

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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"The night of the Great Fire, I sat in a chair in the Hastings Mill store all night, and the next day took my books and \$600 in cash, and went over to New Westminster and put the money in the bank."

"My uncle, Lewis Carter, of the Carter House, told me that, when the fire broke out, he was halfway up Mount Pleasant" (up Westminster Avenue on Mount Pleasant), "and started to run back. He ran a long way, then walked to regain his breath, then started running again, and got as far as the corner of Cordova Street East and Main Street" (Westminster Avenue), "and then turned west down Cordova Street slope. The wind was so strong that he could hardly make headway. He got as far as Carrall Street, but the fire prevented further progress and he turned and went down Hastings Road with the crowd." – W.F. Findlay, Mr. Carter's nephew.



"I think the building
in rear is the old
Regina Hotel, or
Oriental Hotel; most
likely the Regina.
W.F. Findlay

The sign "POST OFFICE" in window

North side Hastings St between Cambie and Homer St
almost at foot of Hamilton St

Item # EarlyVan_v1_0044



THE CONSTABLE OF GRANVILLE
Jonathan Miller
Postmaster of Vancouver
1835

Jonathan Miller

Item # EarlyVan_v1_0045

3 JULY 1931 - POST OFFICES.

The first post office on Burrard Inlet is generally assumed to have been "Burrard Inlet," a post office conducted by the Hastings Sawmill prior to the creation of "Granville." The post office of "Granville" was a small building, or part of it, on the east side of Carrall Street, just south of the corner of Carrall Street and Powell; next to the Ferguson Block on the corner. After the first post office, that is, before the fire, "Granville," after the incorporation of the city, "Vancouver," both before the fire, was burned, a temporary post office was established in a cheap shack at the southern end of Carrall Street, where it remained a few weeks, and was then moved to Hastings Street. A photograph of the little building on Hastings Street is in the archives of the Vancouver Public Library.

"The first post office in Vancouver after the fire of June 1886," said Mr. William Bailey, "was in the little old frame one-storey building shown in this photograph, so my brother told me at the time I came here in 1890, in the fall of 1890. It was situated where the Kent Piano Company now is, or about there, between Homer and Hamilton streets, on the north side of Hastings Street West. Afterwards, it was used as a store by my brother. That is why the name 'C.S. Bailey and Co. Landscape Photographers' appears on the glass of those windows. He came here some time before I did.

"When I came here in 1890, there was nothing near that building, just vacant lots, a blankness. Right back of it was where Jonathan Miller, the first postmaster had lived, and a raised platform connected his dwelling to the post office at the time it was used as such. He must have lived there quite a time; a year or more after the fire; until the stone building in the next block up the street was built and in shape for occupancy.

"Jonathan Miller's dwelling behind my brother's store was used, when I came in 1890, as the Rosehill Dining Hall. It was right behind our photograph shop, and we went down some steps from Hastings Street to enter it, or it could be entered from the lane. Everyone ate there, it was just a rough place, but in those days there were no 'fancy hotels.'"

The British Columbia Directory of 1887 shows "Jonathan Miller, postmaster, Hastings Street," the Vancouver Directory of 1889 shows "Jonathan Miller, postmaster, residence 311 Hastings Street," and the same directory for 1890 shows "Jonathan Miller, post office, 309 Hastings Street West." The street numbers have been changed since.

Was this the place which caused all the complaint by the citizens of Vancouver, supported by a petition to the City Council, because it was so far out from the centre of civic life? I asked.

"I don't know, it may have been," said Mr. Bailey. "When I got here the post office was in the centre of the next block, opposite where the C.P.R. Telegraph is, and I think J. Oben, of Central Park, afterwards had a pastry shop in it. Jonathan Miller's son Walter is living—he would tell you; so is George Fowler."

Mr. Geo. L. Schetky, a very early pioneer, told me that when the post office was moved to the first Hastings Street site—it was numbered afterwards 227—there "was a terrific row; it was so far out."

"After my brother moved from 227 Hastings Street he located on Cordova Street, near Carrall, north side; the building is still standing, used as Woods Boot Shop, 160 Cordova Street West. Later we moved to the other side, between Abbott and Cambie. The block number 200, that is 227, on Hastings Street West, is now numbered 300," said Mr. Bailey.

J.S.M.

MEMORANDUM.

The very extensive collection of photographic plates of C.S. Bailey & Company were sold by Mr. William Bailey to the Dominion Photo Company about 1929. All are of priceless value, and they are very numerous. He sold them for \$50. All are early scenic.