

Early Vancouver

Volume Two

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2011 Edition (Originally Published 1933)

Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1932.

Supplemental to volume one collected in 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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1 APRIL 1932 - SURVEY OF VANCOUVER. L.A. HAMILTON. HAMILTON STREET.

"L.A. Hamilton, Alderman Hamilton, C.P.R. surveyor, who laid out the site of the city of Vancouver, told me that he started the survey from the corner of Hastings and Hamilton Street, using a nail driven in a wooden post as a starting point."

Remark by the late W.F. Findlay, pioneer, sportsman, and early newspaper reporter, killed in accident, April 1932.

LAUCHLAN ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

Alderman L.A. Hamilton, who laid out a large part of the City of Vancouver in 1885, was the son of William Basil Hamilton, first mayor of the town of Collingwood, Ontario, and postmaster there for thirty years or over, and the grandson of James Matthew Hamilton of Province of Ulster, a captain in the 5th Foot Regiment, served with his regiment in various places in Europe and Canada, and ultimately on retiring, received a large block of land in the county of Simcoe, Ontario.

Alderman Hamilton was born at Penetanguishene, 20 September 1852, was a graduate of the School of Military Instruction, 1870, became a civil engineer and land surveyor.

He selected twenty-five million acres of land in the Canadian Northwest, this being part of the Canadian Pacific Railway's subsidy from the government of Canada. Also three million acres in British Columbia, part of a subsidy for branch line railways. He selected and surveyed the lands for numberless towns on the Canadian Pacific Railway, the principal ones being Regina, Moosejaw, Swift Current, Calgary and Vancouver.

He was one of the staff in defining the boundary on the 49th parallel between the Lake of the Woods and Rocky Mountains, 1872, 1873, 1874. Was General Land Commissioner, Canadian Pacific Railway. Surveyed the city of Vancouver. Senior Alderman of the city for two years.

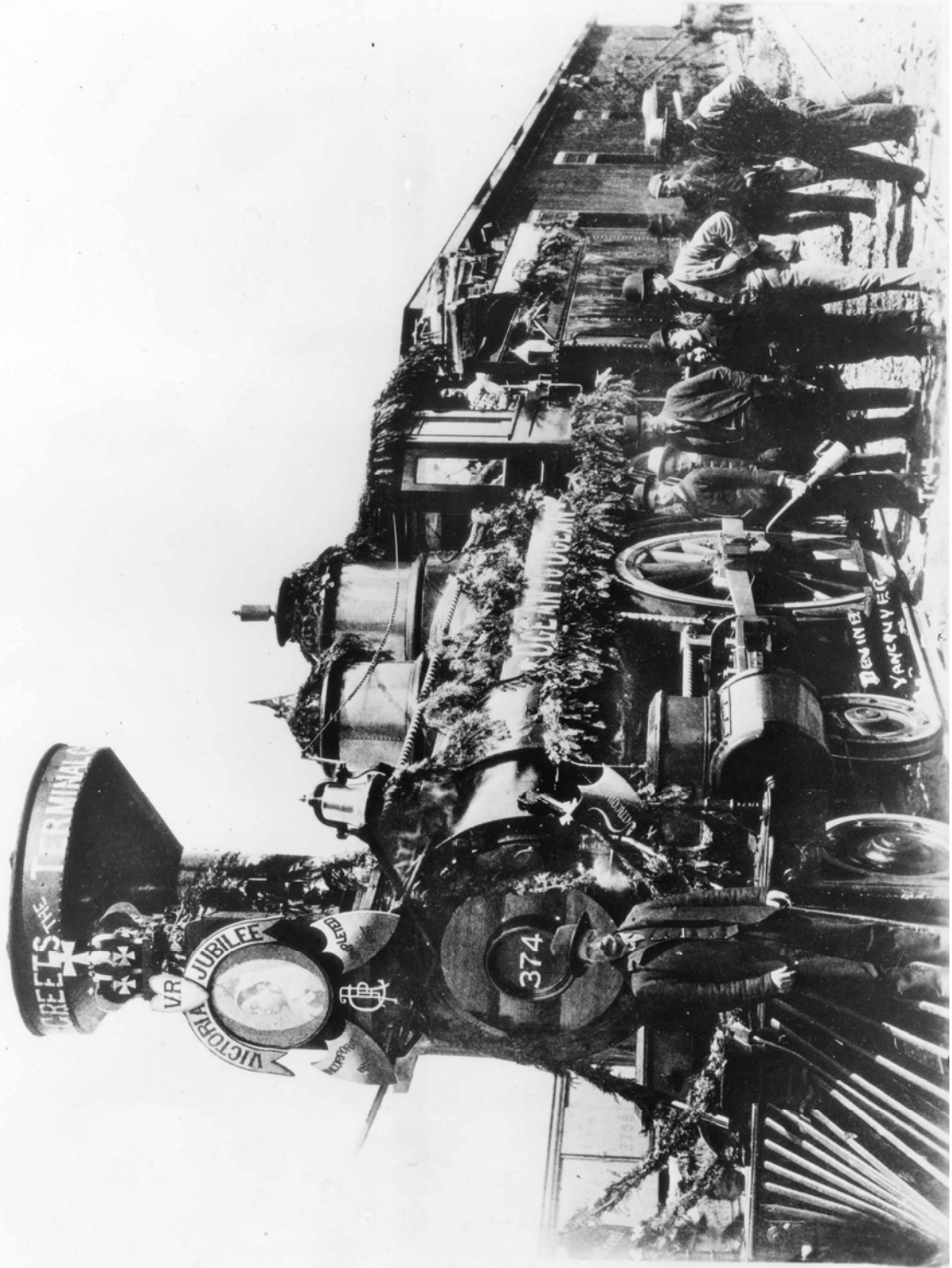
During the Great War was chairman of the Red Cross Society, Chairman of the Patriotic Society, and Judge under the Conscription Act, all in the County of Peel, Ontario.

