

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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and it was sixty-three feet around, and about sixty feet before it forked; a cedar, of course. May be there yet if it has not been burned. No; never heard of George Cary.

“The next year, 1876, I worked building bridges from Hope to Princeton, and the next spring hewed timbers for the first bridge across the Fraser at Lytton.”

(Note: Mr. Cameron, very elderly, does not inspire my confidence in matters of figures. He probably did see a very big tree; there was one in Stanley Park, a cedar, reputed to be fifty feet around. The big tree on Georgia Street was about forty-eight or –nine.)

NOTE ADDED LATER:

He died 13 September 1940.

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH VICKER WALLACE HAYWOOD, ONE OF THE FIRST FOUR POLICEMEN ON THE VANCOUVER CITY POLICE FORCE, 23 MAY 1935.

FIRST POLICE.

“The first police force was appointed before the fire of June 13th 1886; I was one of them. I was burned out; lost everything—clothes, blankets, everything. The first police force was appointed quite a while before the fire.

“I came here in September 1885 from Prince Edward Island, via Portland, Oregon, and then by boat via Tacoma and Victoria. Worked on the dry dock at Esquimalt, then went laying track for the C.P.R. at Ducks, near Kamloops, and came back to Vancouver in September 1885, and stayed here ever since.”

DEPUTY CONSTABLE.

“At first I worked as Deputy Constable to Constable Jonathan Miller; it was through him that I got on the Police Force.”

THE OLD JAIL ON WATER STREET. COURT HOUSE. CLEARING AWAY THE FOREST. HASTINGS STREET.

“The old jail was just an old shack of a place; two or three cells in it; they used to hold Court in it. The jail yard was just an ordinary yard with a board fence about ten feet high around. Cordova Street and Abbott Street were not properly cleared when I came here in 1885. Hastings Street or about Hastings Street was just timber; a trail through it. From Abbott Street west was just trees.”

THE “EIGHTY-FIVE ACRES.” C.P.R. TOWNSITE.

“The ‘85 acres’ was logged off, but not cleared in 1885. In the fall of 1885 they started to clear the townsite from Abbott Street west.” (Note: not quite correct; a little later than the fall; probably early 1886.) “I think Hartney had something to do with the clearing; or Chinese McDougall.”

CAPTAIN J.A. CATES.

“Cates and I were partners in the Terminal Steamship Company, which is now the Union Steamship Company in part; he and I were together in the Klondike Rush.”

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH J.N. DAWZY, 2361 TRINITY STREET, VANCOUVER, B.C., 27 FEBRUARY 1935.

THE GREAT FIRE. NUMBER OF BUILDINGS LEFT.

“I arrived in Vancouver on June 14th, 1886, about noon the day after the fire, and of course was struck with what I saw, and was impressed; the recollection of it has remained in my mind very clearly.

“There were just five houses standing. There was the old Bridge Hotel on Main Street, or Westminster Avenue, False Creek; a frame building next to it; a little house on the southeast corner of Prior Street occupied by Harry Chase, and Regina Hotel on Water Street near Cambie, and the C.P.R. building opposite David Spencer’s store, about where the C.P.R. depot is now.”

(Note: he missed one, a small shack on the edge of False Creek, in the low, wet land—on Pender Street—just at the end of Abbott Street, below the corner of Beatty and Pender streets.)

MRS. ONDERDONK. ANDREW ONDERDONK. PORT HAMMOND. ENGINES, C.P.R. ENGINE NO. 4 “THE LYTTON.”

“I went to work on the building of bridges for the C.P.R. in August 1882, and then from March 1883 worked for him” (Onderdonk) “for three years at Yale, building cars in the car shops, making car repairs; also foreman wrecking car.

“A fine man was Onderdonk; I’ll say so” (with emphasis.) “My wife came up in March 1883 to Yale. Mr. Onderdonk and my wife were the only two passengers on the boat from Westminster to Yale. When I went to the Yale shops in March 1883, the superintendent and master mechanic were at Port Hammond unloading engine No. 4, the ‘Lytton,’ which had come on a big scow from Tacoma, and the foreman of the shop would not put me to work, but sent me to see Mr. Onderdonk at the general office, Yale, a building about sixty feet long. When I gave Mr. Onderdonk my letter from the bridge superintendent, he looked at me and asked if that was my wife who came up on the boat with him. I said, ‘Yes.’ He looked at my letter from the superintendent to him, and he wrote across the corner of the letter in red ink, ‘Start this man to work immediately,’ and he never forgot to speak when he came around the shops.”

CISCO BRIDGE.

“Mrs. Onderdonk I only spoke to once, on July 4th 1884. They gave us a free excursion up to the end of the track; we had flat cars with railings around and board seats. She was aboard and congratulated everybody, and hoped we’d have a nice holiday.” (See *Port Moody Gazette*.) “A fairly tall lady, fair complexion and good dresser. The oldest boy was Shirley, about thirteen years old then, and the youngest girl was Eva.”

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH MR. JAMES EDWARD SMITH, 1630 CHARLES STREET, VANCOUVER, 3 MAY 1935.

STREET CARS.

“I was the first baby to ride on the street cars of Vancouver. The story goes that when the first street car came out of the Prior Street barn, that Mr. Snyder, our next door neighbour, grasped me from my mother’s arms, and said as he did so, ‘He’s going to be the first baby in Vancouver to ride on a street car.’ Mother is said to have protested that my face was dirty, and that I was not dressed. But Mr. Snider said ‘that did not matter. Car was coming; no time to wait,’ jumped on the car in the middle of the block—it stopped for him—went a short way, and got off.

“The car in question was out for a trial spin from Prior Street as far as Hastings Street; Westminster Ave was a bit of a rough thoroughfare then.” (He may mean Front Street barn; don’t think Prior Street barn was built; the Vancouver Street Railway’s Carhouse was on Front Street early in 1890. The *World* panorama map of 1890 shows no buildings on Prior Street, but does show a siding turning in there.)

YALETOWN.

“My father came to Vancouver about 1887, and first went to live in Yaletown. Then he squatted where the B.C. Electric Railway Company located their first barn, but the Vancouver Electric Railway Company forced him out; he squatted right on the beach; there was trouble, and they were going to arrest him. Then we moved over to Prior Street to some little old cottages, still there.

“Father helped to grade Georgia Street in front of the Hotel Vancouver.” (The Council let the contract for this work on 19 July 1887.) “The work was done by John Clendenning.” (See photo No. ? of Mr. J.I. Smith, also see B.C. Electric Railway *Buzzer*, 1935.)

CHARLES E. TISDALL, FORMER MAYOR OF VANCOUVER. JOHN INNES, SCENIC PAINTER.

John Innes loved to joke, even when he was ill in bed, as he was from September 1934 to March 1935. Mr. Tisdall was a pioneer gunsmith, afterwards had the first and the finest sporting goods store in Vancouver, but was always noted for his economy.