

Henry Hogan

New Westminster Soda Water Manufactory 1864-1879

B.C.'s First Soda King

Or was he? His obituary in the *Mainland Guardian* on October 22, 1879 (pg 3) said this:

"He was the pioneer manufacturer of Soda Water in California, as he afterwards was in this Province."

That is not exactly correct, but without a doubt, Hogan was a true pioneer in the soda water business. The "first soda water manufacturer" title goes to Peter Brader and W. H. Emerson of the Pioneer Soda Works in Victoria due to their advertisement in the *Victoria Gazette* on April 16, 1859 (pg 1). No earlier evidence has emerged for any other contender, although Alex Phillips often (incorrectly) made the claim. Then again, the Phillips family also held (in his obituary) that he was the first soda bottler in California, contrary to the Hogan claim. The facts remain in doubt, but here is what we do know.

Henry Hogan moved to New Westminster in December 1864. At that time, the city was part of British Columbia, a separate colony from Vancouver Island. Thanks to an amazing photograph by photographer Frederick Dally (dating 1866-1870), Hogan's soda water business can be seen in a corner of the image. Henry Hogan was more than familiar with the soda water business, having previously worked at the Union Soda Factory in San Francisco. In 1861-62, he also had a short-lived partnership making syrups with Alex Phillips. In 1864, when the Cariboo Gold Rush was near its peak, Hogan left Victoria to set out on his own in New Westminster, opening a liquor store there. There was also a sign above the door: "SODA WATER MANUFACTORY."

Hogan established the first soda water business in the Colony of British Columbia, carrying on until his death in 1879, so he earned the title of "B.C.'s First Soda King." If he wasn't the first soda bottler in the Province of British Columbia, at least in New Westminster, he stood alone for more than a decade.

By Bill Wilson

Brought to AB&GC publication
by Eric McGuire

Looking upriver towards the Golden Ears, Hogan's false-fronted building sits alone on Columbia Street. The telegraph poles, wooden sidewalk, wood pile and the Fraser River all add to a sense of the pioneering era in which the photo was taken.



BCARS
#E02199
Accession
#HP80093.

Close up of Hogan's premises. The sign reads "SODA WATER MANUFACTORY Licensed Liquor Dealer."



BCARS
#E02199
Accession
#HP80093.

Early Life

Henry Hogan was born in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, in 1835 to Irish parents. At just 17 years old, he boarded the British barque *William and James*, commanded by a Captain Colls. The ship set sail from Sydney Harbour, carrying a cargo of 322 tons of coal plus 25 passengers. After a voyage of 120 days via Tahiti and Honolulu, it arrived in San Francisco on July 29, 1852.* Henry was accompanied by John Hogan who, according to the family, is “P. J. Hogan.” This man would soon leave a permanent mark in the history of soda bottling in California as one of the partners in the Union Soda Water Factory.

*Rasmussen’s *San Francisco Ship Passenger Lists*,
Vol 4, pg 55 – June 17, 1852-Jan 6, 1853

California

The Union Soda Water Factory is thought to have started in San Francisco in early 1851 after its founder, George C. Thompson, came to the city on September 22, 1850. It was located at Union Place, at the corner of Union near Stockton Street. The year that P. J. and Henry Hogan joined the firm is unknown, but both were listed with the Union Soda Water Factory along with Thompson in *Lecount & Strong’s 1854 San Francisco Directory* (pg 71 & 132).

Recently, a more precise date has come to light with the discovery of a terse announcement in San Francisco’s *Daily Placer Times*, starting January 11, 1854:

“Notice is hereby given that the partnership heretofore existing between George C. Thompson and the undersigned, has been dissolved since the 1st day of January 1854, and that the said Thompson has no longer authority to sign the partnership’s name to any paper whatever, or in any manner bind the firm.

January 11, 1854 – 3w Peter J. Hogan”

This announcement is significant as it dates the iconic cobalt blue “Hogan & Thompson, San Francisco” soda bottle. Given P. J. Hogan’s arrival in San Francisco, the earliest possible date is August of 1852, and the latest date is the end of 1853. The bottle is still considered one of California’s most desirable soda bottles and likely dates from 1852 to 1853.

Whatever happened to the Union Soda Water Factory under the management of P. J. and Henry Hogan is unknown. In California, business conditions were strong, and gold shipments were still increasing each year. Despite this general prosperity, by 1856, neither Hogan was working in the soda business. In the *1856 Colville San Francisco City Directory* (pg 103), Henry was listed as



A stunning soda embossed “HOGAN & THOMPSON SAN FRANCISCO CAL” with “UNION GLASSWORKS PHILAD” on the reverse. Iron pontil on the bottom. R3. Photo courtesy Jeff Wichmann, American Bottle Auctions, who sold one bottle in 2011 for \$4,200 US plus buyer’s commission.

