

Dodd House

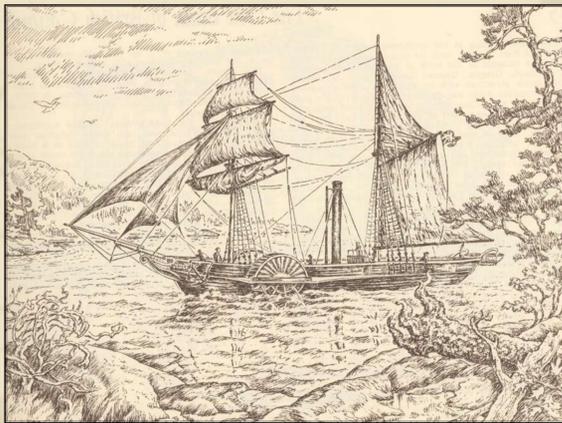
Charles and Grace Dodd



Captain Charles Dodd
Photo Courtesy of BC Archives
Call no. HP-044613

Charles Dodd was born in 1808 in Norfolk, England. At the age of 27, he served as second mate on the Hudson Bay Company's new steamship *Beaver*, on its journey from England to Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River (Oregon Territory). He arrived on the west coast in 1836, seven years before Fort Victoria was established.

During his career he commanded the *Beaver* and other ships to all parts of the coast to carry out the fur trading activities of the HBC and to help maintain order among a new population of settlers and First Nations. Dodd was made Chief Factor in the HBC shortly before his death on June 2, 1860. He died in his home on Cormorant Street at age 52, and was buried in Pioneer Square on Quadra Street. Several coastal features are named after Charles Dodd, including Dodd Narrows and Dodd Passage.



Charles Dodd was the master of the *Beaver* for over a decade
Illustration by Barry King

The Beaver

Built in London as a fur-trading vessel for the Hudson's Bay Company, the *Beaver* was the first steamship to operate in the Pacific Northwest. Armed with four cannons, and with muskets and cutlasses carried in racks around the main mast, the *Beaver* played a vital role in the settlement and maintenance of order of the Crown colony of Vancouver Island. The *Beaver* first anchored off Clover Point on March 14, 1841.

Dodd Family

Charles Dodd married Grace McTavish on November 22, 1842 at Fort Vancouver, Columbia River. Grace was the daughter of HBC employee John George McTavish and Nancy McKenzie, a woman of First Nations heritage on her mother's side. By the 1850s, the Dodds had a substantial house in Victoria on Cormorant Street, but town life did not suit Grace. She preferred life in the country and persuaded Charles to purchase 276 acres of land in Gordon Head on February 3, 1859 for \$1447.65 (section 84 of the Victoria Land District). It was on this secluded and forested area of land that they built their country residence, while still maintaining a house in the city.

When Charles died in 1860, one year after the house was built, Grace continued to live in the house. Grace was just 34 years old and the mother of seven children aged from five months to 17 years. The oldest Dodd daughters, Mary Grace and Elizabeth Ann were 17 and 15 respectively when their father died; Elizabeth Ann married the same year and Mary Grace two years later.

In 1863, Grace was charged with harbouring deserters from a British ship in her secluded country home, for which she was fined ten pounds. She died in 1881, and in 1883 the property was divided between the seven children. The division of the property brought about a rough trail that today forms Tyndall Road. Soon after the division, son Henry sold his portion to Dr. John Ash, and other portions were subsequently sold and subdivided. In 1874, when the Pollocks are listed as living there, the Dodd house was still the only house in the 276 acres of forest.



Mary Grace & Elizabeth Ann, two of the seven Dodd children
Photo courtesy of BC Archives Call no. H-03109

The House and Land



Interior of Dodd House circa 1978
Photo courtesy of Saanich Archives

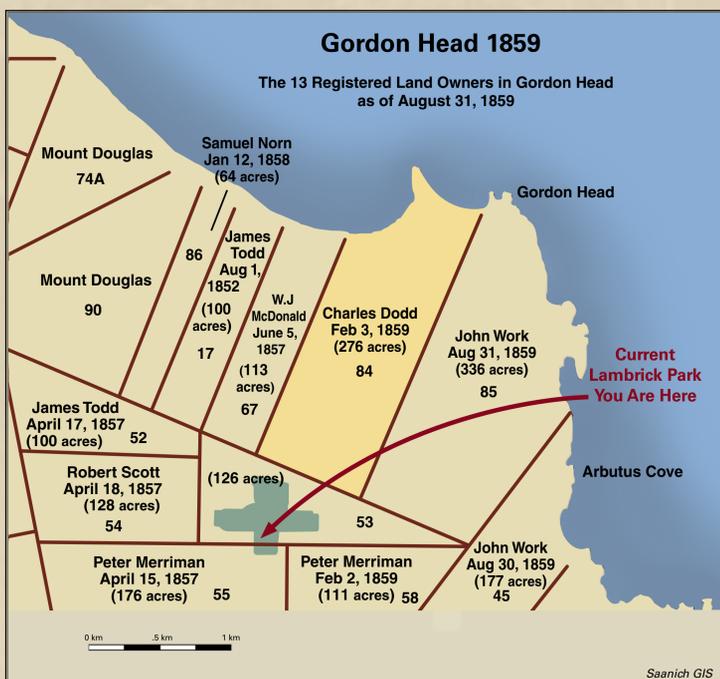
Dodd House was built in 1859 as a country home for the Dodd family. The property consisted of 276 acres of heavily forested land, rich in wildlife. A rough trail led to the property, and only a few settlers resided in the area. The Dodds built their home on the southwest corner of their property, an area now bordered by Kenmore Road and Torquay Drive. It was the only home on their 276 acres.

By 1859, all of the registered land in Gordon Head (over 2,200 acres) was owned by 13 families. Some cleared the land for farming, established homes and remained in the area.

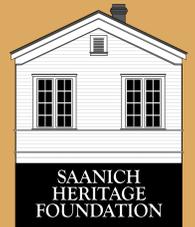
Dodd House is the oldest surviving house in Saanich and the first building to receive heritage designation from the Municipality of Saanich (1979). It is a simple Georgian cottage with two bedrooms, one with a fireplace, a large sitting room/parlour with a fireplace, and a lean-to kitchen. The interior has 3.7 metre ceilings, is lined with redwood tongue and groove, and has large decorative mouldings believed to have been imported from California. The house was moved to its present location in Lambrick Park in 1978. Demolition was threatened when its original location was subdivided.



Interior of Dodd House circa 1978
Photo courtesy of Saanich Archives



Dodd House in its original location at 1710 Kenmore, before it was moved to its current site in 1978 for preservation
Photo courtesy of Saanich Archives



The District of Saanich, through the Saanich Heritage Foundation helps with funding for the restoration of designated heritage structures.

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