

BOHEMIAN

John Graham Haggart (1836-1913)

John Graham Haggart, industrialist, Member of Parliament, Cabinet Minister and Dean of the House of Commons, was something of an enigma. He garnered both business and political success, but his legacy is not without blemish and, even in his day, neither the press nor his colleagues regarded him in a particularly positive light.

He was most kindly described as a man of,

... keen insight and stern business integrity, a fierce fighter¹ ... a man of courage, energy and audacity² ... a careful and capable administrator³. Tough, able, and unpolished⁴ [he] played the game of politics like a gentleman⁵ A striking figure; big, broad and loosely knit, topped with a great head and shaggy white locks, he struck the eye and stood out from the crowd as a man apart.⁶

The same observers often contradicted themselves, however, and described Haggart in harsher terms.

With few men did he associate on a basis of intimate friendship. Feared rather than worshipped ... he was not touched by criticism [and] when his combativeness was aroused, he was sarcastic and bitter⁷. A strong man in the House [but] lazy and with a penchant for plump and available lady typists⁸ ... a Bohemian⁹. The most powerful getter-up of cock-and-bull stories as any man we know¹⁰ ...

Haggart may not have been loved by even those who admired and respected him, but with consummate political skill he commanded the unwavering support of voters in the constituency of Lanark South and held his parliamentary seat through the administrations of nine Prime Ministers¹¹.

¹ *Ottawa Citizen*, March 13, 1913.

² Joseph-Israël Tarte (1848-1907), Conservative MP 1891-1892, Liberal MP 1893-1903, Minister of Public Works 1896-1902.

³ *Perth Courier*, March 21, 1913.

⁴ *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, Larry Turner.

⁵ *Toronto Globe*.

⁶ *Perth Courier*, March 21, 1913.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Canada 1874-1896: Arduous Destiny*, by Peter Busby Waite (1971).

⁹ *Lady Aberdeen's Journal*, December 13, 1894.

¹⁰ *Perth Courier*, January 16, 1874.

¹¹ Macdonald (i), Mackenzie, Macdonald (ii), Abbott, Thompson, Bowell, Tupper, Laurier and Borden.

John G. Haggart was born at Perth, on November 14, 1836, the son of John H. Haggart (1786-1855) and Isabella Graham (1816-1875). His stonemason father had arrived in Upper Canada in the 1820s from Breadalbane, Scotland, working first on the Welland Canal¹² and then as a contractor building Chaffey's Lock¹³ on the Rideau Canal. In 1832 John Sr. came to Perth and, in partnership with George Buchanan¹⁴, leased Dr. Alexander Thom's (1775-1848)¹⁵ grist mill on what was soon known as Haggart's Island. Within a decade he owned the site and had built a complex of water-powered flour, oatmeal and sawmills on the main branch of the Tay, a carding mill on the Little Tay, and a large two-storey Regency style stone home¹⁶ in between.



*Haggart House c1920*¹⁷

John Jr. was born and grew up in the house by the mills where he “*served a rigorous apprenticeship as ‘general utility man’ which entailed driving a wagon, delivering flour and making himself generally useful about the mill*”.¹⁸

Young Haggart began his education at Mrs. Jessop's Primary School on Brock Street¹⁹ where, according to historian Clyde Bell (1915-2005), he did not demonstrate much academic aptitude.

¹² Constructed 1824-1829.

¹³ Constructed 1828-1831.

¹⁴ George Buchanan's primary interest was the timber trade and he built the slides at Chat's Falls and Chaudière Falls on the Ottawa River. He married Caroline Powell, daughter of Bathurst District Sheriff James Hamilton Powell (1773-1831), at Perth in 1836 and was drowned in 1841 running a crib through his slide at Chat's Falls.

¹⁵ Soldier-Settler and Perth's first doctor.

¹⁶ Haggart House, 41 Mill Street, built in 1837, is recognized as a heritage property by Town of Perth By-law 2521, January 21, 1984.

¹⁷ Photo courtesy of the Perth Matheson House Museum.

¹⁸ Clyde Bell, *Perth Courier*, March 5, 1964.

¹⁹ Located on the north side of Brock Street between Drummond and Beckwith Streets.

[Mrs. Jessop] was noted for being very cross and seems to have vented all her anger against her dissipated husband upon the unfortunate children who were placed under her care. She held 'confession' every Friday, when all the children had to confess their sins of the week. John Haggart seems to have been one of the banes of this school mistress' life. He was seemingly so stupid and dull, that one day, as punishment, she made him wear a dunce's cap and stand on the stove which did not support his weight, the result being a bad mixture of broken stove and small boy.²⁰

Escaping the tender mercies of Mrs. Jessop, Haggart attended the Perth Public and Grammar Schools with more success and undertook to study law with local barrister John Deacon (1823-1909)²¹. His legal studies were abandoned, however, when his father died in 1855 and, at the age of 19, he took over management of the family milling business. John Jr. was the eldest of three brothers, but his siblings Duncan Archibald (1838-1851) and Norman James (1839-1840), had both pre-deceased their father.

In his youth, John G. Haggart was known for his athletic prowess and enthusiasm for sports. He was a particularly outstanding cricketer, boxer and bowler and the local newspaper once described him as "*unquestionably one of the best, if not the best, handball player in Perth*"²². Wealthy mill-owner that he was, he was still "*an expert among the logs*"²³ and loved to show off his log rolling technique across the timber floating on his mill pond.

Haggart would be involved in milling at Perth for nearly six decades, although, through a series of partnerships and managers, the company name often changed and did not always reveal his stake in the enterprises; Perth Mills, R. H. Balderson, Haggart & Herron, James Herron & Sons, Perth Roller Mills, W.T. Patterson, and Dodds & Erwin.²⁴ In 1891 generators were installed on the island and began producing electrical power for the Town of Perth²⁵. Haggart was president of the Tay Electric Light Company Limited and, over the years, a stockholder in the Perth Felt Co. Ltd., the Perth Carpet Co. Ltd., Perth Rink Co. Ltd. and the Winn Shoe Co. Ltd., among investments further afield.

On May 26, 1861, 25-year-old John G. Haggart married 19-year-old Caroline Douglas at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Perth. His bride was the daughter of Robert Douglas (1812-1886) and Caroline Cox (1819-1868). A native of Northern Ireland, her father began his career at Perth as a carpenter, developed a contracting business, opened a merchant store, was elected to the Town's first municipal council at incorporation in 1850 and was elected Mayor in 1867. Through the 1850s and 1860s he was also Quartermaster of the 1st Battalion, Lanark Militia.

²⁰ *Perth Courier*, October 15, 1964.