Owner of a large fruit farm and adjoining golf links at Lorne Park, Ontario. Owner of farm and golf links comprising 640 acres in the city of Kissimmee, Florida.

On September 1879, he married at Toronto, Isobel Leask, and had a daughter, Isobel Ogilvie Hamilton, born Ottawa, 3 October 1880. [NOTE ADDED LATER: Wrong. I have seen her birth certificate. 1881.] And married, secondly, to Constance Bodington, daughter of Dr. George Bodington, M.D. at St. James' Church, Vancouver, 10 April 1888. His sister, Mrs. John Leask, resides (1932) in Collingwood, Ontario.

Authority: genealogy form, dated 3 February 1932 in Mr. Hamilton's own handwriting.

Arrival in Vancouver of first C.F.R. passenger train, May 23rd 1887, on the eve of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee, May 24th. First C.P.R. freight shed, below cliff at foot of Richards street, in background. H.T. Devine photo.



Item # EarlyVan_v2_065



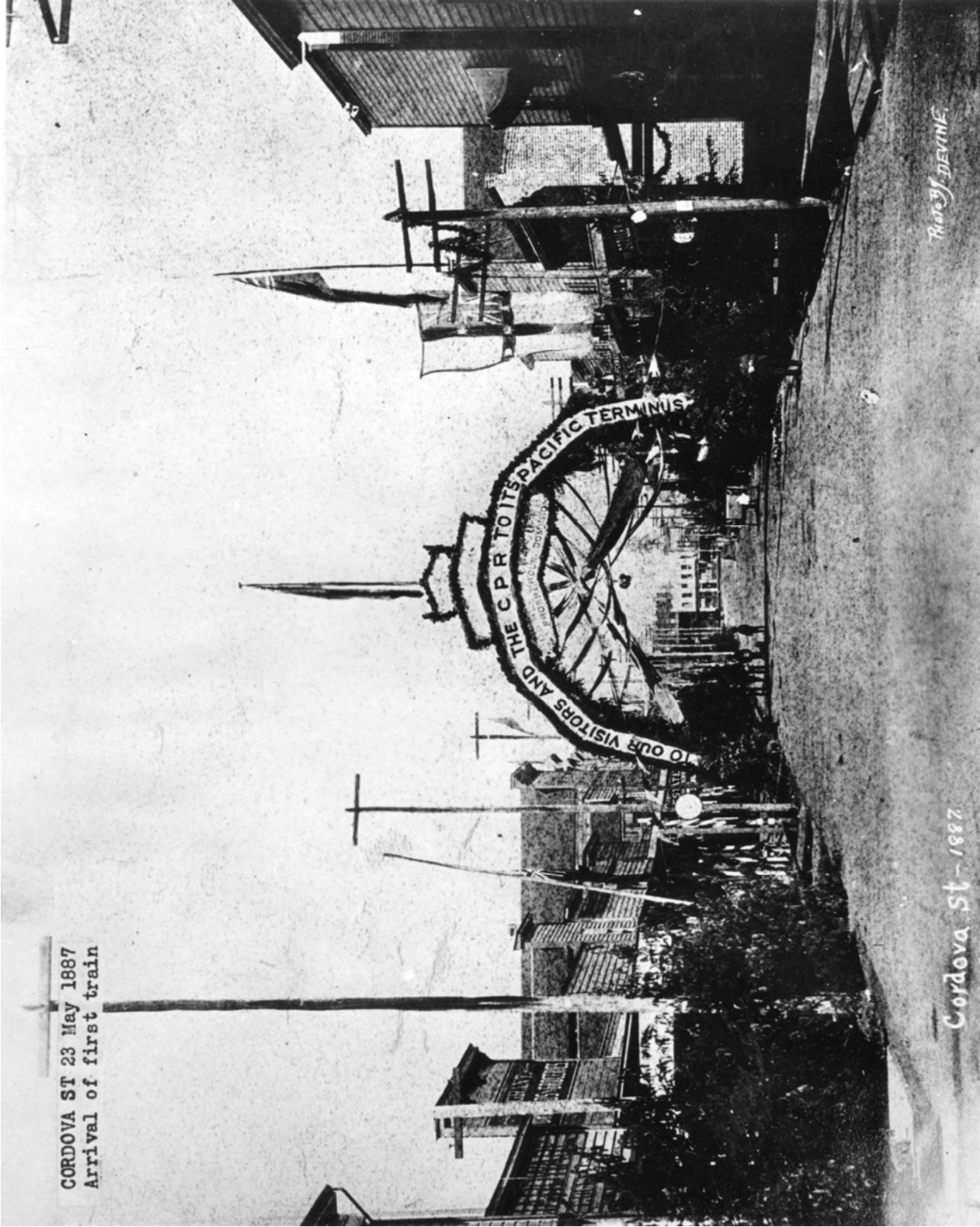
ARRIVAL OF FIRST TRAIN.
C.P.R. Station, 23 May 1887