A woodcut of Thompson’s Soda Works as it appeared in 1860. A worker in front of the building is loading the egg-shaped dispensers that held soda water. Reprinted from *Bottles and Extras*, Nov-Dec 2014, page 38.



a shoemaker, and P. J. (now just “John”) Hogan was listed as a laborer, both residing on Dupont Street, a short distance from the factory. Meanwhile, Thompson had found a new partner for the factory.

His name was James McEwen, and the firm was now listed as “McEwen & Thompson, union mineral water” in the 1856 *Harris, Bogardus & Labatt Directory* (pg 76). That partnership lasted until 1860; Thompson and his family went on to operate the bottling works themselves for decades. Ultimately it became the longest-operating soda works in the history of San Francisco, ending around 1906.

What happened to Henry and P. J. Hogan? One version of the story was relayed by the family. They contacted an unnamed bottle expert who said:

“Peter and Henry were swindled out of their interest in the soda water business in San Francisco” –

(email to the author May 11, 2017, from Kathleen Crain)

Whatever happened, Henry Hogan, now in his early twenties, began to look elsewhere for his future. As for P. J. Hogan, he died in San Francisco on April 2, 1862 (*San Francisco Evening Bulletin*). Another obituary provided a little more detail:

“Died... Peter J. Hogan, a native of Ireland, aged 43 years”

(*California Farmer and Journal of Useful Sciences*, April 4, 1862)

This notice suggests that Peter J. Hogan was an older relation of Henry Hogan, not a sibling. Being much younger, Henry still had his adult life in front of him, and by 1862 he was long gone from California.

British Columbia

The Fraser River Gold Rush brought thousands of gold seekers in 1858, and Henry Hogan was one of the hopefuls, according to his obituary (*Mainland Guardian*, October 22, 1879, pg 3). How he did and where he went during those early days are unknown. He surfaced again in 1860, when “Henry Hogan from Australia,” age 23, was enumerated in the United States Census at Port Townsend, working as a chemist. The age is off by a year or two, but the other facts all match—his name, country of birth and occupation (early soda bottlers crossed over as druggists and vice versa—for instance, Thomas Shotbolt).

“H. Hogan” was also listed as the agent for the *British Weekly Colonist* newspaper at Port Townsend from November 21, 1860, to August 7, 1861 (pg 1). At the time, crossing the border for work was much easier than it is today. By 1860, Henry had done well, reporting a substantial sum of \$1,000 of personal property to the census taker.

On January 13, 1862 (pg 3), the *British Colonist* in Victoria noted that Henry Hogan had returned on the steamer *Brother Jonathon* after visiting San Francisco. A month later, the same paper carried

an ad for “Phillips, DeYoung & Co.” selling various types of wines, rum, gin, brandy and other liquor. At the end of the ad, in tiny print, it also noted that they were the Sole Agents for “Phillips and Hogan’s syrups.” Since Hogan left Port Townsend in August 1861, he likely started the partnership with Phillips in the latter part of that year. It was a short partnership—on April 21, 1862 (pg 2), the *British Colonist* first advised that the partnership

MISCELLANEOUS.

Wines and Liquors.

PHILLIPS, DeYOUNG & CO.,

Importers and Dealers in

Brandies, Wines, Liquors and Ales,

NO. 15, WHARF STREET, NEAR YATES.

Ex Late Arrivals—

RECEIVED AND FOR SALE LOW :

HENNESSY BRANDY—	Pale (choice) in	qr casks.
MARTELL “	Pale (choice) in	qr casks
BONNIOT “	do do	½ casks,
PELLEVOISIN “	do do	½ do
A. CAMUS “	do do	½ do

RUM—All kinds.

WHISKY—Scotch and other, in large quantities

PORT WINES—In cases, choice quality.

SHERRY WINES—In cases, choice quality.

PORT AND SHERRY—In qr-casks.

HOLLAND GIN—Superior, in pipes and cases.

OLD TOM GIN—In puncheons and cases.

ALE—100 cases Pale Ale, in fine order.

PORTER—100 cases in fine order.

BITTERS—Of every brand and description.

SYRUPS, CORDIALS, &c.

CLARET WINES—In casks and cases large stock.

CHAMPAGNE WINES—A complete stock of all the favorite brands.

☞ Sole Agents for Phillips & Hogans' Syrups.