²¹ Appointed Renfrew County Judge in 1866.

²² *Perth Courier*, September 21, 1866.

²³ *Perth Courier*, March 21, 1913.

²⁴ Over their history, various parts of the Haggart mills complex burned and were replaced; including in 1841, c1876, 1948 and 1964. The dam on the main branch of the Tay River, first constructed in 1817, was rebuilt and reconfigured several times over the years, including in 1883, 1960, 1971 and then replaced by a 'rocky ramp' in 2015. The smaller dam on the Little Tay was also rebuilt several times and then replaced by a 'rocky ramp' in 2017.

²⁵ One of several including generators at the Bowes and Adams dams upstream.

John and Caroline Haggart's first child, John Haggart III, was born in 1862, but died in infancy. Their son Duncan Archibald Haggart followed in 1863²⁶ and, like his father, grew up to be an athlete. After elementary and secondary education at Perth, Duncan undertook the study of law in the offices of D'Alton McCarthy (1836-1898) at Barrie and Toronto but died of typhoid fever in 1885 at the age of 22 years.

In the same year he married, John G. Haggart raised a militia company at Perth in response to war jitters set-off by the *Trent* affair²⁷. He served as Company Captain for a decade, through the Fenian raids of 1870-1871.

Even as a young man Haggart was a leading citizen of Perth and politics soon emerged as his true calling. In 1861, the year he turned 25, married and was commissioned in the Militia, he was elected Mayor of Perth, holding the post until 1864. He was elected to Town Council for the 1866-1869 terms, and then re-elected as Mayor for 1871-72.

Politically Haggart professed to be a Conservative but proved a political opportunist. In 1867 he secured the Conservative nomination in Lanark South to run for election to Canada's first parliament. He lost. In the 1869 Federal by-election he ran again, this time as a coalition candidate, but withdrew before the final vote. In 1871, his prior affiliations notwithstanding, he ran as a Liberal for a seat in the Provincial Legislature but finished a close second.

The following year, when incumbent MP Alexander Morris (1826-1889)²⁸ stepped down to accept appointment as Chief Justice of Manitoba, John G. Haggart once again secured the Conservative nomination and, this time, went on to win election. He would be returned 11 times and only death could pry loose his grip on Lanark South.

Haggart's advancement through Conservative party ranks was steady if not particularly rapid and in the late 1870s he replaced Senator Alexander Campbell (1822-1892) as leader of eastern Ontario Tories in the House of Commons. Over the next decade his influence and political power continued to grow, as is perhaps best illustrated in his drive to re-develop of the Tay Canal.

The first Tay Canal, created to connect Perth with the Rideau Canal, was financed as a local business proposition and opened in 1834. Following the course of the Tay River from Perth to its mouth downstream from Port Elmsley, it consisted of five locks, six dams with timber slides and two swing bridges. Built on the cheap, its locks were too small, the channel too shallow and the engineering too shoddy to accommodate steamers and barges designed for the substantial infrastructure of the Rideau Canal. It was never a commercial success. It was only used by cargo vessels until 1849, thereafter dams were sufficiently maintained to float timber but when a log drive destroyed several locks in 1865 it was abandoned.

²⁶ The *Perth Courier* of December 18, 1863 announced the "*Birth, at her father's residence on the 10th inst., [to] Mrs. John Haggart, a daughter*". This seems to be simply an error in reporting the gender of the child, but Duncan Haggart (b.1863) may have had a twin sister who did not survive, although there is no sister buried in the Haggart family plot in Craig Street Cemetery.

²⁷ In November 1861, during the first months of the American Civil War, an American (Union) Navy ship stopped and boarded the British mail packet RMS *Trent* and seized two Confederate States diplomats travelling to Europe. Until President Abraham Lincoln backed down and released the Southerners in January 1862, war between the U.S.A. and Great Britain seemed imminent.

²⁸ Son of Perth's first merchant and first elected member to the Legislature of Upper Canada, William Morris (1786-1858).

Reconstruction of the Tay Canal was the dream of Perth businessmen with high hopes for exploiting deposits of phosphate, mica, and iron ore found in the area. In 1880–1882, in alliance with Perth Mayor Francis Alexander Hall (1843-1904) and Rideau Canal steamship owner and MP Moss Kent Dickinson (1822-1897)²⁹, Haggart prevailed upon an unwilling Sir Charles Tupper (1821-1915), Minister of Railways and Canals, to finance a new canal. The project was executed in three stages between 1885 and 1891; bypassing Port Elmsley by digging a new 18 meter (59 foot) wide, two kilometer (1.2 mile) long canal from the Tay River to Beveridge Bay; constructing two locks, each with a lift of 4.0 meters (13.1 feet), near the south end of the canal cut; deepening the entire system to 1.7 meters (5 foot 7 inches); building an overflow dam on the new cut above Beveridge Bay to raise the canal water level to Perth, and excavating a turning basin at Perth. When completed six years later the project had cost nearly \$500,000, an enormous sum in the 1880s.



Excavating the Perth Basin, c1891³⁰

In 1888, as the project advanced by fits and starts, from cost overrun to cost overrun, John G. Haggart was named Postmaster General in John A. Macdonald's cabinet, a post he would hold through the Macdonald, Abbott and Thompson administrations. As a cabinet minister Haggart was even better placed to push his pet project forward.

²⁹ A Manotick mill owner, known locally as 'King of the Rideau', Dickinson owned 16 steamers and 60 barges operating on the Rideau Canal. He was mayor of Ottawa 1864-1866 and MP for the constituency of Russell 1882-1887.

³⁰ Photo courtesy of the Perth Matheson House Museum.

During the first weeks of 1890, as the canal neared completion, Haggart persuaded John A. Macdonald, who, in addition to being Prime Minister was also holding the portfolio of Railways and Canals, to allow use of an unexpended balance of funds from an earlier contract to extend the canal from the turning basin, between Drummond and Gore Streets, to the site of his mills on Haggart Island, at the top of Mill Street. In addition to dredging another 366 meters (1,200 feet) of the Tay River, the proposal included construction of an iron swing bridge on Gore Street.³¹

Haggart's justification for this unplanned work was that the canal should extend to his mill so that 70 years of sawmill and other debris accumulated at the foot of the dam could be cleared out lest it drift into the basin and thus require periodic dredging. Why deepening the river to the standard canal depth of 1.7 meters (5 foot 7 inches) was necessary for removal of the debris, and what an iron swing bridge would contribute to the stated objective, was not explained. Nor was it mentioned that deepening the river and clearing the debris would effectively raise the head and significantly increase available power at the Haggart dam.³²

Despite the fact that neither the extension nor its funding had been sanctioned by parliament, tenders for the work were solicited in November 1890 and contracts signed in February 1891, barely a month ahead of Federal Election day on March 5th. With the Tay Canal project already grossly over budget, and the extension having been end-run around Parliamentary review and approval, Wilfred Laurier's Liberal party, and many others, cried foul, and dubbed the whole venture 'Haggart's Ditch'.

