

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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UNCORRECTED MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH MR. CALVERT SIMSON, LATE OF SIMSON, BALKWELL & CO., SHIP CHANDLERS, AND HIS SISTER, MRS. CROWE, 1890 BARCLAY STREET, VANCOUVER, FRIDAY EVENING, 6 OCTOBER 1933.

EARLY LOGGING.

"When I first came to Burrard Inlet in the spring of 1884, I saw them hauling logs with oxen down to the present Water Street; the skid road ran up towards somewhere about the Hotel Vancouver as it is now."

COAL HARBOUR. HERRING. WILD DUCK.

"There were 'acres' of ducks in Coal Harbour, feeding on the herring. The herring were very thick in Coal Harbour waters. Spratt's Oilery caught them, squeezed the oil out, and dumped the refuse back in the inlet; whether that drove all the herring away or not no one can tell positively, but they say it did; anyway they went. They used the herring oil for logging skid roads and various other purposes; not in the sawmills. They used dogfish oil for lubrication purposes in the sawmills. The herring were so thick that they were caught with a fish rake, a sort of paddle with nails driven at intervals along one side, then stroked through the water and the herring shaken off in the back of the canoe." (See Duncan McDonald, Vol. 2, and W.R. Lord, Vol. 3.) "Of course, in catching herrings for the oilery they used nets. I saw the cannery burn afterwards, years afterwards, after Vancouver was burned in June 1886."

PORTUGUESE JOE'S STORE. BEN WILSON'S, GRANVILLE.

"When I first arrived I went to work for Ben Wilson in the store on the shore at the west end of the beach—Mrs. Ben Wilson, who ran it after Mr. Wilson's death, died in quite recent years—that was before I went to the Hastings Sawmill store. Portuguese Joe was living over at Brockton Point in 1884."

POST OFFICES.

"The way we got our mail in those days was that a man brought it over from Westminster to Mr. Fannin's at Hastings townsite; then there was another man who had a sail and row boat," (see Harold Ridley, "Hans, the Boatman," Vol. 3) "and he took it on to Moodyville, and then on to Hastings Mill, and continued until Jonathan Miller was appointed just about the time Vancouver was incorporated. The position of postmaster for Vancouver was offered to me, but I declined it."

"According to an old *British Columbia Directory*, 1877, published by T.N. Hibben & Co., Victoria, which I have, Henry Harvey—that is, the first storekeeper at Hastings Mill—was the postmaster in 1877 at Burrard Inlet Post Office. The Hastings Sawmill was started in 1865, and was in operation in the summer of 1867, and you can quite understand that there would be a post office there long before 1877, as the directory indicates. The 'Burrard Inlet Post Office' at the Hastings Mill got the mail for the whole of Burrard Inlet, other than certain specified points. There was no post office at Port Moody then, but at Moodyville on the same date the directory shows D.S. Milligan as postmaster, and at Granville, Ben H. Wilson."

EARLY TELEGRAPH. TELEGRAPH LINE TO VICTORIA.

"There was a Dominion Telegraph office at Burrard Inlet in 1877. Ben Springer, manager of the Moodyville Sawmill, was agent. When I came in 1887 the telegraph office was at Gastown, and I very distinctly recall Mr. Sinclair, the telegraph operator, riding his horse out Point Grey to make repairs to the line when there was trouble." (See Maurice O'Neill, Vol. 3.)

MOODYVILLE SAWMILL.

"Much of the machinery in the Moodyville Sawmill came out of the wrecked H.M.S. *Sparrowhawk*; she was wrecked in the Seymour Narrows."

COAL. STANLEY PARK.

"I know nothing of the drilling for coal near the Granville Hotel," (mentioned in Report of Department of Interior—Bowman—about 1888) "but there was a man named Ostrander who had a coal hole, or shallow shaft in Stanley Park near Third Beach." (See George Cary.)

HASTINGS SAWMILL SCHOOL.

"This photograph of the first school, in what is now Vancouver, is of the Hastings Sawmill School, and was taken in 1886. It was sometimes used as a church, and for any other similar purpose. The man standing on the plank sidewalk is John S. Palmer, the principal. Peter Cordiner's house is on the right, and the gable end of Abington Ridley's is on the left; it stood at the foot of Dunlevy Avenue."

HASTINGS SAWMILL STORE.

"We worked hard in those days; seven days a week in the store. It was on Sundays that the loggers came up from Jericho and other places, and we had to be in the store on Sundays; work was all you did; there was nowhere to go. When you had a holiday, all you did was take a sail in a boat out on the inlet."

BURRARD INLET TRAIL. JOHN MCDUGALL. KINGSWAY.

"You say that John McDougall" (see *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 2) "claims to have located the route of Kingsway by climbing up on a hemlock, and getting two burnt stubs of trees in line. Well, there may be an *element* of truth in it, but here" (T.N. Hibben's *British Columbia Directory* of 1877) "is an extract from the report of the Public Works Department, 1877, which says that the survey for a good route for the Burrard Inlet Trail has been made." (Note: the False Creek Road was built years before John McDougall improved it in 1884.)

LOGGING BY TRACTION. JERICO, LITTLE MOUNTAIN.