1:24 1m

Phillips & Hogan Syrups; *British Colonist* March 5, 1862, pg 1. The “Phillips” partner with DeYoung wasn’t Alex Phillips; it was Moses Phillips, a bona fide character and jack of all trades—ship captain, trader, furrier and a man of many other ventures, some not exactly legal. In 1863 he was refused a liquor license in Comox, and in 1865 he was sued by the purchaser of one of his ships after it was seized by U.S. customs for infraction of liquor laws. The purchaser claimed that Captain Phillips was aware that it could be seized when he sold it. Phillips went to “Stickeen River” Gold Rush in 1865 carrying supplies to the miners, only to have his ship plundered by the First Nations. He died in 1866 and that same ship, the *Nanaimo Packet*, was auctioned off.

Dissolution of Partnership.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, THAT the Partnership lately existing between the undersigned, under the firm of Phillips & Co., in the town of Victoria, has this day been dissolved by mutual consent.

Alex. Phillips will continue the business, collect all debts due the late firm, as well as pay all just claims up to this date

A. PHILLIPS.

Witness, } HENRY HOGAN.

L. DAVIES. }

Victoria, April 21st, 1862. ap21-1m

Phillips & Hogan go their separate ways. *British Colonist*, April 21, 1862, pg 2 (New Advertisements)

had been dissolved, with Phillips carrying on the business.

In 1863, Hogan was still living in Victoria according to *Howard & Barnett's Directory* (pg 66), residing on Herald Street along with a W. J. Hogan. There was no mention of what he did for a living. However, on November 18, 1863 (pg 3), the *British Colonist* reported that "H. Hogan" & "D. Hogan" had returned to Victoria from San Francisco on the steamer *Sierra Nevada*.

Henry Hogan was about to make some major changes in his life. On December 11, 1864, Henry Hogan, now 29 years old, married Mary Powers, age 15. The ceremony was conducted at the Roman Catholic Diocese in Victoria, the document noting that Henry and Mary were "both of New Westminster."

Like Henry, Mary was born in Australia, came to California and then went to British Columbia in 1858. Her father, Robert Power (the 's' was apparently added when the family left California), was born in Ireland and sent on a convict ship to Australia in 1832. There he married Mary's mother, also named Mary (the family believes her maiden name was Chambers). Their firstborn, William Powers (1844-1907), was born in Sydney. He was called "Uncle Billy," the glue that held the family together*. Mary was born in 1849 in Sydney, and her younger brother John (1858-1883) was born in San Francisco.

*(email to the author May 26, 2017 from Kathleen Crain)

Six days after the wedding in Victoria, Henry & Mary prepared to move their belongings to the capital of British Columbia, where they would begin a new life together. During the move, Henry ran into a problem, a costly one that required him to write a letter:

*"New Westminster
December 17, 1864
The Honble.
The Colonial Secretary
Sir:*

On Monday last, I purchased in Victoria – a few articles of furniture for my own use, and intended to have brought them with me on the following day to New Westminster on the Steamer Otter, but in the busy going away I had to leave them to be brought by the next boat. Last morning they came by the Otter. Had they been brought with me, no duties would have been chargeable, they being for private use. I take the liberty of asking his Excellency for government consideration to this case, and that His Excellency will authorize the Collector of Customs to remit the duty in my favor viz. The amount of nine dollars and eighty cents (\$9.80) as the things are for my private use and for no other purpose.

*I have the honor to be your most obedient servant,
Signed,
Henry Hogan
Mr. Hamley suggested my writing to the governor in the manner I have done."*

This letter shows one disadvantage of living in New Westminster at the time. Governor Douglas declared Victoria a free port

in 1860, meaning Hogan's items were subject to customs duties (British Columbia was still its own Colony in 1864). Fortunately for Hogan, the Customs Collector, Wymond Hamley, supported him with a letter a few days later:

"This man went to Victoria I believe to buy a few articles of furniture & came back by some accident without them. I think, under the circumstances of this (illegible) is pleased to allow it, that the duty might be returned to him.

*Customs House
W. Hamley
December 21 1864"*

A week later, he received good news—the duties would be repaid. Encouraged, he tried again the next year. This time Hogan bought a cask of brandy in Victoria and brought it to New Westminster under bond on December 28, 1865. When he took it out of bond two months later, he discovered that the duties on his cask would be subject to a new Customs Bill. He wrote to Victoria again on February 17, 1865, asking whether the duties should be charged under the old or new law. A prompt reply came back ten days later—the new law "was in full force," and Hogan had to pay the higher duties.

Henry Hogan's only other letter to Victoria is perhaps his most interesting. This time, he teamed up with his old partner Alex Phillips:

*"New Westminster B.C.
To: The Hon. A.N. Birch
Colonial Secretary
British Columbia
Sir:*

Will you be kind enough to draw the attention of His Excellency to an unfairness in the Tariff. Confectionery is to be charged 30 per cent. There are only one or two confectioners in the Colony. On Syrups it is proposed to charge 12 ½ per cent, only. There are three Syrup manufacturers in the Colony.

