

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

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H.M.S. SWIFTSURE. H.M.S. TRIUMPH. ADMIRAL SEYMOUR.

Mr. Ridley: "The first warship I ever saw the H.M.S. *Swiftsure*, a great big square rigger, steam propelled, in English Bay. I was just a kid then, and don't remember much about her, except that we all went over to see the wonderful ship. I remember quite clearly Admiral Seymour and H.M.S. *Triumph*; they used to salute with 21 guns on May 24th and July 1st, on Burrard Inlet. But what they would be doing firing seven-inch shell I do not know; they were not firing at Indians; the Indians gave no bother; there was never a shot fired on Burrard Inlet at any time to impress the Indians."

OPPENHEIMER WAREHOUSE. CEMENT. THE GREAT FIRE.

"At the time of the fire the foundations of the Oppenheimer warehouse at the southeast corner of Powell and Columbia Avenue were just in, but it was all stone; there was no cement used in those days; just stone and mortar. There was a basement, oh yes, fairly deep, too, but the walls were of stone; I remember it so well because after the fire I saw the carcass of a cow still in it." (See Frank W. Hart, and the using of the basement for shelter during the fire.)

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH HAROLD E. RIDLEY, 1956 VENABLES STREET, 28 SEPTEMBER 1933.

GASTOWN. THE RIDLEY PHOTO OF GASTOWN.

Mr. Ridley brought down, and loaned for copying, an early photo of Gastown. It is the one which was afterwards etched as "Gastown, 1882," original of etching being in the files of the *Province*. The different buildings are named. It was probably drawn at the instance of the late Cecil Carter-Cotton, an early reporter, son of the Hon. F.L. Carter-Cotton, of the *News-Advertiser*, and, at the time of his death, a reporter on the *Province*.

The same picture was published in the *Sun* at some unknown date, and is captioned "Water Street in 1875." Mr. Ridley was looking at the photograph.

Mr. Ridley: "I was born at the Hastings Sawmill in 1875. *My people told me that this photo was as Gastown looked when I was born.* I do not know when the photograph was taken, and the fact that it is marked 1875 or 1882 proves nothing."

GASSY JACK.

"On the left is the entrance to the Deighton House. Gassy Jack had a previous building to this one. It stood to the east and nearer the shore than the southwest corner of Carrall Street and Water Street. It was just a barn of a place, board and batten uprights. I recall it quite well. We were told it was moved from where it was because it was probably on the Hastings Mill property, but I guess you are right when you say it was probably moved because it was in the middle of Carrall Street" (see Trutch's Map of the "Town of Granville, 1870") "after Granville was surveyed. We did not know actually why it was moved."

FROM THE MAINLAND GUARDIAN OF 1874.

**DEIGHTON'S
HOTEL
Granville**

This newly constructed and commodious Hotel, is situated close to Hastings Sawmills, on Burrard Inlet.

The establishment is replete with all the comforts of a home. The furniture and everything connected the fittings are new. The large and comfortable parlors, single and double bedrooms, extensive dining-rooms are furnished in every respect with care, and are under the experienced management of Mrs. Thos. DEIGHTON.

Granville is in daily communication with New Westminster by Steamer and Stages.

For Invalids or Sportsmen, no better location can be found in the province, and the charges will be found to suit the times.

HASTINGS SAWMILL.

"The Hastings Sawmill were very jealous about people settling, or camping, on their property. I can recall no building on the shore from Granville to the site of the present sugar refinery except Hastings Sawmill Co.'s buildings, and the Church of England" (St. James), "which stood practically at the foot of the present Main Street." See Cambie, C.P.R. map, 1886. "The Hastings Sawmill people would not let you tie up a scow or a boat on their shore line more than one night; they were afraid of squatters."

GASTOWN.

"The Deighton House was on the corner, next came Cudlip's house, where he lived; there was a passage way between the Deighton House and Cudlip's home. After Cudlip's came another piece of vacant garden, then Jonathan Miller's house, and another passage way between Miller's house and the Government building." (The jail.) "The telegraph building was separate. Granville Hotel was next." (Joe Mannion's.)

POST OFFICE.

"The Granville Hotel was where the mail for the village was distributed." (See W.E. Graveley, Vol. 3.)

