

Frederick M Blomquist

Frederick M “Fred” Blomquist was born in May 1857 in Chicago, Cook, Illinois.¹ He was the oldest of eight children of Niels F Blomquist and Henrietta Maria Bortin. The family was living in Chicago in 1860, where his father was in the shoe business.² The family went west in 1866, but Fred must have stayed behind, as he was a farm laborer for the Billingsly family in Floyd, Warren, Illinois, in 1870.

By 1880, Fred was a sign painter, living in Silver Reef, Washington, Utah Territory, and was a jury member in 1882.³ He moved to Seattle, King, Washington, where he was a shoemaker like his father, in 1883. His father built one of the first modern frame houses on Division Street in Whatcom, Washington. It burned down in the 1885 fire. Fred was a merchant, living with his family in Whatcom in 1885. That year he was arrested in Salina, Kansas, along with T G Nicklin and L Martin. The US marshal immediately took them back to Seattle, Washington. The warrant did not state the offense and it was felt by the citizens of Whatcom that it was politically based to affect the election and the reputation of the Knights of Labor with whom the three men were prominently identified.⁴

Fred was still living with his family in Whatcom in 1887.⁵ The next year, he moved to Vancouver, British Columbia, to work with his brother.⁶ Based in Vancouver, they worked around the region, as is attested in the newspaper description of a job in Portland: Mr Blomquist “just finished a piece of fancy sign painting that cannot be excelled.” He did the lettering on the windows of Messrs. “Mr Blomquist does all kinds of ornamental painting and decorating, glass embossing, glass painting, makes transparent signs, “cut-in” work, and all and any kinds of sign painting.”⁷

Fred was very involved with the Knights of Pythias in Vancouver. This was the first fraternal organization to receive a chart under an act of the US Congress.⁸ Fred marshalled in the parade for the visit of the Governor General Lord Stanley and his wife and headed up the building of the lodge room. He served as secretary of the first uniformed division in British Columbia; with regalia consisting of belts, plumes, helmets, caps, etc.⁹

Fred could always be found at his old stand opposite the post office on Hastings Street. He was considered “one of our most respectable citizens” in Vancouver. He left in July 1890 to attend supreme council of the Knights of Pythias in Milwaukee; took a prolonged trip through Chicago, St Paul, Kansas City, Denver, Salt Lake City and other places, studying the new devices introduced into sign writing. He visited his parents in Whatcom before returning to Vancouver.¹⁰

Fred married Bessie O Forth in 1898 in Wisconsin; they had no children.¹¹ On the 1900 census, he was a sign painter, living with his wife in Center Township, Marion, Indiana.¹² In 1902, he returned to

¹ United States Census, 1900.

² US City Directories, 1822-1995.

³ *Salt Lake Herald*, 12 February 1882, p. 16.

⁴ *Saline County Journal* [Kansas], 17 December 1885, p. 3.

⁵ Washington State and Territorial Censuses, 1857-1892.

⁶ History of the Puget Sound Country, by William Farrand Prosser, 1903, p. 604.

⁷ *Morning Oregonian*, 7 August 1888, p. 12.

⁸ *Wikipedia*: Knights of Pythias.

⁹ *Vancouver Daily World*, 5 October 1889, p. 4; 26 October 1889, p. 1; 3 February 1890, p. 1; 20 September 1890, p. 1.

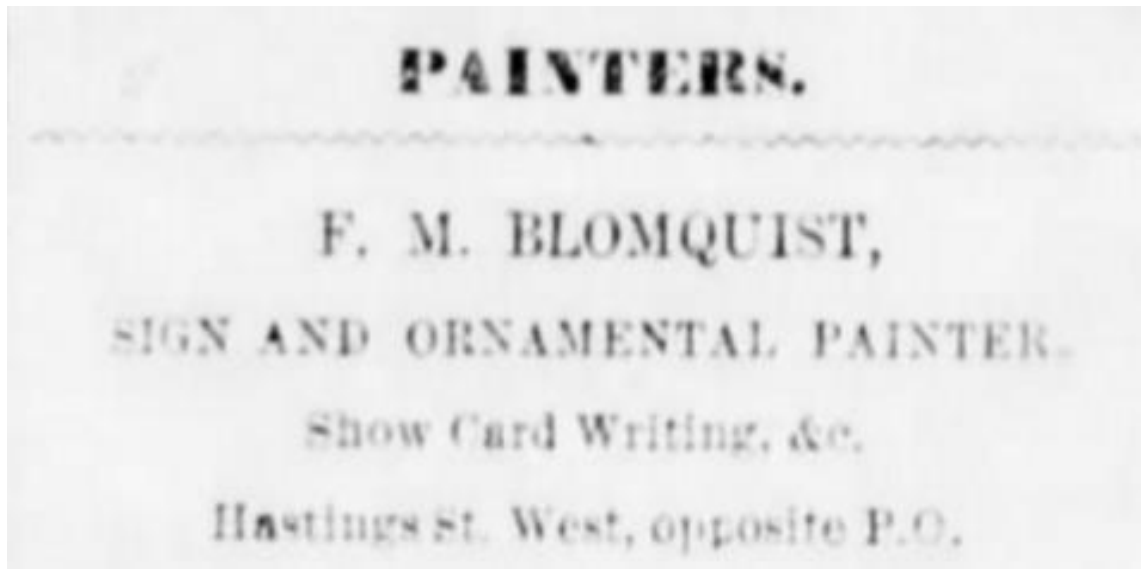
¹⁰ *Vancouver Daily World*, 19 June 1890, p. 4; 26 September 1890, p. 4; 22 September 1890, p. 1.