We could supply all the syrups required for the Colony, we think there is a heavy duty on refined sugar from which we manufacture our syrups. The duty on imported syrups is not in comparison therewith sufficiently high to enable us to compete with the imported article.

We therefore beg that you place these facts before his Excellency, hoping the subject may meet with his consideration.

*We are Sir
Your Most Obedient Servants
H. Hogan New Westminster
A. Phillips Fort St Victoria"*

The letter is intriguing. First, it has the signatures of two of the most significant pioneer soda bottlers in British Columbia —the Phillips signature exactly matches those scratched onto so many of his early blob-top sodas. Second, even though the 1861-62 partnership began and ended quickly, there were no hard feelings, and they continued to work together in areas of common interest.

Third, the letter confirms that there were only three Syrup manufacturers in the Colony in 1866 when the letter was sent—who was the third? Paul Bocion is perhaps the most likely, but did Thomas Shotbolt start up earlier than is known? The answer is still to come. Lastly, if his liquor business paid the bills, it is also clear that his soda water manufactory was also an important part of Hogan's livelihood.

Hogan and Phillips didn't receive a reply from the Colonial Government, but an internal note was attached to the file that indicates a lack of success for their plea:

This seems hardly worth postponing his preparing this tariff bill for.

(Unreadable initials) March 22, 1867

Col. Sy. I think not

(Unreadable initials)

From: Colonial Correspondence; GR 1372.776 BCARS.

Family and Business

Henry and Mary Hogan started their family in 1866; in March, they welcomed their first child, Thomas William Hogan, called "Doc" by the family (email to author Kathleen Crain, June 4, 2017). Their daughter Margaret Jane was born on October 12, 1867, Robert Edward arrived on March 13, 1870, and Mary Ellen was born on February 28, 1873. Sadly, Mary's mother died on June 24, 1866, a few months after her grandson William was born. She was just 44 years old.

In 1866 times were generally hard in British Columbia—the Cariboo diggings were in decline, the Big Bend stampede was a bust and many were deeply in debt.* However, the Hogan and Powers family were in good shape. Mary's brother William Powers, a carpenter, built the Telegraph Hotel. It was named after British Columbia's first mega-project, the Collins Overland Telegraph, based in New Westminster, built between 1865 and 1867. William came to British Columbia during the Cariboo rush, then went to New Westminster where he worked for the telegraph company.** The Powers family likely built the hotel during this time.

*"Mary's father and mother owned and operated the Telegraph Hotel on Front Street and Hogan built his soda water manufactory on the same parcel of property. Later a rather charming-looking family home was built. All the buildings were on a parcel of land that lay between Front Street and Columbia Street right at the foot of Fourth Street" ****

* (Vancouver Sun, August 6, 2016, page A3)

** (Vancouver Daily World, January 7, 1907, page 15)

*** (email to the author October 6, 2010 from Nelson Oliver).

Although Hogan initially sold hard liquor, he also became an agent for a pair of Victoria breweries. In the 1860s, he sold "ale that is not stale" from Arthur Bunster's Colonial Brewery, and in the 1870s, he carried Charles Gowen's "celebrated ales" from the Phoenix Brewery.

As the Cariboo Gold Rush subsided and the huge Collins Overland Telegraph project was canceled in February 1867, an inevita-



Circa 1865 view of New Westminster with the "Telegraph House" on Front Street circled; Hogan's Soda Water Manufactory on Columbia Street is located behind. Photo courtesy New Westminster Public Library



A rare view of the Hogan Family dwelling, and possibly the factory, courtesy Kathleen Crain who believes it dates to the 1870s, prior to Henry Hogan's death.

If you want pure ALE
That is not stale,
DRINK
BUNSTER
AGENT, H. HOGAN.
ma 23 2m

Drink Bunster, Agent, H. Hogan, *The British Columbian*, July 3, 1867, pg 3.

H. HOGAN,
AGENT FOR
**Stewart & Co's and
C. Gowan's
CELEBRATED ALES.**
—
**Syrup and Soda Water
Manufactory.**

H. Hogan Agent For, *The Mainland Guardian*, September 12, 1870, pg 4.

ble downturn hit New Westminster. Yet Hogan seemed to thrive. He and Mary had two more children (Robert Edward and Mary Ellen) between 1870-73, and on September 19, 1872, he took a preemption on 160 acres "on the South Arm of the Fraser River," according to the *BC Gazette* summary that year.

