

Biography by Robert Jarvis

Jarvis, William Botsford 1799 – 1864

William age 10, the youngest of Stephen and Amelia's 6 children arrived at York 28th of August 1809 after a 2 month journey. Their temporary quarters were with William, Stephen's cousin who was the Secretary and Clerk of the Province of Upper Canada and had persuaded him to move from Fredericton N.B.

He attended the district school under the tutelage of George Okell Stewart and John Strachan. In 1818 he was appointed a clerk in the Provincial office working with his cousin Samuel Peters Jarvis. After accumulating some funds he bought a house and like others in the official class engaged in land speculation. Along with others he subdivided land to create the village of Yorkville. In 1824 he bought a 120 acre site from John Small on which had been built a 2 story house.

His mother had died in 1819 and he and his father lived bachelor lives in this house until 1827. In May of that year he was appointed High Sheriff of the Home District. Two month later he married Mary Boyles Powell, grand daughter of William Dummer Powell, Chief Justice of Upper Canada. Mary named the estate "Rosedale" for the wild roses that grew on the property.

Between 1830 and 1834 he contested 3 provincial elections for the town of York. He was narrowly defeated by Robert Baldwin in a bi-election but was successful later that year against him. During his tenure he pressed for the incorporation of the city and advocated voting by ballot.

He was one of the heroes of the rebellion of 1837 when William Lyon Mackenzie and his rebels march down Yonge Street. William with 27 men opened fire when they saw them advancing. The rebels thinking there were many regular troops panicked and retreated.

His social affiliations and business interests showed a keen interest in the development of York and the welfare of its residents. He was chairman of the committee that planned the railway from York to Lake Simcoe. He was an incorporator of the Toronto Dry Dock Co. [1847], the Toronto-Hamilton- Niagara and St. Catharines Electro-Magnetic Telegraph Co., the Toronto Island Bridge

Co.[1857] and the Accident Assurance Co. He was a member of the Board of Health during the cholera epidemic.

At the end of his life in 1864 he was a respected patriarch of his adopted city.