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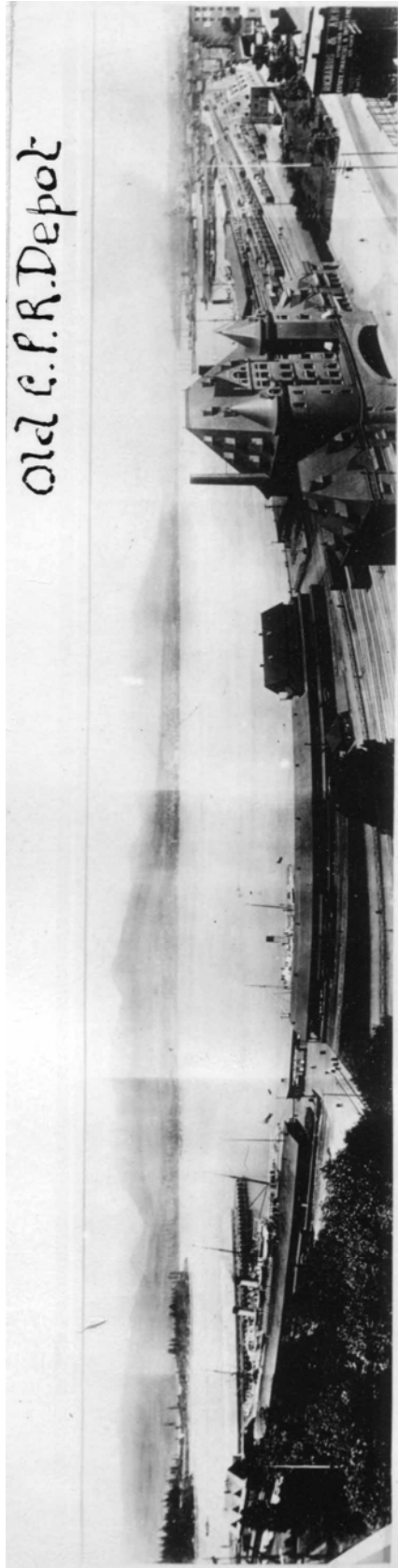
CORDOVA ST. 1887 First celebration
of Dominion Day in Vancouver