During the 1891 election campaign, cost over-runs and unauthorized spending on the Tay Canal were not the only scandals swirling around Lanark South Conservative candidate John Graham Haggart.

The House of Commons Select Standing Committee on Public Accounts was also asking awkward questions "*respecting certain payments made by the Post Office Department for extra services*"³³. It had been discovered that a Miss Craig, "*a young woman in his department*"³⁴, was still receiving regular salary cheques six months after she had left the employ of the department. When pressed by reporters, Haggart refused to explain or to address the implications of his relationship with Miss Craig, "*because the charge was not made openly in the House, and because he did not like to put the girl on the witness stand*"³⁵.

Other charges surfaced that Haggart had been a silent partner in a company that, through his political influence, won over-priced CPR construction contracts in 1879³⁶.

³¹ The first bridge on Gore Street was, reportedly, a giant elm tree felled to connect Cockburn Island with the Brockville Road. Over the years several bridges replaced the tree, including a single arch stone bridge that was pulled down in July 1891 to make way for the iron swing bridge. That bridge was replaced by a concrete bridge in 1957.

³² The work would not raise the height of the dam, but it would increase the fall of water (the head) by deepening the river below.

³³ *Journals of the House of Commons, XXV*, Appendix No. 2, 1891, Select Standing Committee on Public Accounts Report and Minutes.

³⁴ *Perth Courier*, August 28, 1891.

³⁵ *Perth Courier*, November 27, 1891.

³⁶ Related to a section of rail between Port Arthur (Thunder Bay) and Rat Portage (Kenora).

As the transcontinental railway pushed westward that year, the first locomotive to reach Winnipeg, on December 29th, was named the '*John G. Haggart*'. For reasons apparent to many, the railway contracting firm of MacKenzie and Mann had named their new locomotive to honor a then back-bench MP from eastern Ontario.³⁷ It was alleged in the House that,

*John G. Haggart became beneficially interested in the profits accruing to the shares in the name of Peter McLaren, and received large sums out of the said profits [and that] members of the firm were called upon by members of the Government of Canada for large contributions for political purposes".*³⁸

Moreover, in 1890, on the recommendation of John G. Haggart, timber baron Peter McLaren (1831-1919) of Perth, who had been instrumental in re-directing those 1879 railway contract profits into Conservative Party coffers, had been appointed to the Red Chamber by John A. Macdonald³⁹. From the outset of his political career in Ottawa, Haggart was a loyal and dedicated supporter of Macdonald and came to be regarded as a member of the 'Chief's' "*old guard*"⁴⁰. For his part, Macdonald was not particularly enamored of Haggart personally, once observing that "*apart from his ability to hold a seat, I can detect no virtue in the man ...*"⁴¹, but he found Haggart useful as party bagman in eastern Ontario and in that role Haggart had considerable influence with Macdonald.

At a rally held at Perth in the autumn of 1891, attended by the Prime Minister and several of his Cabinet colleagues, Haggart was forced to devote "*his whole address to the scandals with which his name is connected*".⁴²

In the end, however, those unexplained payments at the Post Office Department, railway contract kickbacks, overspending on the Tay Canal generally, and the shell-game funding of the canal extension, had little or no impact upon Haggart's political fortunes. In Lanark South voters were quite prepared to ignore Miss Craig and a decade-old railway scandal. Rather, the electorate credited Haggart with securing \$10,000⁴³ in Dominion Government funding toward construction of the Rideau Ferry bridge in 1874 and then bringing even more investment and jobs to the constituency through five years of canal construction. However questionable, the canal extension was seen as a bonus. The *Perth Expositor*, a Conservative journal and Haggart supporter, observed,

*Mr. Haggart has at all times commanded the confidence of the public as a man who can be relied upon to perform his duty. John Haggart is well known to all his constituents and all that a member can properly do in their behalf he has sought to accomplish.*⁴⁴

³⁷ The *John G. Haggart* reached Winnipeg on a temporary track laid over the frozen Red River so that it would be in place to begin construction across the prairies in the spring of 1880.

³⁸ *Hansard*, September 23, 1891.

³⁹ *Ex Uno Plures: Federal Provincial Relations in Canada, 1867-1896*, by Garth Stevenson (1993).

⁴⁰ *Ottawa Citizen*, March 13, 1913.

⁴¹ *Macdonald: A Novel*, by Roy MacSkimming (2007).

⁴² *Perth Courier*, November 27, 1891.

⁴³ The Province of Ontario and the Town of Perth each contributed another \$4,000 to the project.

⁴⁴ Quoted from the *Perth Courier*, March 5, 1964, *John Haggart: The Shrewd Member For South Lanark*, by Don Sisson.



*Rideau Ferry Bridge, constructed 1874*⁴⁵

Haggart was comfortably re-elected, 1,804 to 1,174⁴⁶, but when the Seventh Canadian Parliament convened, he and McKenzie Bowell, Acting Minister of Railways and Canals, faced a storm of protest over \$30,000 that appeared in the annual estimates; additional funding for the unauthorized canal extension already underway.

*I object to the scandalous use of public money ... it is done for no other purpose than to give the mill a greater head of water.*⁴⁷

*It is of no public utility and never will be ... to extend that canal up to Haggart's mill was an act of maddest folly ... this extension was not constructed in the public interest; it benefits nobody except the owners of the mill.*⁴⁸

*My business is that of millwright, and I have some knowledge on which I speak. I visited Perth and took in the sights. We found a small mill with a capacity of 75 barrels of flour in 24 hours. I venture to say that the construction of the canal will give to Haggart's mill three and a half or four feet greater head of water than it has. It does not raise the dam, but it lowers the tailrace, which has exactly the same effect.*⁴⁹

For his part, Haggart strenuously denied that he would enjoy any advantage at all from the canal extension,

⁴⁵ Photo courtesy of David Bromley, Perth Remembered, http://www.perthremembered.com/?page_id=776

⁴⁶ Defeating Liberal candidate William McGarry (1833-1910).

⁴⁷ Hansard, August 12, 1891, William Gibson, MP Lincoln & Niagara.

⁴⁸ Hansard, August 12, 1891, Malcolm Colin Cameron, MP Huron.

⁴⁹ Hansard, August 12, 1891, Robert Watson, MP Marquette.

