

Early Vancouver

Volume Three

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Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1933-1934.

Supplemental to Volumes One and Two collected in 1931-1932.

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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“Here endeth all that I find in John’s pencillings in his Memorandum Book.”

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH ISAAC HENDERSON, 13 SEPTEMBER 1934.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. HASTINGS STREET.

“I came here in August 1886. This photo, No. ?, is of the first church used by the Presbyterians after the Fire, up on the corner, on Westminster Avenue between Hastings and Oppenheimer streets. It was the one they used before they built the one called St. Andrew’s on the northeast corner of Georgia and Richards streets.

“You know, it makes me smile to think of it; to think of Hastings Street in the winter of 1886-1887 after I came and before we got electric light a year or two later. In the winter, a great big pool of water on Hastings Street between Columbia and Carrall streets, great big pool spreading out all over the land about there; it was low land, almost level with high tide” (see Hugh E. Campbell re building bridge on Dupont Street, and Mayor Oppenheimer’s brown book of printed reports) “and when, of a Sunday night, the people would be going up Hastings Street hill to the Presbyterian church on Westminster Avenue, they would use the stepping stones put down so that they could cross the pool. Not every one, but say one person in every little group, would have a lantern; a whole string of lights like fireflies, bobbing up and down in the dark.” (See George Cary and the Cordova Street lanterns.)

WESTMINSTER AVENUE. ST. JAMES’ CHURCH.

“There was a young fellow sparking Miss Welsh who used to go to St. James’ Church on Oppenheimer Street, and they came up from the Westminster Avenue Bridge way. Down by Prior Street the sidewalk was about six feet above the earth, and one night as she and her young fellow were coming along there was a yell. The young fellow, all dressed up for church, had stepped too near the edge of the sidewalk and fallen into the water.”

HASTINGS AND GRANVILLE STREETS.

“As I first saw the corner of Hastings and Granville streets, where the Post Office is now, the trees were all lying around; it was just a trail, and the water came up to the cliff on Cordova Street.”

THE FIRST HOTEL VANCOUVER.

“A story used to be told that, when Sir William Van Horne was visiting Vancouver about 1900, a gentleman approached him in the rotunda of the Hotel Vancouver and introduced himself as the architect of the hotel, and, the story goes—probably not true—that Sir William replied, ‘Oh, you are the fool who built this.’

“The story simply illustrates the fact that the first hotel was a bit of a disappointment from an architectural point of view; a glance at photographs of the exterior will prove this.”

INDIAN BURIAL GROUNDS.

Some of the Indians’ burial grounds, before the whiteman came, near Vancouver, were:

Deadman’s Island in Coal Harbour. See *Early Vancouver*, Joseph Morton narrative, etc., Hill-Tout, etc.

Foot of Howe Street, False Creek. A tiny low island covered with a bit of grass and with a tree or two on it, was known as “Smamchuze” (see Jim Franks, *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 2.)

Two bare rocks off Point Atkinson. See *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 2.

Defence island, near Squamish.

Stanley Park:

Chaythoos, near Prospect Point. See *Early Vancouver*, volumes 2 and 3.

Whoi-Whoi. In First Narrows; see *Early Vancouver*.