List, Fred and Neita Jepson are still living at 225 Vancouver Ave.

In Nanaimo on Feb 12 1978, Frederick passed away at the age of 96 while Neita Walker Jepson died Feb 2 1988. Neita was a charter member of the Native Daughters of BC and also an active member of St Paul's Anglican Church.²⁶

Frederick Jepson and Neita Walker Jepson had five children:

1. Phyllis Grace Jepson Weekes born in 1919; married William Lewis Weekes on Oct 16 1944;
2. Marion Rothwell Jepson Corfield born in 1920; married Angus Andrew Corfield (1913-2003) on Dec 15 1952;
3. Harry Rothwell Jepson born 1922; married Eunice Norah Henderson (1923-2010); died Jul 24 2014 in Duncan BC;
4. Frederick Glyn Jepson born October 7, 1924; married Dorothy Jones in 1945; died Apr 28 2019
5. Ivor Quentin Jepson born in 1927; died Apr 7 1995, age 68.

²⁵ Nanaimo Daily News, Mar 28 1951

²⁶ Nanaimo Daily News February 3, 1988