It does not increase the head or fall of my property six inches ... the engineer who recommended the extension says himself that it does not add one single inch to the head or fall ... the extension of the canal does not go to my mill ... The extension was made on the recommendation of Mr. Page⁵⁰, the engineer.⁵¹

The Commons knew he was lying, and the *Perth Courier* did not believe him either.

In stating in the House that the extension of the Tay Canal to his grist mill would be of no benefit to himself ... he no doubt forgot that the extension will add two or three feet of 'head' to his water power and the owners of water-power generally think such a thing as this of some 'benefit' to them.

With a comfortable majority in the House, however, the Conservative Government passed the \$30,000 appropriation to complete the Tay Canal all the way to the doorstep of Haggart's mill.

John A. Macdonald died on June 6, 1891 and was replaced as Prime Minister by John Abbot (1821-1893). When Abbot shuffled the Conservative cabinet in 1892, he appointed John Graham Haggart as Minister of Railways and Canals. Who better to oversee the nation's canals than the creator of 'Haggart's Ditch'?

When the Tay Canal reconstruction was completed in 1891, from Beveridge Bay to Haggart's mill, the total cost of \$476,128 was more than three-and-one-half times the originally approved budget of \$132,660. The final cost exceeded \$509,000 when North Elmsley Township farmers sued for damages to their land and won a \$33,500 settlement in 1897.



The Tay Canal extension, as seen from the Gore Street Bridge, looking west to Haggart's Mill, with Spalding & Stewart Distillery on the left.⁵²

⁵⁰ John Page, Chief Engineer of the Department of Railways and Canals.

⁵¹ Hansard, August 12, 1891, John Graham Haggart, MP South Lanark.

⁵² Photo courtesy of the Perth Matheson House Museum.

Despite its enormous cost, the canal proved to be of very little benefit. It went into service at a time when railway expansion ensured that it would be under-utilized from the outset and quickly made redundant. In fact, the Brockville & Ottawa Railway had been serving Perth for two decades before reconstruction of the Tay Canal was even begun. The canal and B&O terminals at Perth were less than a mile apart.

As canal construction was still underway, the shipping and freight forwarding firm of 'Seeley & Moffat'⁵³ had a steamboat built by Robert Robertson at a work yard near Craig Street⁵⁴. The hull was launched into the Tay in late 1887 and, when completed in May 1888, the vessel was christened the *John Haggart* in honor of the man who had ensured sufficient water to float it. The vessel was described as; “a strong and staunch boat for carrying grain and other freight, but specially designed to accommodate in a comfortable way large excursion parties”.⁵⁵ Seeley & Moffat knew what they were about, ‘excursion parties’ would prove to be the biggest users of the Tay Canal; little cargo was ever freighted on its waters.



*The Steamer John Haggart c1900*⁵⁶

⁵³ Alfred E. Seeley and Thomas Moffatt.

⁵⁴ The Tipping Yard.

⁵⁵ *Perth Courier*, May 25, 1888.

⁵⁶ Photo courtesy of Parks Canada.

In June 1894, as it became glaringly apparent that the Tay Canal had no commercial justification whatever, Liberal MP John Charlton (1829-1910)⁵⁷ rose in the House to pour further contempt upon 'Haggart's Ditch'. The canal, he said, was "*a public work of considerable cost and of no very considerable public utility*". Citing figures from Haggart's own Ministry of Railways and Canals he pointed out that the annual cost of interest on investment plus maintenance amounted to \$21,521 while, in 1893, the canal had earned only \$135.76 in receipts.

*The Tay Canal is a specimen of lavish expenditure and reckless waste of money ... the cost of maintenance and interest is 158 times greater – not 158 per cent greater, but 158 times greater – than the receipts.*⁵⁸

Charlton then turned specifically to the last-minute, unsanctioned canal extension.

*In 1891, a further vote for the Tay Canal of \$30,000 was placed in the Estimates ... It was stated that the work was in progress from Perth basin to Haggart's mill, and that a new iron swing bridge would be constructed, the estimated cost of the extension and bridge being \$18,466. This estimate was about as reliable as any of those made hitherto; for I find that when the extension was completed, the cost was \$36,412.65.*⁵⁹

While the reason for Haggart's promotion of the canal extension might have been to facilitate loading and discharging cargo directly at his mills, rather than at the basin docks a half-mile away, the primary objective seems to have been something quite different. Charlton, like the critics of 1891, focused on how deepening the river channel and clearing the dam base of debris had significantly increased available waterpower by, in effect, raising the head of the dam at Haggart's Mill from eight feet (2.44 meters) to 10½ feet (3.2 meters).

*I am told that advantage has been taken of this additional head of water. That a powerhouse has been built to supply electric light to the town of Perth and that but for the [canal] extension the power could not have been furnished to the powerhouse.*⁶⁰

In early 1890, at the same time John A. Macdonald was prevailed upon to release unauthorized funds to build the canal extension, Haggart, with just-appointed Senator Peter McLaren (1833-1919)⁶¹ and other investors, formed the Canadian Electric and Water Power Company "... with a capital stock of \$150,000, to produce and distribute electricity in Perth, as well as other towns in the Dominion".⁶² The powerhouse at Haggart's dam, alluded to in the Commons debate of 1894, was a result of that venture. It was owned and operated by the Tay Electric Light Company Limited, of which John G. Haggart was President.

⁵⁷ Member for North Norfolk.

⁵⁸ *Hansard*, June 12, 1894. Receipts in 1894 were \$126 and in 1895 \$119. The canal would always be a massive money-loser.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Hansard*, June 12, 1894.

⁶¹ Also of Perth.

⁶² *Western Electrician*, July 30, 1890.



*Haggart's Mills on the main Tay, as seen from upstream, across the mill pond.*⁶³

Increasing the power output of the Haggart dam, by raising its head through excavation of the river bottom to canal depth, and thus providing additional power to drive electricity generators, appears to have been the primary driving force behind the extension. Canal barge access to the Haggart mill was of secondary importance, if it was ever a consideration at all. In his attack on the project Charlton asked,

... what, I should like to ask, was that [extension] made for? Was it made to be navigated by boats? I am told that the only boat that has navigated it since it was completed is the Hon. Peter McLaren's yacht⁶⁴, which has made two trips.

A few months before Charlton raised the issue in the House, the *Perth Courier* had asked the same question.

*The extension of the Tay Canal, from Gore Street Bridge up to Haggart's mill, cost the country something like \$60,000 ... [it] has been open to traffic for two years, and the swing bridge has been opened once during that time for the passage of a pleasure yacht ...*⁶⁵

⁶³ Photo courtesy of David Bromley, Perth Remembered http://www.perthremembered.com/?page_id=569

⁶⁴ The steam yacht *Geraldine*.