"I don't know a very great deal about this photo" (Ridley's Gastown). "On the left is the entrance to the Deighton House, and the verandah posts. This box around the tree here had no steps up to it. It was not to climb up on to mount a horse; it was just a protection to the tree; just above the box protection you can see what I think is the slope of the verandah on Cudlip's house. Next to that comes Miller's gate, and a rocking horse on the verandah, and a boy stooping down, playing with it; that must be one of Miller's boys, but which one I don't know. Then there is a little bit of a hemlock, and next comes the Government building with the gable and facing the water. The big building with the balcony is the Granville Hotel, and the next building with a peaked gable end is a shed belonging to the Granville Hotel; it might be one of the old buildings in Trutch's Map; I don't know. The low, square top shop front is Blair's saloon, and then comes Sullivan's store with a balcony. Hidden out of sight is, next, McKendrick's boot repair shop—a bit of a shack, and the next tall building is Robertson's 'Hole in the Wall' saloon, afterwards the Gold House, and I think there was one more building at the far end beyond that which does not show clearly in the photo, but I forget what it was."

PORTUGUESE JOE.

"Portuguese Joe was living at Brockton Point in 1884."

GASSY JACK'S FIRST HOTEL.

"Gassy Jack's first building was down in the direction of the lower right hand corner of Ridley's Gastown photograph."

BURRARD INLET, SHORE.

"The dark spot on the right, overhung with a small vine maple bush, is the curve of the beach, and the water of Burrard Inlet, which penetrated right up almost to the Granville Hotel, and the criss-cross slats sort of fence beside the lamp post is not a landing platform, but a fence to stop people falling over into the water; there was a bit of a bank there. The lamp posts, one opposite the Granville and the other at the far end of Robertson's saloon, were, of course, coal oil, and were to light the passage way along at night. If you look closely you will see a pile of wood between the left of the stump and the nearest lamp post. That is not cordwood; it is more likely hand-split shingles; there was always a pile of cedar shingles or shakes lying around that point.

"I cannot say why there are no wheel tracks there. The photo might have been taken before the road was put in to Granville." (1877.)

"You will also notice some children playing on the Sullivan store verandah, and there seems to be a man outside Robertson's. You will also notice that handrail fence runs along the outside of Robertson's place for some distance, and by the steps; see that the land lies low under the front of the Granville Hotel.

"In the distance is the trail to the west, probably to Morton's clearing or to the saltery out there, and on the extreme right is Portuguese Joe's store, afterwards Ben Wilson's, later Mrs. Ben Wilson's."

THE OLD COURT HOUSE. JONATHAN MILLER.

I don't know very much about the old Provincial Government building, but it seems to me that I was in Miller's house once, and saw them moving it back on rollers, back towards what is now the lane. The Court House was painted or whitewashed; it was a sort of grey; we called it the 'Jail.'"

THE FIRST JAIL.

(See Trutch map of March 1870.) "The first jail was just two cells; a bit of a place of big logs built at the back; just two cells big enough to throw a drunk into to sober up; two cells big enough to sleep in, behind Miller's house. The lock up" (Government Building) "was where Alexander—he was magistrate—sometimes held court, but the usual court, all I ever saw, was down at the Hastings Sawmill, in the room there which was used as Mechanic's Institute, reading room, and everything else." (See F.W. Alexander.)

THE COURTS AND JAIL.

"I don't remember much about the old Court House at Granville. After they started to build the railway, it was pretty rough down at Gastown, and I was a child and now allowed, and did not care, to go up there; I was going to school. Before the railway was building, I went up there, up the two-plank sidewalk, and used to run around the Deighton House, and play. Johnson had children of his own, but after the railway began to come, Gastown was no good for children, and we children were not used to civilisation anyway, and did not like it; we were accustomed to trees."

GRANVILLE IN EARLY 1886.

"The Deighton House was on the corner, and south of it, just behind, as it were" (on Carrall Street) "was the little cottage where Simon Fraser, brother to Angus, lived; Simon's daughter married Gillespie. Next, south of Simon Fraser's, was the barn, the Deighton Hotel barn, right on the corner of what is now Trounce Alley. Across the alley still going south on the west side of the road" (Carrall Street) "was Angus Fraser's. Angus Fraser's house was up Carrall Street a piece, where the Boulder Saloon was afterwards." (See photo No. ?)

"The next place was Paull's. Paull lived across what is now Cordova Street, on the southwest corner of Carrall and Cordova—where the Ranier Hotel is—and died there; his widow married Mole. He worked at Spratt's Oilery. They gave a 99 year lease of the Ranier Hotel site, Billy Quann's place; that was her 'nest egg.' The only other place on Carrall Street was Pete Plant's, about on the corner of where the B.C. Electric offices are now. Pete Plant had two sons, Frank and Jesse."