In 1874, Hogan opened the Terminus Hotel in Moodyville. Somehow, he had obtained a liquor license even though the mill's owner, Sue Moody, had been able to keep the mill "dry" since it began in 1865. Hogan attempted to transfer the license when it

came up for renewal to a man named Briggs. This time, Moody successfully objected on the grounds it would:

*“likely induce drunkenness amongst the Indians. The license was refused, and once more, Moodyville was without alcohol.”**

*Page 141, *The Enterprising Mr. Moody, the Bumptious Captain Stamp*, by James Morton (1977)

There were other setbacks during this time. In November 1872, Hogan was successfully sued by his former partner, Alex Phillips for \$72.89 plus costs (*British Colonist*, November 6, 1872, pg 3), more than a month’s wages at the time. In 1875, unable or unwilling to come up with the funds to pay for required improvements on his Fraser River preemption, the 160 acres of Fraser River waterfront reverted back to the province (*BC Gazette*, December 11, 1875, pg 280). Hogan’s name was just one of many on that page.

The most serious was a fire that started on Front Street on August 29, 1875, that nearly consumed Hogan’s home and business. *The Mainland Guardian*, Hogan (and his insurance company) were impressed by the Hyack Fire Company’s response: (September 1, 1875 pgs 2 & 3):

“they cut off the fire from the dwelling of Mr. Hogan which at one time appeared to be in the midst of the flames and already impossible of escape...it was saved intact...Mr. Hogan will lose more or less by loss of furniture from hasty removal. A remarkable preservation of his property could hardly be credited by anyone but the witness. The gallantry and indomination of the Hyacks is deserving...”

It was a close call. Hogan immediately placed a “CARD OF THANKS” to the Hyack Fire Company:

“and the citizens who so heartily aided them, for their very gallant conduct at the late fire on Front Street, by which my property was saved from destruction. H. Hogan.”

But soon, there were more challenges. Mary’s father, Robert Power, passed away the following year on April 16, 1876, at 65 years old. His obituary noted that he had arrived in British Columbia in 1858 and held property in Victoria and New Westminster. He was survived by Mary and her brothers, John and William. John Powers, just eighteen, would soon manage the Telegraph Hotel. Meanwhile, in 1878 Henry Hogan ran for office as a New Westminster city councilor. He was a popular choice, well respected by the business community and was elected. (*Mainland Guardian*, January 16, 1878, pg 3).

End of an Era – Henry Hogan Passes Away

Time was running out for the soda bottler, and Hogan seemed to know it. On July 16, 1879, not feeling well, he decided to make out his will. Henry’s main concern was the soda water business. William (“Doc”) was only 13 and Robert was just nine years old, and he worried they were too young to run the business. He approached James Wise and Charles McDonough, who had similar backgrounds as Hogan—Catholic, Irish merchants with successful establishments (clothing and dry goods) on Front

Street. Henry considered both men his friends and named them his executors in the will.

Henry’s health continued to decline after making out the will. Three months later, after “ailing for some time” (*Mainland Guardian*, October 18, 1879, pg 3), Henry Hogan passed away on October 17, 1879, of heart disease. He was just 44 years old. The *Mainland Guardian* (October 22, 1879, pg 3) summed up his life and character:

“he was of a kindly, good-natured disposition, and much esteemed by all who knew him...the funeral procession clearly indicated the high respect in which he was held. It included all the old residents, who evidently looked upon him as one of themselves.”

In his will, Hogan gave fifty dollars to the Roman Catholic Church “for masses for my soul.” Mary (and her brother William) had already inherited the Telegraph Hotel on Front Street, so Hogan gave her Lot 1, Block 9, likely their home, “for her sole and only use forever” (it was on Richards Street, which later became part of Columbia Street. The house was close to the Fraser River and eventually was absorbed by John Hendry’s Royal City Planning Mills. (For Will, see GR1052, #2971, B8949 – 12 pages)

The rest of the estate was to be divided up equally between the four children after they turned twenty-one, with one exception. The executors were to carry on the soda water business to support the four children, and when William and Robert were:

“of sufficient age in the opinion of my said Executors to conduct the business it is my wish that my said two sons jointly assume the management of the said business for their sole use and benefit.”

The will had no mention of real estate on Columbia Street, where the soda water business was located, confirming the family’s belief that it was on the Powers property. Henry owned the business but not the property. This soon became an issue.

Executors James Wise and Charles McDonough asked creditors and debtors to settle their accounts with Hogan’s Estate by January 18, 1880 (*Mainland Guardian*, November 26, 1879, pg 2). At that point, a decision had to be made as to how to carry on the soda water business for the coming year. Real estate agent James Morrison was engaged to find someone to lease or buy the business as a going concern. With no land being sold, he came up with a novel idea, noting:

“in view of the early construction of the railway, presents a unique opportunity for making a rapid income.” (*Mainland Guardian*, January 28, 1880, pg 3)

Claiming that a fast dollar could be made off the CPR construction crews didn’t work, and several more months went by. Finally, on May 22, 1880, with the busy season about to begin, Mary Hogan took charge, even though Henry’s Executors were supposed to be making the decisions. She placed an ad noting that the business was no longer available for lease.