⁶⁵ *Hansard*, June 12, 1894.



*The Gore Street single-arch stone bridge shortly before it collapsed during demolition in 1891. It was being removed to make way for the iron swing bridge on the Tay Canal extension to Haggart's dam.
(Photo courtesy of the Perth Matheson House Museum.)*

Even though it was equipped with an iron swing bridge costing thousands of dollars, there is little evidence that the canal extension, from the turning basin to the dam on Haggart Island, was ever used to transport cargos of any kind. Inclusion of the bridge in the project may have been nothing more than camouflage for the real purpose of the extension – an additional two and one-half feet of head at the Haggart dam with which to generate electricity. Over the years, the swing bridge was so seldom used that the last time it was opened in 1905, when it was only 14 years old, it was found the counter-weights of the mechanism had fallen off and the gearing was so seized from disuse that the drive shaft twisted and it took eight men to manually swing it.

Liberal Trade and Commerce Minister Sir Richard Cartwright (1835-1912), called the whole Tay Canal project a “*scandalous waste of the resources of the public*”⁶⁶. In response, Haggart dodged the embarrassing return-on-investment numbers and defended himself by pointing out that the canal had been undertaken, “... *on the petition of the inhabitants of the town of Perth [who] themselves contributed a large sum towards that extension*”⁶⁷. The Town of Perth had raised \$4,000 by debenture toward the cost of the seldom-used Gore Street swing bridge, on top of an earlier \$4,000 spent to purchase a tannery property to make room for construction of the turning basin.

⁶⁶ *Hansard*, June 12, 1894.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*



Contemporary photo of Haggart's Island. The site of the Carding Mill dam on the Little Tay is indicated by the arrow at the top and the site of the Grist and Sawmill dam on the main branch of the Tay River is marked by the lower arrow. (Photo by David Taylor.)

The *Perth Courier*, a Liberal journal and no friend of Haggart, still felt compelled to acknowledge that, although the 'Ditch' provided little real benefit and was, in truth, a colossal waste of money, in bringing it about Haggart had indeed been representing his constituent's perceived interests and desires.

In connection with his representation of his native constituency the greatest act of his career was his successful effort to effect the construction of the Tay Canal, otherwise known among outside and unfriendly critics, and not altogether unjustly from an outsider's standpoint, by a designation not flattering either to the work or its promoters [i.e. 'Haggart's Ditch']. However, it was what the people of Perth wanted and though its utility, considering its cost, may be questioned, it is undoubtedly a benefit in many ways to the town, and an ornament ...⁶⁸

In time, and in ways unforeseen in the 1890s, 'Haggart's Ditch' did eventually prove to be a "benefit in many ways" and an "ornament" to the town and region. In 1890, the year John A. Macdonald agreed to spend unapproved government funds on the extension to Haggart's mill, his government put through an Act of Parliament that incorporated the Tay Canal into the Rideau Canal system. Operated and maintained by the Federal Government since then, the canals became central to a valuable tourism industry, the future of which was boosted when the Rideau Canal, inclusive of Tay Canal, was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2007. That designation does not, however, include the 366-meter (1,200 foot) Haggart Mill extension of 1891, but applies only to the main course of the Tay Canal from Beveridge Lock on Lower Rideau Lake to the Turning Basin at Gore Street in the center of Perth.

⁶⁸ *Perth Courier*, March 21, 1913.

Haggart may have been self-serving and corrupt in an opportunistic sort of way, but he proved to be a competent Cabinet Minister and was credited with some significant achievements in his portfolios.



**Minister of Railways & Canals, Hon. John
Graham Haggart**
(Photo courtesy of LAC)

As Postmaster General he increased efficiency of the postal service and slashed the red ink by some \$120,000 annually. At the same time, he doubled the weight allowed for single rate letters, a move much appreciated by both business and the general population. On February 19, 1890, while he held the portfolio of Postmaster General, Haggart was awarded the Confederation Medal (bronze grade)⁶⁹ for services of merit to Canada.

He demonstrated similar effectiveness as Minister of Railways and Canals. The Intercolonial Railway, Canada's first national infrastructure project, was owned and operated by the Federal Government from 1872 to 1918. Constructed between 1867 and the mid-1870s, it connected Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Québec and Ontario. With the objective of stimulating economic growth and interprovincial trade, government regulations kept freight rates low but, in doing so, ensured that the project consistently operated in the red; lacking sufficient earnings to meet maintenance and repair costs, it had to be heavily subsidized. In his first year in the job as Minister, however, Haggart turned it around, saving the taxpayers of Canada nearly \$500,000 annually.

... he was feared rather than worshipped, but he started in to have the Intercolonial Railway operated on something nearer to business principles than had been the case at any previous period in its history, and the result was that, during the fiscal year 1892-93, he succeeded in running the line with a surplus over all expenses.⁷⁰

As Minister of Railways and Canals, Haggart also hastened completion of the long delayed Canadian locks at the Sault Ste Marie Ship Canal. American operated locks at the Sault, dating from 1855⁷¹, had often been a source of international friction. At the time of the 1870 Red River Rebellion Colonel Garnet Wolsley's armed force sent to suppress Louis Riel was refused passage and in 1890, in a dispute over Canada's Welland Canal tolls, the Americans retaliated by effectively closing their locks at the Sault to Canadian shipping. With the project pushed hard by Haggart, the Canadian Sault Ste Marie locks were completed in 1895, opening for the first time an all-Canadian water route through the Great Lakes to the St. Lawrence ports, an important accomplishment in the cause of the nation's economic independence.

⁶⁹ The Confederation Medal was the first honor created by the Dominion of Canada. Available to all Canadians, it was awarded in gold, silver and bronze to recipients put forward to the Secretary of State and approved by the Privy Council.

⁷⁰ *Ottawa Citizen*, March 13, 1913.

⁷¹ There had been a small, primitive canal and lock at the Sault as early as 1798.

Under his administration of the department, there was completed the Sault Ste. Marie canal the last link in the chain of canals connecting the Great Lakes with the St. Lawrence and making the Canadian system the greatest the world had ever known.⁷²

Haggart's tenure as Minister of Railways and Canals was not without controversy, however. In 1896 he and two others were implicated in a scandal related to construction of the Soulanges Canal between Pointe-des-Cascades and Coteau Landing, Quebec. Expenditure on the Little Rapids and Galops Rapids locks exceeded an approved budget of \$357,000 by \$527,000 with little accounting of where the money had gone.

