



## *Bottomley House*

*~ 1912 ~*

This unique character home was built circa 1912 for Yorkshire-born Richard M. Bottomley at a value of seven thousand dollars. Its features closely represent the Victorian architectural style of a Queen Anne house: complex roofs, tall chimneys, wraparound porches, towers and bay windows with large single panes of glass. The Queen Anne style remained popular until the First World War.

There are several interesting construction particulars to note on the exterior of Bottomley House. The east side of the building reveals a sunrise bay window with large glass panes. Elegant double columns located at the front entrance continue as single columns encased by the railings of a wraparound porch, creating a glimpse from the past that appeals to our sense of nostalgia. A round bell cast turret positioned on the porch-side of the house enhances the charming curve of the verandah. Three distinctive curved windows in the turret compliment this bow effect. Decorative lattice grills on the large windows overlooking the front street from the second floor complete the grandeur of this Victorian home.

The owner, Richard Midgeley Bottomley was born in Elland, Yorkshire, England in 1852. As a wealthy businessman in the city of Blackburn, Lancashire, he operated a large department store, manufactured ready-made clothing and owned a furniture factory. The 1905 edition of Barretts Blackburn Directory (England) describes his shop as “Bottomley’s, wholesale & retail clothiers, hardware dealers, jewelers, cabinet makers and boot & shoe dealer on King Street”. At that time Bottomley’s household consisted of his wife, Selina and three daughters, Clara, Mary and Annie, and one servant girl. He was a tailor while his wife was a draper and his daughters were described as assistant drapers.

Upon his first visit to Saskatoon in 1907, Richard Bottomley was so favorably impressed with the city's growth he became one of Saskatoon's largest real estate promoters, organizing the Royal Realty Company in 1912 with Thomas Wiggins and W. D. Cowie, investing approximately \$1.5 million in Saskatoon. He spent his summers in Saskatoon dealing in real estate and built his residence on the edge of a tract of land he owned known as the Bottomley Addition. It extended from Clarence to Cumberland Avenue and from College Drive to Osler Street.

In 1912, Richard Bottomley moved to St. Annes-on-Sea, a well-to-do seaside town in England known as an area to which the successful middle-class retired. W.D. Cowie, his son-in-law and business partner resided in his Saskatoon home until 1918. Fred and Florence Kerr lived with their four children in the Bottomley residence from 1918 to 1930.

Fred Kerr was born in Meaford, Ontario in 1874. Upon his arrival in Saskatoon in 1903, Kerr and J.C. Drinkle jointly invested five hundred dollars and began a land speculation interest. The Kerr-Drinkle partnership has been recorded as the first firm to sell a lot in Saskatoon breaking the four-digit price ceiling.

Kerr began developing independently in 1905. He successfully speculated on key tracts of land, resulting in the development of City Park, eight hundred acres of land sold to the university, the Canadian Pacific Railway yards, various downtown lots, and Second Avenue tracts. Through his influence he attracted other settlers and investors to Saskatchewan who otherwise may have benefited other localities. In 1911, Kerr and associates formed a million-dollar syndicate that purchased extensive holdings in British Columbia, and in the following year, in southern Ontario.

Saskatoon's residents were mainly British. In 1911 the census showed that eighty percent of the population traced their origin back to the British Isles. The period from 1910 to 1913 was incomparable for economic and physical growth in Saskatoon. Between 1909 and 1912 the population of the city increased from 10,000 to 28,000. The architectural styles of commercial buildings like those in Winnipeg and Chicago appeared in Saskatoon's downtown core. Gothic-style greystone collegiate buildings were constructed on the new university campus across from Bottomley House. The riverbanks were lined with beautiful cathedrals and stately homes.

*"Old buildings are the soul of the city  
Like an embrace they hold the past gently".  
~ Nancy Henderson*