

Early Vancouver

Volume One

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2011 Edition (Originally Published 1932)

Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1931-1932.

*A Collection of Historical Data, Maps, and Plans Made with the Assistance of
Pioneers of Vancouver Between March and December 1931.*

About the 2011 Edition

The 2011 edition is a transcription of the original work collected and published by Major Matthews. Handwritten marginalia and corrections Matthews made to his text over the years have been incorporated and some typographical errors have been corrected, but no other editorial work has been undertaken. The edition and its online presentation was produced by the City of Vancouver Archives to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the City's founding. The project was made possible by funding from the Vancouver Historical Society.

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beneath the wings, the pilot's seat in front, and the propeller in rear, and was entirely without a cabin, the pilot sitting out in front on a framework of bamboo poles. It flew from Minoru Park, afterwards was equipped with pontoons, and actually rose out of the water of the First Narrows and flew over English Bay.

JSM

20 NOVEMBER 1931 - WATER WORKS. BOULTBEE. HASTINGS SAWMILL. COMMERCIAL DRIVE.

Mr. Robinson, City Librarian, told me today that the Town Planning Commission had called him on the phone asking for the names of some Waverley novels, as they wanted to name some new streets. I rushed down to City Hall and saw Mr. Harrison, the secretary. He told me that Commercial Drive was now curved at its southern end, near Clark Park, whereas formerly it went south, then east, then south again, and that the curved shortcut, formerly a cutting made by the B.C. Electric Railway, would be named Commercial Drive, which would leave the short street running north and south from 15th Avenue to 18th Avenue, east of the cutting, without a name. They had selected a name out of a book, one which, I think he said, was the old name for Scotland. I protested very mildly, and he asked me what name I suggested.

I said, "How about Hendry," in honour of the manager for many years of the Hastings Sawmill. He replied, "Too near Henry." I suggested, "Boulton." He replied, "Excellent," after I had made the necessary explanations. They follow.

John Boulton was our first magistrate. He lived for some years on Westminster Avenue, east side, near Westminster Avenue Bridge across False Creek. Very nearly opposite lived the well-known C. Gardner Johnson, his brother-in-law, in a small cottage or shack. Magistrate Boulton's house stood over the water of False Creek, now filled in and used as flower beds for C.N.R. Station.

Lieutenant Colonel F.W. Boulton, who afterwards commanded the 6th Regiment D.C.O.R. about 1907 to 1910, was in the earlier days a clerk in the Vancouver Water Works, a private company, and when the city took over the water works, about 1892, F.W. (commonly called "Tom") became first city water works chief clerk, or office manager, and he remained as such until he resigned about 1913—about 21 years.

A son of John Boulton is E.L. Boulton of Macaulay Nicolls and Maitland, real estate.

The history of the water works of Vancouver would not be complete without some reference to the Hastings Sawmill flume which, in very early days, conveyed water for the Hastings Sawmill, Burrard Inlet, then practically the only settlement on that inlet.

The old flume ran from Trout Lake westerly, and when the Great Northern cut the deep cutting through Grandview to bring their trains to Vancouver, traces of the old flume were unearthed, according to Mr. T. Sanderson, now of the B.C. Mills, Timber and Trading Company (1931) who says he recalls seeing sections of it. The flume then continued along the head of False Creek in a northwesterly direction to the Hastings Sawmill. The old map in the City Archives, signed by Mayor MacLean and dated 1886, shows the water tank at the Hastings Mill. The flume ran through the forest, was a privately owned affair, never had anything to do with the city of Vancouver. The Hastings Sawmill had the logging rights over the adjacent territory, and when they sold such property as they possessed, retained Trout Lake and its environs for the water. Afterwards, between 1920 and 1925 approximately, they presented it to the city, who have converted it into a park. This lake is within a few hundred feet of the short street which it is proposed to rename.

Messrs. Raymur, Alexander and Hendry were successively managers of the Hastings Sawmill. The two former already have streets named after them; that of the latter was not acceptable as already explained. Hence, Boulton, the name of a pioneer family of distinction, one of whose members was closely identified with the early water systems, suggested itself.

It is appalling to think that with so many historical names available by which to honour our pioneers, that recourse should be books of fiction for names. The changing of historic names, some given in the very earliest days, to gratify the fanciful whim of some newcomer temporarily in power, and with a mad penchant for systemising everything, and devoid of any spark of emotion or romance or affection for our forbears, is deplorable. The changing of Grove Street to Atlantic Street is an instance of it.

JSM

25 NOVEMBER 1931 - EARLY VANCOUVER PUBLIC LIBRARY. GEORGE POLLAY, FIRST LIBRARIAN.

The widow of our first librarian, Mrs. Janet S. Pollay, having written me that she desired me to call, I went to 743 East 18th Avenue, where she resides with her niece. She is now 90; she must have been a great little lady in her prime. I asked her how it was that Mr. Pollay came to receive the appointment of librarian; she had said that his occupation was that of cooper. She replied that he was a great reader. He was at one time a Methodist, but accepted in later years the teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg, 1688-1772, of Stockholm. She showed me a copy of this writer's book, *The True Christian Religion*, published in London, England in 1867, and said that Mr. Pollay was sent a complete set of his works—as a gift, all he had to do was pay the freight—and that perhaps they may be in the library yet. I read to her Mr. H.P. McCraney's account, dated 14 October 1931, of how the public library started, and she nodded acquiescence and added that her husband was asphyxiated in the mining accident, his body brought from Discovery, B.C. to Atlin, that he was chaplain of the Arctic Brotherhood when he died, his funeral consequently conducted with considerable ceremony, and afterwards his remains placed in the Atlin Cemetery. She gave me one of his letters, dated Discovery, 9 December 1911, to his nephew Robert Nightengale, which commences with the words, "Life, and its manifold manifestations is the most wonderful of all other phenomena," etc. Mr. Pollay died at Discovery in June 1912. She told me that their first home (which they built themselves) was at the corner of Gore Avenue and Hastings Street, and that the site was subsequently sold by them, and upon it was built the First Presbyterian Church. She remarked that it was a peculiar coincidence that a man of so pious a turn of mind as Mr. Pollay should sell his home for the purpose of building a church on its site.

Mrs. Pollay, who had been engaged, at 90 years of age, in washing dishes when I arrived, then revealed the purpose of her desire for my call. It was to present me with a chronicle which she herself had written, at my former suggestion, of the circumstances under which the first library started. It read as follows, and is now preserved in the archives.

743 18th Ave. E.

November 21st 1931.

Mr. Matthews,

Dear sir:

When you called on the 23rd Oct I was deaf; my hearing is good again. I will tell you about the beginning of the first library.

In 1888, on the south side of Cordova Street between Abbott and Cambie Street upstairs, in a small building. Two rooms were secured. Mr Devine, sen. and his son Harry T. having another room for business on the same floor. Mr Jackson jeweler had a little place at the east side of the entrance, to the stair no door to it & Mrs Hannafin milliner on the west side of the entrance. [*In error, was over Dunn's. Criticism, H.P. McCraney.*]

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