In 1892 Haggart was elected leader of the Ontario Conservative Party, replacing Mackenzie Bowell (1823-1917) who had been appointed to the Senate and then called upon to act as Prime Minister.

By 1894 Haggart had been a member of Canada's parliament for over 20 years and would go on to sit as an MP for another two decades⁷³, a record exceeded only by his contemporary Wilfred Laurier (1841-1919) who served as an MP for over 44 years⁷⁴. Like Laurier, for most of those years Haggart occupied a prominent seat on the front benches, whether in government or opposition, but unlike Laurier he never became party leader or Prime Minister. Haggart's best chance came when Prime Ministers Sir John Joseph Caldwell Abbot (1821-1893) and Sir John Sparrow David Thompson (1845-1894) died in rapid succession in 1893 and 1894. He reached the threshold of national leadership but gossip and innuendo surrounding his personal life prevented him from stepping over.

From the outset, John G. Haggart's marriage to Caroline Douglas had not been a success and they separated in 1871, shortly before he was first elected to the House of Commons. No one can say for certain what goes on between a husband and wife, but in 1900 an American gossip columnist provided the following account of the break-up.

The story is of a stern, stubborn, headstrong man and of a girlish but self-willed woman.

It is now nearly 40 years since John Graham Haggart led to the altar Caroline, the pretty daughter of Robert Douglas. John was 24 years old, Caroline barely 18. The husband was of a reserved, even morose disposition; society had no attractions for him. The wife, on the other hand, was full of the exuberance of youth and fond of participating in the gayety which the little town afforded. Gradually, on account of dissimilarity of taste and disposition, there was a drawing apart of husband and wife. The advent of a baby boy did not bring them closer together ...

The story of the separation ... has been repeatedly told in the drawing rooms of Ottawa, Toronto and Montreal. A skating carnival was to be held in the town of Perth. Mrs. Haggart asked her husband to take her to the rink that evening but received a peremptory refusal. Mrs. Haggart went to the rink alone ... When she arrived again at her own home, accompanied by one of her brothers, she found the door barred against her ... Mrs.

⁷² *Ottawa Citizen*, March 13, 1913.

⁷³ Forty years, four months and 19 days (1873-1913).

⁷⁴ Forty-four years, 10 months, 17 days (1874-1919).

Haggart went to the residence of her father for the night, and the family hoped that the breach would be healed. Haggart, however, would not listen to any overtures ... carrying reproof to the verge of vindictiveness the wife would not be allowed to return to her home, nor could she have the boy who was her heart's delight ...

*When young Haggart had grown almost to man's estate, he was taken with a serious illness. He was desirous of seeing his mother; the mother was anxious to see her son. But the father was unrelenting as ever.*⁷⁵

John G. Haggart's 'casting off' of his 'disobedient' wife extended to refusing her adequate financial support. Caroline was forced to rely upon the generosity of her own family and, for a time, to earn her own living, probably the only wife of a Canadian MP of the time to do so. In the years immediately following the 1871 break-down of their marriage Caroline operated 'The Emporium of Fashion' at 23 Gore Street East, in Perth.

Mrs. Jno. G. Haggart, having secured the services of Miss Hannah Riddle, a first-class cutter and fitter of five years experience in Ottawa ... desires to announce to her friends in Perth and surrounding country, that she is now prepared to receive orders in the above line.

She will keep constantly on hand a large stock of the latest styles of patterns of Ladies' and Misses' Clothing – as also of Ladies' Jackets and Mantels, Hats and Mantels Trimmed – Fancy work kept on hand. Parties entrusting her with work can rely on its being done in first class style.

Sole agent for Butterick's Patterns. Catalogues of patterns will be sent to applicants. Butterick's Metropolitan and Quarterly Journal of Fashion available.

Call at Mrs. Morrisons old stand, immediately opposite Martindale's Hardware.

- Mrs. John G. Haggart, Box 100, Perth⁷⁶

Caroline was not about to be discarded without a struggle, however, and in 1888, when Haggart first joined John A. Macdonald's cabinet, she made it a point to be present, front and center, for her husband's August 6th swearing-in ceremony.



⁷⁵ *Pittsburgh Daily Post*, January 31, 1900, by syndicated society and gossip columnist Frederick Cunliffe-Owen (1855-1926), writing under the under the by-line 'The Duchesse de Belimere'. Cunliffe-Owen also wrote columns under the name 'The Marquise de Fontenoy'.

⁷⁶ *Perth Courier*, weekly 1871-1873.

... when the new Postmaster-General took his seat as such in the House of Commons, Mrs. Haggart claimed from the Speaker a carte d'entrée to the front row of the Speaker's gallery, which is reserved for the wife of the Governor-General and the wives of the ministers. The request was refused at first, but Mrs. Haggart insisted upon her rights, and got them.⁷⁷

As Caroline watched her husband take his oath on the floor of the House below, she had already launched a bid to secure a more tangible share in the honors of Haggart's promotion to ministerial rank and the Privy Council; specifically, a piece of the \$7,000 annual salary that went with the post. When Haggart refused her request, she promptly filed a very public civil action claiming support as an abandoned wife. Haggart knew when he had been outmanoeuvred and the press soon reported that,

The action for support of Mrs. John Haggart has been settled out of court. The defense allowed judgment to be entered giving her \$1,000 a year as long as her husband occupies his present position and \$600 a year after that with the privilege to her of moving for an increase. She is also to be freed out of paying all costs of the present suit. F.A. Hall, barrister, was her counsel.⁷⁸

With her settlement in hand, Caroline seems to have retired from self-employment. In the same edition it reported resolution of her lawsuit, the *Perth Courier* also reported that, "*Mrs. John Haggart wound up her dancing class in Smiths Falls by a successful recital*".⁷⁹

Francis Alexander Hall, who successfully represented Caroline against her husband in 1888, was the same man who, as Mayor of Perth in 1880, had been allied with John G. Haggart in lobbying for government funding to reconstruct the Tay Canal.

Caroline Douglas-Haggart died at the age of 57 years, on January 8, 1900, at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Montreal, after what the *Courier* called "*a long period of illness and bodily affliction*". The funeral was conducted from the Ottawa home of her sister Charlotte Douglas-Lyon (1850-1910)⁸⁰ where Caroline had lived during the later years of her life.

⁷⁷ *Pittsburgh Daily Post*, January 31, 1900, by syndicated society and gossip columnist Frederick Cunliffe-Owen (1855-1926), writing under the under the by-line 'The Duchesse de Belimere'. Cunliffe-Owen also wrote columns under the name 'The Marquise de Fontenoy'.

⁷⁸ *Perth Courier*, March 15, 1889.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Married George R. Lyon (1851-1921).