Soda-Water and Ginger-Beer Manufactory.

Mrs. HOGAN

BEGETS TO INFORM THE PUBLIC that she has engaged experienced assistance in the manufacture of Soda-Water, plain and sweet, Ginger-Beer, Sarsaparilla, and syrups of all kinds. She has refitted the establishment carried on by her late husband for so many years, and trusts that the patronage so liberally bestowed on him will be continued to herself.

She will execute any orders sent to her from the interior with care and dispatch. A messenger will call at each hotel and saloon in the city, every morning to receive orders.

MRS. MARY HOGAN,
Columbia Street,
Above Lytton Square.

my22

Soda-Water and Ginger Beer Manufactory ad. *The Mainland Guardian*, May 22, 1880, pg 2

The New Manager

The New Westminster Soda Water Factory had a new manager from June 1880 to August 1882, believed to be Murdoch Duncan McLennan. McLennan came to British Columbia from Nova Scotia in 1878 and was 39 years old. His real occupation was a ship captain, but he was enumerated in the 1881 census as a “Soda Water Maker” in New Westminster. Since there was no other soda water factory in town, he was likely the “experienced assistance” Mary Hogan engaged.

Mary Hogan was fortunate to find McLennan, as she had her hands full. Back in January, she had already taken charge of the Telegraph Hotel, the family’s main source of income. Her ad in the paper noted:

“the above popular Boarding House is now under her own control and management. She asks a continuance of the patronage which has always been accorded to the house, which she will endeavor to merit by strict attention to the comfort of her guests.” (Mainland Guardian, January 7, 1880, pg 3)

This ad was interesting—it begins with “Mrs. Hogan” and ends with “Mrs. Mary Powers, Proprietress,” perhaps hoping to show her connection to the Powers family. Mary had taken over the hotel from her brother John, who had managed it the previous year at just 21 years old.

In May 1880, Mary was involved with the soda water business and managed the Telegraph Hotel, but there was one other complication—she was about to give birth again. Her son John Frederick was born the same month she took over the soda business and only seven months after Henry died. Her brothers William and John Powers were there to help, but one can only admire her ability to cope with all this—mother of four children plus a new-

born baby, all while managing two businesses. Remarkable.

The next year, Mary had another child, a daughter named Laura May, born on June 24, 1881. She obviously had met someone else, but the father was not named on the birth certificate. Laura May was given the last name Hogan. The 1881 Census described Mary’s occupation as Hotel Keeper, living with five children (Laura May was not yet born), plus William and John Powers.

Mary Hogan managed the Telegraph Hotel and held the liquor license for the next decade. It was rare for a female to hold a liquor license in those early days. In 1884 a list indicating all the liquor license renewals in the Lower Mainland (from Moodyville to Delta and as far as Whonnock) was published. Of the 39 licenses, only two were held by a woman. (British Columbian, November 26, 1884, pg 4).

Soda Water Factory Sold

Between June 1880 and August 1882, Mary Hogan transferred the soda water business to J. G. Jaques, a wealthy New Westminster real estate investor. Jaques later modestly described himself as:

“one of the largest property holders in the city” (Daily British Columbian January 30, 1889, pg 4)

Parting with the factory was definitely not in keeping with Henry Hogan’s will—he had asked his Executors to keep the business going until sons William and Robert were ready to take it over. Possibly financial pressures played a part in the decision. Jaques was no bottler, so it seems likely that he didn’t own the factory very long before selling it to Alex Phillips in August 1882.

After Henry & Mary

Free of the soda water factory, Mary carried on as proprietor of the Telegraph Hotel. However, she began running into financial difficulties that would follow her to her death. Sick with Nephritis, a painful kidney infection, she died of arsenic poisoning on June 18, 1892, at 42 years old. The Daily Columbian paper reported on June 20, 1892 (pg 4):

“By the death of Mrs. Hogan, of the Telegraph Hotel, on Saturday afternoon, another vacancy is made in the thinning ranks of the early-day settlers. Mrs. Hogan was especially well known to navigators of the river and gulf, and her hospitable manner won her many friends. Out of respect to the deceased, flags were at half mast yesterday and today on the steamboats and several buildings. Mrs. Hogan organized the first choir in the R.C. church in this city, of which she was leader for some years...a family of six children mourn her loss.”

