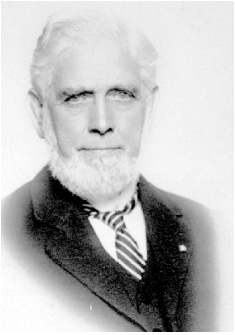


NOAH SHAKESPEARE



Noah Shakespeare was born 26 Jan. 1839 in Brierley Hill, England, son of Noah Shakespeare and Hannah Matthews. He has a distant relationship to William Shakespeare. As an 8 year old, he worked in a local chain factory. He returned to school briefly and then worked in an iron rolling mill until he decided to emigrate. In the meantime, he married Eliza Jane Pearson at Dudley Staffordshire on the 26 Dec. 1859. They had seven children, of whom three sons and one daughter survived infancy.

He chose to emigrate to British Columbia because of glowing accounts of the Cariboo gold rush. After a long 114 day journey sailing around Cape Horn, he arrived in Victoria on 10 Jan. 1863. He found employment in Nanaimo as a labourer with the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company and by working double shifts he was able to pay passage for his wife and son within a year. The family moved to Victoria in the summer of 1864. Here, Shakespeare learned photography from George Robinson Fardon and subsequently managed his photo gallery for a year. By August 1866 he was running another gallery, which he later took over from its absent owner, Charles Gentile. With the exception of a brief interval in 1870, when he worked for journalist and politician Amor De Cosmos at the *Victoria Daily Standard*, he seems to have continued in photography.

In January 1875 Shakespeare entered politics when he was acclaimed a city councillor for James Bay Ward. He ran for council every year from 1876 to 1881, but was successful only in 1878, 1880, and 1881.

He was elected mayor of Victoria in January 1882. He acquitted himself well, the high point of his term being the state visit of the governor general, Lord Lorne Campbell, later that year.

Shakespeare, a Conservative, successfully contested one of the two seats for Victoria in the federal election of June 1882. He continued as mayor until the end of his term and when the House of Commons was reconvened in February 1883 he took his seat. In the 1887 election Shakespeare retained his federal seat, but he resigned it to accept an appointment on 1 Jan. 1888 as postmaster of Victoria. He held that position until his retirement on 31 March 1914, supervising the rapid growth of postal facilities as the city boomed.

From the 1860s Shakespeare had been a leader of the temperance movements in Victoria and British Columbia. He was also very active in the anti Chinese movement of his day. In 1877 and 1878 he was elected grand chief templar of the Independent Order of Good Templars for British Columbia and the Pacific northwest states. He maintained a lifelong involvement in temperance and in other issues consistent with his Methodist beliefs and the improvement of workingmen. He served as president of the Victoria Mechanics' Institute in 1882, the British Columbia Agricultural Association in 1885, and the Young Men's Christian Association in Victoria in 1886-87, and as a member of the management committee of the British Columbia Protestant Orphans' Home in Victoria at least in 1887 and 1889.

An active Methodist in England, Shakespeare had remained so in Victoria, belonging to Pandora Street Methodist Church until 1885, when he became a trustee for the new Centennial Church. He acted as a local preacher, class leader, steward, and Sunday school superintendent in these congregations, as a delegate to the provincial Methodist conference, and as a director of the Columbian Methodist College. Founder of the provincial branch of the International Sunday School Association, he was its president and later honorary president in the period from about 1900 to 1917. During these years he also played a prominent role in the Victoria branch of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

Noah died 13 May 1921 in Victoria and is buried in Ross Bay Cemetery.