¹¹ Wisconsin County Marriages, 1836-1911.

¹² United States Census, 1900.

work with his brother in the sign business in Whatcom.¹³ In 1905, he was the manager of Blomquist Brothers, sign painters.¹⁴ On the 1910 census, he was listed as a sign manufacturer, owning his own shop, and living with his wife in Bellingham, Whatcom, Washington.¹⁵ He worked as a painter, sign writer, sign painter, and sign shop proprietor¹⁶, until his death on 15 October 1933 in Bellingham.¹⁷

Bessie married again in 1934 in Whatcom, Washington.¹⁸ She lived in Bellingham until her death in 1952¹⁹ and was buried in the Bayview Cemetery.²⁰



(Image from *Vancouver Daily World*, 22 November 1890, p. 7)

¹³ History of the Puget Sound Country, by William Farrand Prosser, 1903, p. 604.

¹⁴ *San Juan Island* [Washington], 16 September 1905, p. 4.

¹⁵ United States Census, 1910.

¹⁶ US City Directories, 1822-1995; United States Census, 1820, 1930.

¹⁷ Washington Death Certificates, 1907-1960; Washington Deaths 1883-1960.

¹⁸ Washington Marriage Records, 1865-2004.

¹⁹ Washington Death Certificates, 1907-1960.

²⁰ *Findagrave.com*

GRAND CELEBRATION

Three Days
Never a
Dull
Moment

Bellingham, Washington
JULY 4th, 5th and 6th

Three Days
of fun
and
Amusement

\$10,000 in Prizes and Open Air Attractions

Sensational Aviation Exhibition---Monoplane and Biplane
Balloon Ascensions and Thrilling Parachute Leaps

TWO --- MAMMOTH STREET PARADES --- TWO

Fancy Floats, Comic Freaks, Clown Band, Three Big Brass Bands, Rube Band, Lodge Drill Teams, Prize Horses, Decorated Automobiles, Motorcycles, Bicycles, and Carriages, Mounted Police, Fire Departments, G. A. R. Union Organizations, Tug-of-War Teams, Etc.

10 Big Shows

Greater Than Ever

10 Big Shows

Robinson's Celebrated Lady Vaudeville, Joy-Wheel, Shadow of the Cross, Foolish House, Snake Show, Giant Mummy, Trumbull's Phenomenal Clown Band in its open air and street concerts, Dog and Monkey Show, Trained Animal Exhibition and High Wire Walking.

Finest body of Uniformed Fraternal Men in parade. First prize \$50.00; second prize \$15.00.
Best Float, Fraternal, first prize \$40.00; second prize \$15.00.

Reduced rates on all lines of
travel--Remember the date

Prizes will be awarded
for the following:

You cannot afford to miss
this--Don't forget the date

Best decorated store front, fattest man, homeliest woman, prettiest baby one-year-old, the prettiest baby two years old, oldest violinist, the largest family on the grounds, the best decorated float, the best freak character, the best represented lodge, fifty-yard dash, fat man's race, woman's race, girls' race, three-legged race, canoe races, log rolling contest, potatoe race, high jump, broad jump, bicycle race, tug-of-war, baseball game, greased pole.

F. M. **Blomquist**

Loomis Baldrey

Geo. E. Gage

Allye Elkan

R. J. Rockey

F M Blomquist is manager of the grand celebration (*Vancouver Daily World*, 2 July 1910, p. 29)

Hurray for Bellingham

Washington

BIG DOINGS

July 4th, 5th and 6th.

\$10,000

In Prizes and Open-air Attractions.

Monoplane, Biplane,
Balloon Ascensions
and Parachute Leaps
Never a Dull Moment!

2 - Mammoth Street Parades - 2

Reduced Rates on All Lines of Travel

M. BLONQUIST

LOOMIS BALDREY

H. J. ROCKNEY
Adm. Manager

Adm. Chairman

F M Blomquist was the chairman of the 4th of July celebration
(image from *Vancouver Daily World*, 30 June 1910, p. 21)