Now it was up to her sons William and Robert to step in and manage the hotel. Mary had left no will and a substantial debt. There were 33 creditors from New Westminster to Victoria, and some were “threatening to sue for the amounts due them” (GR 1304 #1261). Even former soda bottler John Mahrer from Nanaimo wanted his liquor bill paid quickly.

Her son William (Doc) Hogan petitioned the court to permit the four oldest children to sort out the estate, which had debts of \$2,967.85. Fortunately, the Hogans found an investor, William Booth of Ladner's Landing, to lend them \$3,000 to pay off the debts. A mortgage was secured against two small acreages that Mary still held on Sixth Avenue (Lots 2 & 3, Block 9, New Westminster Suburban Lands) and the house on Richards Street that Henry Hogan had bequeathed to Mary.

Mary's younger brother, John Powers, passed away on June 11, 1883, just 25 years old, but her older brother, William Powers, "Uncle Billy," was always there to steady the ship. He was later recalled as:

"The mainstay of the family and remarkable man. He was an Anglican and a Mason. He bought the family plot in the cemetery which accounts for all the Catholic Hogans being buried in the Masonic section of the cemetery."

*(email to the author May 26, 2017 from Kathleen Crain).

Mary's estate took the better part of a year to sort out, but by September 23, 1893, her sons William, age 27, and Robert, 23, began running ads in "the Pacific Canadian" under the "Hogan Bros." banner, once again pointing out the Telegraph Hotel's choice location opposite the Fraser River ferry landing. These ads ran until May 1894, even with a Depression going on that year.

In December 1894, while he was tending the bar, Robert wound up getting shot in the leg while trying to break up a fight among two patrons. The bullet narrowly missed his femoral artery which would have killed him (*Vancouver Daily World*, May 16, 1895, pg 8).

Other scrapes at the hotel were reported in the papers in the years that followed, all part of the rough and tumble life of running a hotel with a liquor license in the frontier days of New Westminster. When times were slow, there was always work on the Fraser—in 1897, William Hogan was listed as a deck hand in the directory, Robert was a fisherman, and Fred worked as a steamboat man. Later he became a master mariner and tug captain.

The sons carried on, but like their father, Henry, none would live past 50. William, the eldest, was the first to pass on June 19, 1901, age 35, of Bright's Disease. Fred, the youngest, was next. He died September 4, 1906, at age 26, of "strangulation while vomiting" in his cabin on the tug Stranger. Robert lived the longest, passing on January 16, 1917, at 46 from pneumonia.

Between 1895-99, all three daughters of Henry and Mary Hogan married ship captains working on the Fraser River. Laura May's husband, C. F. (Fred) Mayers, signed his place of birth on the marriage certificate as "Gastown, Vancouver." Born about 1873, thirteen years before the city was incorporated, he was a true pioneer. Margaret's husband, Lyman H. Ford, was described as "senior Fraser River pilot and Pacific coast navigator for 40 years." He left a substantial estate to her when he died in 1930. (*Vancouver Sun*, April 26, 1930, pg 14). All of the Hogan offspring stayed in the Lower Mainland, but the daughters had longer lives—Mary Ellen passed in 1931 at 56 years old, Margaret died in 1946 at 78, and Laura May died in 1957 at 76.

As for the Telegraph Hotel, address 375 Front Street, it was sold in June 1896:

"James Brennan, late of the Occidental hotel, has re-opened the Telegraph hotel on Front Street, recently purchased from the Hogan estate." (*Vancouver Daily World*, June 8, 1896, pg 5)

The next year "Uncle Billy" Powers turned his hand to boat building, but he must have kept a part interest in the hotel, as in 1900-01, he was again listed as the proprietor. By 1905 Albert Peters, Mary Ellen Hogan's husband, had joined Uncle Billy as proprietor, and Robert Hogan was back as a bartender.

However, the old hotel was starting to show its age, now almost forty years old. The liquor license inspector reported to council that the Telegraph hotel building "was very old and dilapidated" (*Vancouver Daily World*, December 22, 1905, pg 20).

Uncle Billy asked the council to renew the license for a full year. After a lengthy debate, he was given six months, during which time a new building must be erected. The writing was on the wall, and the building was torn down. A new hotel called the "Premier Hotel" was built in 1906, further up the same lot, now facing Columbia Street instead of Front Street (New Westminster Public Library website, photograph #155). Uncle Billy, the mainstay of the family, passed away on January 7, 1907. His obituary and the documents at BC Archives say he was 62, but the headstone at Fraser Cemetery shows that he was 64 years, five months old. As that is more precise, likely that was his correct age.

As for the fate of the Hogan family home on Columbia, a photo shows it still there in 1910, (New Westminster Public Library website, photograph #1870), now surrounded by many other buildings. The address was 322-332 Columbia Street, which "probably became part of the Riverview Boarding House Complex of George Davis" (see the 1909 B.C. Directory).