THE FERGUSON BLOCK.

(Southeast corner Carrall and Powell.) "Hartney's was on the corner; Geo. L. Schetky's was next up Carrall Street; he had a gents' furnishing place. Next was Geo. R. Cordon, clothing. Thos. Dunn was not here then." (Something out of order here.)

JOE GRIFFITHS. SUNNYSIDE HOTEL.

"Joe Griffiths had no children; don't think he was married. He ran the Sunnyside for years before McInnes took it on. Joe was afterwards an alderman."

HASTINGS SAWMILL. "WE GIT DAR." THE FIRST FIRE ENGINE.

Mr. Ridley laughed at photo No. ? of minstrels "Fire Brigade" with tremendously tall man in front—all faces blackened as Negroes—also companion photo showing part of fire engine. (Bailey Bros. photograph No. ?) "That was the first fire engine north of San Francisco; it belonged to the Hastings Sawmill; the hose was of pure leather, copper riveted."

HASTINGS SAWMILL DURING THE GREAT FIRE.

"Mr." (R.H.) "Alexander and Mrs. Alexander had been up at Presbyterian Church on Alexander the morning of the fire. There was only one ship at the Hastings Mill, the *Southern Cross* I think, her master Captain Cox, and R.H. Alexander and John McAlister" (Mrs. J. Hampton Bole is daughter) "were having Sunday dinner with him. We children were taken down to the ship and played around on the deck that

afternoon; the smoke did not envelope the ship, but there was an awful surf beating against her sides. Mrs. Alexander went off to China as a missionary afterwards. Oh, yes, before Mr. Alexander died.”

PRINCESS LOUISE TREE.

“I don’t know why it was named thus; it was the Princess Louise tree as long as I remember.”

(Mr. Ridley looked at photo of Andy Linton’s boat house, four yachts with sails set, and corner of wharf, and hulk *Robert Ker* in distance. Bailey Bros. photo No. ?)

DEADMAN’S ISLAND.

“I was over there at a funeral once myself.” (Deadman’s Island.)

“The photo ‘City Hall’ in tent, shows a wharf behind it; this is the same wharf, but after it was added to, and extended; the old City Wharf. The first wharf, behind the ‘City Hall’ tent ran out just a little way, and there was a slip which came down from the Sunnyside beside it, to Andy Linton’s. Andy Linton’s boat house shows to the west of the City Wharf in the ‘City Hall’ tent photo; to the east of it in this photo. He must have moved it a bit to the east after the fire. It was not burned in the fire.”

(Looking at Bailey Bros. photo, “An Early Labor Day Parade on Cordova St.” Columbia Carriage Works, No. ?)

HUDSON’S BAY STORE. CORDOVA STREET.

“This is a labour day procession down Cordova Street. Yes, Bailey Bros. did afterwards move from the store shown here down to the old Hudson’s Bay store with the two peaked roofs.” (Note: there is a photo of the interior of this Hudson’s Bay old store—when used by Bailey Bros.—in the Archives. It is No. ?) “Bailey Bros. had one side; the other was a cigar store.” (Consult directory.)

JAPANESE. HASTINGS MILL.

Bailey Bros. photo No. 414, “Employees, Hastings Sawmill.” (The date of this photo is 1887 or early 1888.) “The first man from the left is a Chinaman, the second is the first Japanese who worked in the Hastings Sawmill; there were no Japs in the Hastings Sawmill prior to that man coming. I don’t know if he was the first one on Burrard Inlet, but he was the first I saw on Burrard Inlet; the first I recall seeing anywhere. After a while ‘hordes’ of Japanese came; Bell-Irving was responsible for that. The next man, the third, with the whiskers, red whiskers, is ‘Rusty’ Poullice, a tall man. When the small pox came he was the man who volunteered to go over to Deadman’s Island and nurse the small pox patients, and he died of small pox there.”

Interjection by Major Matthews: Dr. Langis says there were other reasons for small pox deaths.

Mr. Ridley: “Yes, Rusty did drink heavily. The fifth man, a tall man, is Tom Hunter, millwright. The building on the right is the machine shop; the engine room was attached to it. The coloured man, next to last on right, is Fred Williams, who came on the same ship as Joe Fortes. The only man who is now living of the forty-five in the picture is Billy Horton, stevedore at Chemainus, standing on stairway with both hands in pockets” (touching two wires).

CENTRAL SCHOOL.

