

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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Footnote or Endnote Reference:

Major James Skitt Matthews, *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 1 (Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 2011), 33.

Bibliographic Entry:

Matthews, Major James Skitt. *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 1. Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 2011.

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Hastings and Granville. (approx) 1921. Before 1922



The Old left-hand "Rule of Road."

Item # EarlyVan_v1_0020

28 MAY 1931 - HASTINGS STREET IN 1887. FALLING THE FOREST. PERCY DESBRISAY.

"Hastings Street was just a sort of rough trail when I came here in August 1887," said Mr. Percy DesBrisay, now of the Marina Apartments (owner), 1206 Maple Street, Kitsilano Beach. "There used to be a two-plank sidewalk, and you had to be careful when you walked on it, for the planks used to spring up and down when you walked on them. The posts underneath were too far apart, or else the ground was too soft. I have walked them a good many times, and I know how they used to, the planks, used to jump up and down.

"The first time I came over from Westminster I came by the Douglas Road; it seems to me that it ran right into Hastings Hill.

"They were clearing the West End at that time; falling the trees; about south and west of the Hotel Vancouver.

"Once in a while we went to Jericho for a picnic. We went from the Royal City Planing Mills at the end of Carrall Street, and rowed over, and came back the same way."

J.S.M.

HASTINGS STREET. MRS. J. HAMPTON BOLE, NÉE McALLISTER.

"I was born within a stone's throw of the old Imperial Opera House, afterwards the Drill Shed, in 1892, and I can distinctly remember that Hastings Street, between Cambie and Carrall Street, was just a sort of trail with stumps on both sides; they tell me I can do nothing of the sort, but I know I can." – Mrs. J. Hampton Bole, daughter of John McAllister, member of first fire brigade.

(Mrs. Bole's statement is not as incorrect as on the surface it would appear. Hastings Street was not a main street of Vancouver until after 1899, perhaps 1900, and there were probably stumps on lots much later.)



Item # EarlyVan_v1_0021

10 JUNE 1931 - BIG TREES. GRANVILLE STREET. GEORGIA STREET.

There is a photograph commonly known in Vancouver; it appears almost everywhere; of a butt of a great burned tree in which is established a "REAL ESTATE - LOTS FOR SALE" office. Of this photo, Mr. H.P. McCraney, a very early pioneer, now vice-president of F.L. Cummings and Company, 1300 block Howe Street, painting contractors, says:

"The big tree lay partly on Georgia Street, partly on the lane, and partly on the site of the present Strand Theatre, that is, on Georgia Street between Seymour Street and Granville Street, and immediately behind the present Birks Building. My firm had the contract for clearing the land around there, and I passed the tree many times a day. My firm was Stephenson and McCraney. It was a fir.

"The photograph was taken immediately after the fire. It was not actually a real estate office; the photograph was taken more for advertising purposes, for a joke.