The Hogan and Powers section of Fraser Cemetery, note the branch from the Monkey Tree behind hanging down from above. The family says that the graves of Henry and Mary are the flat slabs on the left.

The Hogan Soda Bottle

After fifty years of collectors searching, only one Hogan bottle has ever been found. The Hogan bottle was found by a veteran digger who lived in Ladner at the time, Reg Volts. I recall Reg telling me that he was aghast when he found it as he cracked it with his shovel. Not even a shard of another Hogan bottle has ever turned up. Reg passed away in 1990, and the bottle was inherited by his son Jody, who granted permission to photograph it again, this time in color. The catch, of course, was that Jody lives near Vanderhoof, so a road trip was needed in 2018. The bottle is a two-piece blob top soda with an unmarked base (no iron pontil). It measures 7 1/8 inches tall and 2 9/16 inches wide on the base. It dates from 1864 to 1879.

Jody believes that his dad found it near an old cannery on the Fraser River. However, my memory from the 1970s when I first saw it is that Reg said that it was dug out of one of the original hand-dug dykes near Ladner. These were located well away from the present dykes that protect the community. Jody Volts told me that contrary to a rumor of the Hogan bottle being for sale, it never has, although his dad once refused \$10,000 for it.

Thanks and Credits

Looking into an early pioneer like Henry Hogan, a man who has almost nothing written about him, meant that a lot of help was needed. Let's start with Sharon Keen, who found Hogan's will after my own lack of success after half a dozen attempts to find it. Unfortunately, Hogan's probate, with specifics like the value of his estate, is still missing, despite all our efforts. Chris Hanna of Alpha Research Corporation tracked down documents relating to the family's financial position after Mary Hogan's death, no easy feat as she died intestate (i.e., without a will). Theresa Vogel, Manager of the Archives at the Roman Catholic Diocese of Victoria, provided key assistance regarding the marriage date of Henry Hogan and Mary Jane Powers. The McPherson Library staff at the University of Victoria are thanked for helping locate the *Rasmussen* ship passenger lists regarding San Francisco port arrivals during the California Gold Rush. Tom Carey, librarian/archivist at the San Francisco History Centre, San Francisco Library, is thanked for helping with details regarding the death of Peter J. Hogan.

An article on pioneer California soda water manufacturer George C. Thompson by Eric McGuire appeared in the November–December 2014 issue (pgs 38–43) of *Bottles and Extras* was helpful. At the time, this was the official publication name of the Federation of Historical Bottle Collectors (FOHBC), an organization that encourages the growth and public awareness of the antique bottle and glass collecting hobby. McGuire's research helped track down Henry Hogan's time in San Francisco.

Finally, as often is the case, the most valuable assistance came from the family, notably Kathleen Crain and Nelson Oliver. It was a chance meeting with historian Mike Hovevar in 2010 at the Vancouver Public Library downtown that led me to Nelson and then to his cousin Kathleen, both direct descendants of Henry and Mary Hogan.



The legendary Hogan bottle, still one of a kind. Courtesy of Jody Volts.

Due to the early death of her father, Margaret (full name—Margaret Kathleen Mitchell Crain) went to live with her grandmother, Margaret Jane Ford (nee Hogan), who was Henry and Mary Hogan's first daughter (October 12, 1867–February 2, 1946). Kathleen shared with me childhood memories of her grandmother taking her out to the Masonic section of Fraser Cemetery in New Westminster to visit the graves of Henry and Mary Hogan. Touched by this story, I did the same and found the Hogan and Powers plots framed by a pair of Monkey Puzzle trees, reportedly planted by Henry Hogan himself so many years ago. Their graves are surrounded by famous names in B.C. history—Henry Edmonds (provincial land registrar, real estate speculator, politician), Captain William Irving (famous Fraser riverboat captain), “Gassy Jack” Deighton, and many more.

Bill Wilson

Bill Wilson is a British Columbia author and history enthusiast who has been researching and writing about British Columbia since 1974. His first book, *Pioneer Soda Water Companies of B.C.*, is still sought out by new collectors entering the hobby. In May 2022, he was awarded a Certificate of Merit by the BC Historical Federation for “outstanding contributions to the published histories of soda manufacturers and brewers of British Columbia.”

Since retiring in 2017, he began his limited-run series called “Soda Kings of B.C. & the Yukon,” and Volumes 1 and 2 are both sold out. The latest volume included a profile about legendary manufacturer Henry Hogan, who began his career in California and like others, finished it in Canada, leaving behind rare artifacts from both countries. For more information Bill can be reached at bcantiquebottles.com.