“The photo” (Bailey Bros.) “No. 651, 2nd Division Vancouver Public School, is the Central School on Pender Street; Miss Hartney, teacher. She afterwards married.”

Photo No. ? (Bailey and Neelands). “The man in the straw hat is Al Larwell. I don’t know who the eight baseball boys are; it is probably on the Cambie Street Grounds.

“Photo No. ?” (Bailey Bros.) “of this cottage with all the vines in front of the verandah and the stove pipe coming out of the board and batten side is Caulfield’s old place; two brothers lived there. It stood next to ours, faced the water, and was just east of Dunlevy Avenue, opposite what is now the Shipping Federation Building on Dunlevy Avenue. There is a junk yard there now. Caulfield was master mechanic at the Hastings Sawmill. Our house was next to Caulfield’s—no connection with Caulfeild” (Skunk Cove) “of West Vancouver—but was two-storeyed; it also faced the water. When the C.P.R. came the track circled around both houses. Our house is seen—the gable end—in the well-known photo of the Hastings

Mill School with the children in front. The other building in that photo, No. ?, below our house, was a barn.” (Note: the Caulfield cottage does not seem to appear in the panorama of Vancouver before the fire, probably because the photo is patched at that point. J.S.M.)

HASTINGS MILL SCHOOL.

Interjection by Major Matthews: I hear the old school house was used on Westminster Avenue afterwards.

Mr. Ridley: “Never was; it was torn down; it faced the water too.”

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH HAROLD E. RIDLEY, 2 MAY 1934.

LONDON INSTITUTE. HASTINGS INSTITUTE. MECHANIC’S INSTITUTE. PUBLIC LIBRARY.

“I don’t know where the London Institute” (mentioned in the *British Columbian* of 18 March 1869) “as changing its name to Hastings Institute could have been—it certainly was not at Hastings, B.C.; it might have been at Moodyville, or Hastings Sawmill. I never heard the early history of the Institute at the Hastings Sawmill, but I do know that the books in there had ‘Mechanic’s Institute’ marked on the inside. They were afterwards moved to the present Vancouver Public Library.” (See *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 1.)

MOODYVILLE INSTITUTE. MT. HERMAN LODGE.

“I have heard that the Moodyville Institute was started with assistance from London, England. It stood about 100 feet east of the Moodyville Hotel, photo of which you have; the stairs faced west, the building lay east and west. The ground floor was used as a reading room, library, dance hall, and for concerts. The upper floor was where Mt. Herman Masonic Lodge was instituted. It was stated at the big celebration this lodge held in 1919 that the same organ was used then as was used the night the lodge was formed. There is an oil painting of the Moodyville Institute in the Masonic Temple, Georgia and Seymour streets.”

EARLY FERRIES. HANS, THE BOATMAN. MOODYVILLE SAWMILL.

“About the first ferry I remember on Burrard Inlet was a row boat from Moodyville, Hastings and Gastown to the mill and back. He was Dutch; all I ever knew of his name was ‘Hans, the Boatman,’ that was what we called him. He had one arm; the other had been blown off at the right elbow, a hook was the remainder—he rowed well with the hook hand. He crossed about every day—took the mail down—sometimes once a day, sometimes twice; depended upon if there was a storm or not. The next ferry I remember was the old *Senator*” (Captain Stalker.) “We always took it for granted that the *Senator* and the *Leonora* belonged to the Moodyville Sawmill; the *Etta White* was bigger and did the long distance towing. The *Skidegate* came later; I don’t know who owned her.”

CAPTAIN CATES.

“Captain Charlie Cates was stevedoring at first—there were brothers. The first boat I recall them having was a little thing, the *Swan*; screw; smaller than the *Senator*, mostly did towing around the harbour; towed scows of brick, sand, gravel. The *Swan* just wore out.”

INDIAN’S FEET.

Query by J.S.M.: What do you think of George Cary’s yarns about the Indian’s feet without boots?

Mr. Ridley: “I have seen Indians go into old Pete Cordiner’s blacksmith shop, the sparks flying around, and walk right over the hot [blank]; you could smell the leather burning. Salt water and travelling over hard rocks hardens them up, the soles of the feet.”

SECOND STREAM BRIDGE. WATER SUPPLY. BEAVERS.

“I read your story in the B.C. Electric Railway *Buzzer*” (6 April 1934) “but the Hastings Mill didn’t expect to get water out of the Tea Swamp, but out of the dam below about 9th Avenue. I have myself picked up freshly chewed beaver sticks under the Second Bridge.”