Her obituary in the *Perth Courier*⁸¹ appeared in the third column of page-five, directly opposite, in column six, an advertisement for a John G. Haggart election rally to be held at Maberly the following Tuesday. Haggart did not take time away from his 1900 election campaign⁸² to mourn or attend his wife's funeral, and just as she had been denied access to her husband's home for over three decades, so was she denied space in the Haggart family plot in Perth's Old Burying Ground on Craig Street. She was interred in the Lyon family plot in Beechwood Cemetery, Ottawa.

Although, year after year, the *Parliamentary Guide* consistently listed MP John G. Haggart as "*married [to] Caroline, daughter of Robert Douglas of Perth*", while parliament was in session Haggart lived alone in an Ottawa rooming house. He occasionally hosted working dinners at hotels, but seldom entertained socially and, when such obligations back in Perth demanded the services of a hostess, he turned to his sister, Isabella Maxwell Haggart-Millar (1846-1917)⁸³. Mrs. Millar lived at Haggart House full time after she was widowed in 1889.

In an age when moral gentlemanly leadership was closely associated with 'possession' of a virtuous wife, Haggart not only lacked such a wife but adopted a lifestyle in Ottawa considered in polite circles as unbecoming of a future Prime Minister.

As the Conservative Party pondered its options to replace the late Prime Minister John Thompson in 1894, Lady Aberdeen, wife of the Governor General, noted in her diary; "*Mr. Haggart ... the strongest man, is admittedly a bohemian.*"⁸⁴ Historian P.B. Waite writes that Haggart was considered "*strong in the House because he was a good man at getting campaign funds [but] lazy [with a] penchant for plump and available lady typists ... unfortunate since it was all too often public knowledge*"⁸⁵. Fellow MP Joseph-Israel Tarte (1848-1907) considered Haggart "*indifferent to the usual suave ways of the politician*". Historian Joseph Schull (1906-1980) thought that "*Haggart ... might have been a strong man if it were not for weak women*".⁸⁶ This reputation for philandering stuck to him throughout his career. As late as 1908 his detractors claimed the 72-year-old was consorting the prostitutes. Even at a time when, in the face of such gossip, 'the boys' on both benches tended to close ranks around one of their own, Haggart was regarded as too much the rake to hold the highest office in the land.⁸⁷

⁸¹ *Perth Courier*, January 26, 1900.

⁸² The Conservative Party lost, but Haggart was re-elected.

⁸³ Isabella Haggart married James Morton Millar (1842-1889) in 1868. He was the manufacturer of 'Venus' sewing machines and was Mayor of Perth 1873-1874.

⁸⁴ *Lady Aberdeen's Journal*, December 13, 1894. Ishbel Marie Marjoribanks Hamilton-Gordon, Marchioness of Aberdeen and Temair, vice-regal consort to Governor General John Campbell Hamilton-Gordon, Earl of Aberdeen, from 1893 until 1898. Lady Aberdeen was an author, philanthropist and women's rights advocate, organizer of the National Council of Women in Canada, first sponsor of the Women's Art Association of Canada and a founder of the Victorian Order of Nurses. She was the first woman to address the House of Commons and the first woman to receive an honorary degree in Canada.

⁸⁵ *Canada 1874-1896: Arduous Destiny*, by Peter Busby Waite (1971).

⁸⁶ *Laurier: The First Canadian*, by Joseph Schull (1965).

⁸⁷ There were no party leadership conventions in Canada until the Liberal convention of 1919 and the Conservative convention of 1927. Prior to those dates, party leadership, and for the governing party the Prime Ministership, were decided by MPs and Senators.

Perhaps not all of the blame for the collapse of his marriage and his resulting failure to occupy the Prime Minister's office should be laid upon John G. Haggart.

Haggart ... was blocked from further political advancement to a certain extent because his wife, Caroline Douglas, was a reputedly bad tempered 'wild virago'⁸⁸ of a woman'. Mrs. Haggart [did not] possess the virtuous image expected of the wife of the Prime Minister. [Her] public image was at odds with the domestic idyll of the admirable influence of a wife acquired through her 'amiable conduct and self command'.⁸⁹

Whichever side of the tale is to be believed Caroline was clearly not a woman who easily conformed with the societal norms of the Victorian era. She ran a dressmaking shop, conducted dancing classes, may well have been 'difficult', and was clearly unsuited to a man of such morose disposition; but her "public image" as a "bad tempered wild virago" was thrust upon her when she was forced to defend herself against the vindictive miserly treatment of her estranged husband.

John G. Haggart was passed over in 1894 for the post of party leader and Prime Minister, but he remained a force to be reckoned with in both party and parliament. Two years later, in January 1896 he led a revolt by seven ministers (half the cabinet)⁹⁰ who resigned their portfolios in protest over Prime Minister Sir Mackenzie Bowell's handling of the Manitoba schools' crisis.

When Manitoba joined confederation in 1870, the Manitoba Act had established the principal of denominational Catholic (French) and Protestant (English) schools. At that time the new Province's Francophone and Anglophone populations were about equal, but between 1870 and 1890 mass immigration had pushed Francophones into a minority status. Politics became dominated by Anglophones and, in 1890, the provincial legislature passed bills that abolished French as an official language of Manitoba and eliminated denominational school districts. In 1894, the provincial government went further, prohibiting municipalities from making expenditures to assist schools outside the public system.

In January 1896, the Conservative federal government of Mackenzie Bowell tabled legislation that would have forced Manitoba to restore its Catholic schools but was forced to postpone a vote on the bill due to opposition within his own Cabinet. Led by Haggart, the cabinet rebels decided that he was incompetent to lead the government and forced him to step down. The press dubbed Haggart's gang 'the Bolters' and Bowell labeled them a "nest of traitors". Haggart said the putsch had been necessary because Bowell, "from day to day, from time to time, like a sick girl hanging on to life, had refused to resign"⁹¹.

⁸⁸ Domineering, violent, or bad-tempered.

⁸⁹ *Sex and Influence: The Gendered Nature of Canadian Political Culture During the Aberdeen Years, 1893-1898*, by Arlis Barclay (2015) - Philosophy Doctoral thesis, Department of Social Justice Education, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto.

⁹⁰ The other six were John Fisher Wood (1852-1899), William Bullock Ives (1841-1899), George Eulas Foster (1847-1931), Walter Humphries Montague (1858-1915), Charles Hibbert Tupper Jr. (1855-1927), Arthur Rupert Dickey (1854-1900).

⁹¹ *Canadian Dictionary of Biography*, Larry Turner http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/haggart_john_graham_14E.html.

