

## DIBBLE, William Charles and BAKER, George J.



The Princess Sophia, a Canadian Pacific Liner that had left Skagway, Alaska on October 23, 1918, bound for Vancouver, British Columbia, ran aground on the Vanderbilt Reef during a heavy snowstorm. The ship sent distress signals and was soon found by a number of boats. Because it was resting on the reef with no apparent damage, a decision was made not to remove the passengers.

On October 25, an even stronger storm struck the area. The ship was lifted off the reef and sank immediately. All on board were killed, including 268 passengers and 75 crew members.

An article in "*Disaster At Sea*" states: "*Vessels scouring the area later found no survivors and only a few bodies.*", however, this was not an accurate account, as an article in *The Saskatoon Daily Star*, dated October 28, 1918 stated that 150 bodies were recovered. Another article on October 29, 1918, stated that the bodies of 187 victims were found on the Sophia; and in a later article, that 192 bodies had been recovered.

Two men, originally from Saskatoon, died on the Princess Sophie. Transport permits exist in the City of Saskatoon Archives for the bodies of George J. Baker and William Charles Dibble.

William Charles Dibble's grave is marked with a monument that is shared with William C.H. Dibble, a 15 year old (presumably his son), who had died of pneumonia in Vancouver the same year the Princess Sophia sank. It's possible that his illness may have been related to the influenza epidemic that was raging at the time.



Mr. Baker's Interment Order simply states "drowning" as the cause of death, with the location as Alaska, and the date as October 25. An article on the third page of the Saturday, November 2, 1918 edition of the *Saskatoon Daily Star* reported that George Baker, brother of William Baker of Saskatoon, had been away from home for 30 years (apparently home meaning Saskatoon) working at different jobs in Dawson City, and had been quite successful in finding gold. He intended to take a trip to Saskatoon and then on to the "Old Country". There is no monument on his grave.