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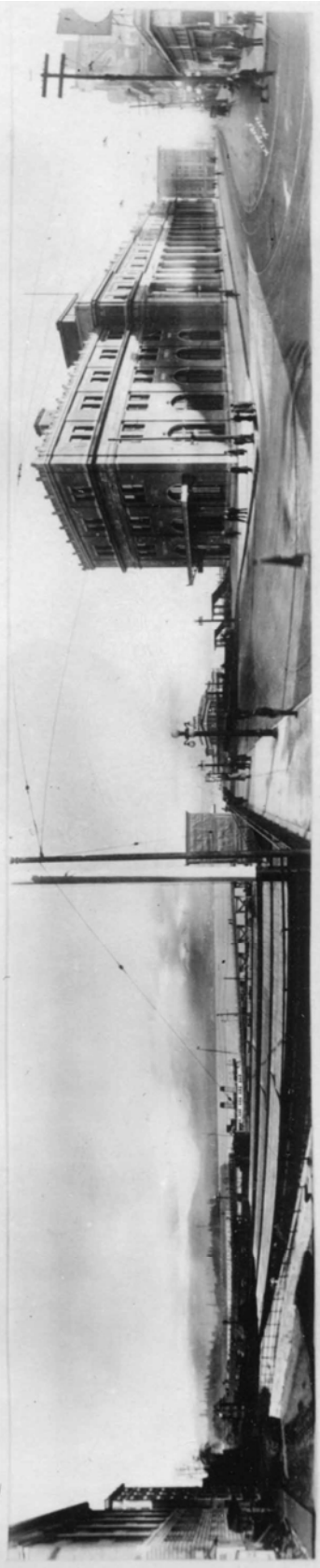