The “*nest of traitors*” recruited Sr. Charles Tupper Sr. (1821-1915), then High Commissioner to Britain, as acting Prime Minister but the election of June 1896, passed government into the hands of Wilfrid Laurier’s Liberals.⁹² Despite the election loss, Haggart’s status within his party was enhanced when he was elected chair of the Liberal-Conservative Union⁹³ of Ontario. In parliament he took his place on the opposition front bench serving as Railway Policy Critic as the Conservatives passed the next 15 years in the political wilderness.

Although in opposition, John G. Haggart’s seniority and prominence in Canadian politics was acknowledged in 1911 when he was chosen to represent the House of Commons at the coronation of King George V and Queen Mary. He attended the crowning ceremony at Westminster Abbey in May and was formally presented to the royal couple at Buckingham Palace in June; but he was back in Canada that summer, in time to fight the bitterly contested 1911 federal election. With Laurier’s Liberals advocating trade reciprocity with the United States, Haggart served as the most vocal champion of Robert Borden’s protective tariffs policy, arguing it was necessary to secure Canada’s place in the British Empire and avoid its economy and identity being swamped by the colossus next door.⁹⁴ When the people of Canada went to the polls on September 21st, Haggart’s Conservatives prevailed.

After a decade and a half in opposition, Haggart was back in government but within months there were signs that he was faltering. During much of the 1912 session ill health kept him away from the House until, on Thursday March 13, 1913, the *Ottawa Journal* announced that,

Hon. John Haggart, member of Parliament for South Lanark, former Postmaster-General and former Minister of Railways and Canals, died at his rooms here to-day after an illness of several month’s duration, which, however, did not become acute until a few hours before the end. Death was due to Bright’s disease⁹⁵. The deceased had been confined to his bed for about two months.



**Privy Counsellor John G. Haggart
(1836-1913)
(Photo courtesy of LAC)**

⁹² By November Laurier and Thomas Greenway (1838-1908), Premier of Manitoba 1888-1900, settled the Manitoba crisis by negotiating the ‘Laurier-Greenway Compromise’. The agreement allowed religious instruction in the province’s public schools for half an hour at the end of each day, provided that Catholic teachers could be hired in the public schools, and that French, like other minority languages, could be taught where numbers warranted.

⁹³ As the Conservative Party was officially named at the time.

⁹⁴ Other key issues were Conservative party plans for a greater Canadian role in the naval arms race then underway between Britain and Germany, and the Conservative’s ‘White Canada’ platform plank opposing Asian immigration.

⁹⁵ Chronic nephritis leading to kidney failure.

That evening his body was brought home to Perth by special rail car and, dressed in the uniform of a Privy Counsellor, with hat and sword displayed on the casket top, was laid out for a public wake at Haggart House. During Friday and Saturday, Perth and district residents were joined by mourners from Almonte, Carleton Place, Smiths Falls and other points across the constituency and beyond. They joined crowds of friends, supporters and the curious in a long queue winding its way up the hill to pay their last respects.

*Under a dull and heavy sky ... with light snow flurries ... the day was raw and cold, and the wind swept the high elevation on which the Haggart homestead stands on a picturesque island with swollen main stream and branches babbling around it as the icy fetters of winter were breaking loose.*⁹⁶

On Sunday morning a special train delivered a parliamentary delegation from Ottawa, led by House Speaker Thomas S. Sproule (1843-1917) and comprised of more than a dozen MPs and cabinet members, several senators, top-ranking Militia Officers and senior civil servants. The Province of Ontario was represented by Dr. Richard F. Preston (1860-1929) of Carleton Place, MLA and Minister Without Portfolio.

In recognition of his commission in the Dominion Militia and his decades of public service as a Member of Parliament, John G. Haggart was honored with a full military funeral. Following the religious service conducted at Haggart House by Presbyterian Ministers Alexander Hugh Scott (1853-1931) and Dugald Currie (1851-1935), the casket, draped in the Union Jack, was placed on a gun carriage under the direction of Sergeant George Terrance Kerr (1877-1937). Escorted by two companies of the 42nd Lanark & Renfrew Regiment, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel James Morris Balderson (1862-1943), the cortege marched in slow time through a crowd of “thousands ... lining the route of the procession on Mill Street, along Gore and Brock, to the old Presbyterian burying ground.”⁹⁷



Haggart Family Plot, Old Burying Ground, Craig Street, Perth.
(Photo courtesy of Bruce Gordon, FindaGrave.com)

As the town bell tolled, the casket was followed by the firing squad with arms reversed, the Citizens' Band with muffled drums, the PCI Cadet Corps and the regimental band playing the *Dead March* from Handel's *Saul*. Carriages bearing flowers brought up the rear. With snow squalls swirling across the Old Burying Ground on Craig Street, the firing party made its salute and a bugler played the last post. As they left the cemetery, the military units were inspected by Minister of Militia Sam Hughes (1853-1921).

⁹⁶ *Perth Courier*, March 21, 1913.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

Even though his will was dated September 1, 1894, six years before his wife died in 1900, it made no mention at all of Caroline Douglas-Haggart. Haggart bequeathed his entire estate, valued at \$65,476⁹⁸, to his widowed sister, Isabella Maxwell Millar, who was also named as sole executrix. John G. Haggart had no surviving legitimate children or known illegitimate offspring. His two brothers were dead; Norman as an infant and Duncan at age 13. His sister Isabella, who married James Morton Millar in 1868, was childless. His remaining sibling, Mariam Anne 'Mina' (1840-1879), who married Lanark County Registrar James Bell (1817-1904) in 1866, had eight children, four of whom were alive in 1913, but none were named in the will.

The long tenure of John G. Haggart, following four years of fellow Conservative Alexander Morris, seemed to embed a voting tradition in the constituency. Over more than a century and a half since confederation, the communities comprising Haggart's riding of Lanark South⁹⁹ have been represented by a non-Conservative MP for only 16 of those 150 plus years¹⁰⁰.

While journalists and other commentators struggled to define the man in his day, looking back at his legacy historian Larry Turner (1951-1996) concluded that John Graham Haggart could be remembered simply as "*practical and businesslike as a miller, and tough, able, and unpolished as a politician*"¹⁰¹ ... but, perhaps, as the Lady Aberdeen saw him, also as a 'Bohemian'.

- **Ron W. Shaw (2019)**

⁹⁸ About \$1,825,000 in 2020 dollars.

⁹⁹ During Haggart's time in office the riding of Lanark North was represented by a Liberal MP in 1872-1878, 1880-1882 and 1904-1908.

¹⁰⁰ As of 2020.

¹⁰¹ *Canadian Dictionary of Biography*, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/haggart_john_graham_14E.html.