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old C.P.R. Depot

-1912-



-1914-

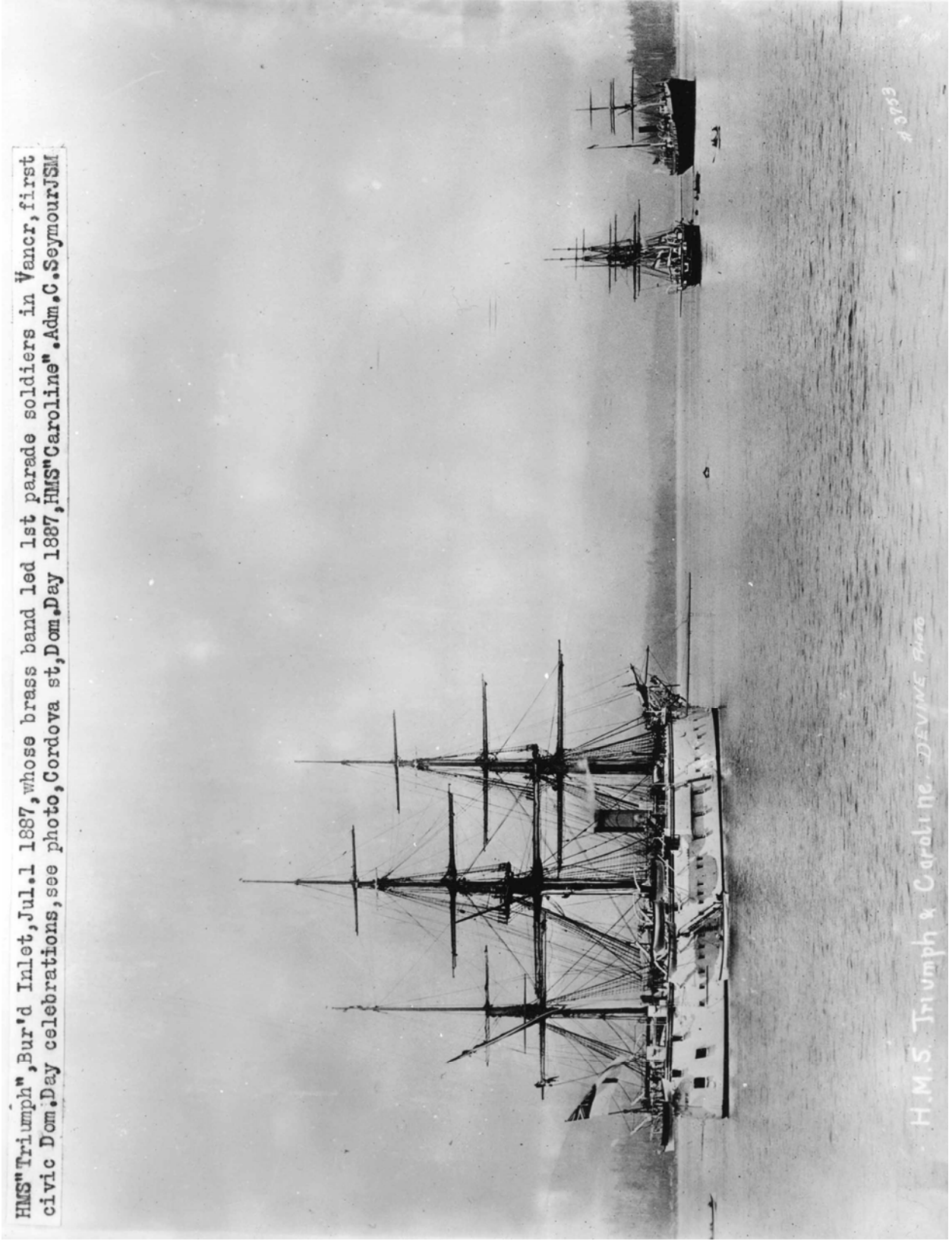
new C.P.R. Station

Item # EarlyVan_v2_069



Item # EarlyVan_v2_070

HMS "Triumph", Bur'd Inlet, Jul. 1 1887, whose brass band led 1st parade soldiers in Vancr, first civic Dom. Day celebrations, see photo, Cordova st, Dom. Day 1887, HMS "Caroline". Adm. C. Seymour JSM



H.M.S. Triumph & Caroline. DEVINE. Photo

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Item # EarlyVan_v2_071

L.A. HAMILTON. SURVEY OF CITY OF VANCOUVER, 1885.

Copy of letter

Oak Tree House
Kissimmee, Florida
5 May 1932

My Dear Major:

The newspaper cutting which you sent me is correct as to the naming of Seymour Street. The street name was taken from the Admiralty chart which showed Seymour Inlet called after Governor Seymour and not after Admiral Sir Michael Culme Seymour.

Yours truly,

L.A. Hamilton.

The corner post from which the survey of the City of Vancouver started was placed with a certain amount of ceremony at the corner of Hastings and Hamilton Street. The only ones with me that I can remember were members of my party viz. Commodore Charlie Johnson, John Leask, the first city auditor, Jack Stewart, now Major General Stewart, Louis, chief axeman, [blank], the son of an English canon whose name I cannot call to mind, and myself. I could only give the date by referring to my field notes, which I think are in Vancouver. [See Mrs. D.R. Reid.]

CAPILANO WATER WORKS.

"I came to Vancouver for the survey of the Capilano Waterworks early spring, 1886." Geo. H. Keefer, Taghun, B.C.

"I cannot recall the exact date of arrival at Granville, but I well remember the party of surveyors who left Victoria one evening on the old steamer *Maud* which took all night to plow her way to the Hastings Mill wharf. The party consisted of Geo. A. Keefer, chief, H.B. Smith, assistant engineer, Fred Bodwell, Fred Little, chairman, and myself, picket man. We took up quarters at the Sunnyside Hotel with the late Harry Hemlow as proprietor. Tom Jackman as bartender, and good old Joe Fortes as hotel runner, shoeshine, and man of all trades. In those days when it became known that we were surveying for waterworks to be brought across the inlet, we were thought to be a little queer, by some of the old timers of Gastown. They could not see how we could bring water across that foaming tide, etc. After the survey was completed, we returned to Victoria on the old *Princess Louise*."

CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION.

"Kingsway in those days was a narrow winding dark road through tall timbers, full of muddy pitch holes. The old plugs could hardly make Mount Pleasant hill, and we were on the lookout for a hold up. My real experience in Vancouver came later when in March 1886 I commenced clearing the right of way of the C.P.R. from Port Moody to English Bay, when I encountered Mr. Sam Greer at his property line in Kitsilano. I had eighty-five Stikine Indians and about fifty white men on the right of way and completed the job on June 12th, moved a big scow with my camp outfit down to the Sunnyside wharf or float and tied up. The 15th was pay day on the railway, so I went to Hugh Keefer's office who was the head contractor, drew some money, and gave each man five dollars in advance. These men next day when the fire took place ran down to my scow, turned it loose, and were blown down to Hastings Mill, saving all my outfit and provisions.

"The day after the fire, the idea struck me to put up my tents and feed the people, so I got my men together and put up two long tents, with floor, tables and benches, opening up as the Railroad Dining Rooms. I sold first class meals to all comers at 25¢, and took in \$75.00 at a meal. Many old timers will remember the big banner on canvas, 'R.R. Dining Rooms.' Well, business howled for about six weeks, by which time new buildings began to open up and the R.R. Dining Rooms went on the bum."