"Yes, they did have a traction engine for logging. Angus Fraser had it out at Jericho. It had broad, flat iron tires covered with a thick rubber protection. The wheels were afterwards used by Mr. Fraser when logging off the Little Mountain district, but there he used two wheels only—running on a wide runway of flattened logs—and under a carriage drawn by mules. I will give you a piece of the rubber. Most of it was used for bumpers in the Hastings Sawmill." (See F.W. Alexander, "Traction Engines.")

PROVINCIAL JAIL AND COURT HOUSE. JONATHAN MILLER, CONSTABLE.

"I cannot identify, for some reason, all of the buildings in Mr. Ridley's Gastown photograph. I was never in the Court House or Jail" (Constable Jonathan Miller's home.) "When Mr. Alexander, who was magistrate, held court he held it up at Miller's house at Gastown, an unruly sailor would be sent to the jail, and kept there until his ship sailed. Miller's house was a bit of a place, and, with so many children" (eight or nine) "rather crowded. Miller had previously worked in Stanley Park, cutting trees. There were rough characters around the Hastings Sawmill sometimes, and course, they got drunk as men will. Once, one of them was tied up and fastened to this box protection around the Maple Tree, but he unravelled himself and made off. Then again, Mrs. McKelvie has told me of, as a girl, looking over Miller's fence, and seeing them strapping up a Hastings Sawmill employee; they had no such thing as a straitjacket, and something had to be done to keep order when things got too boisterous."

THE MILLER FAMILY. JOE HUNTLY.

"I do not know much of the genealogy of the Miller family. Mrs. Miller was sister of Ben Springer, manager of the Moodyville Sawmill. Ada was the eldest daughter; Carrie, the second daughter, is Mrs. D. Todd Lees, and still survives, a resident of Vancouver. The third daughter was afterwards Mrs. Berry, and still later the wife of His Worship Mayor L.D. Taylor. Gretta, the fourth, married Mr. Hirschfield, who died, and she remarried; then there was Mrs. Fyfe. Ada, the eldest, married Mr. Trimble, who died, and she married Joe Huntly, who was Miller's assistant constable. Ada died as Mrs. Huntly. Of the boys, there was Fred" (killed in the war), "Walter, Bert and Ernie." (Mrs. Crowe, sister to Mr. Calvert Simson, is also a pioneer of Vancouver.)

[Marginal note:] Daughter of Chief of Police Stewart.

PORTUGUESE JOE. JOSEPH GONSALVES OF STANLEY PARK.

Query: Do you know anything about Joseph Gonsalves, who went to Pender Harbour?

Mr. Simson: "Joe Gonsalves was living in the park when I came here, living on the shore between Brockton Point and Deadman's Island; had a little place there and one son and a lot of daughters. One of the daughters married Dames. Gonsalves bought out Irvine, of Irvine's Landing, now Pender Harbour,

and the firm up there is now Gonsalves and Dames. Joe did a lot of fishing and some longshoring at the Hastings Mill; I don't think he ever laboured himself, though." (See *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 2.)

"Afterwards, of course, he was evicted from Stanley Park. You recall the long lawsuit about it in the courts. I think they had to prove sixty years residence in the park to establish claim to stay there, and Gonsalves could not prove quite sixty years and had to go."

COAL HARBOUR SQUATTERS.

Query: Harold Ridley talks about a little old shack of logs which used to stand half fallen down on the west side of Coal Harbour, two or three hundred yards from Second Beach, towards the present entrance, on the west side. What do you think of that shack?

Mr. Simson: "Oh, I suppose someone digging for coal. Ostrander had a little coal prospect near Third Beach, a little hole. He had a cabin, too, on Lost Lagoon, but just where I don't know; he cut hand-split shingles there; the little shack you have here in this photo might be his; it looks like it, but I can not say that it is."

COAL.

"There used to be a lot of seams of coal about; some out in English Bay. There were some very prominent ones just by the C.P.R. docks, in the cliff where the C.P.R. station at the foot of Granville Street is now. It was just lignite; no good; little bits here and there." (Note: see H.M.S. *Plumper* report of 14 June 1859, and Progress Report, 1876 and 1877, Geological Survey of Canada.) "It was sticking out right where the C.P.R. first dock was; before they built the dock, of course, it was quite plainly visible in the cliff."

CONVERSATION WITH W. FRAME, FORMER STOREKEEPER OF THE HASTINGS SAWMILL, AT CITY HALL, 13 SEPTEMBER 1933.

DOUGLAS PARK. HASTINGS SAWMILL, W. FRAME. JERRY ROGERS, PIONEER LOGGER.

"Frank Hart writes there were no farms out Mount Pleasant way? Why, that's wrong! The Chinamen were farming on J.Z. Hall's place when Jerry Rogers was logging up there, up Heather Street between 20th and 22nd Avenue West; there is a park there now. Jerry Rogers was taking the timber out, and Calvert Simson" (storekeeper previous to Mr. Frame at Hastings Sawmill) "and I used to go up there on Sundays and have lunch at Jerry Rogers' camp."

"Jerry was taking the timber out on carriages, with rubber tired wheels, pulled by mules, four or six mules. The wheels had a tread about twelve inches wide, the track has just squared timbers laid on the ground; just big heavy square timbers shaped with an axe flat on top were laid on the ground for the rubber tired wheels to run on; the logs were put on a carriage; Jerry had no skid road on that job; just log carriages with great big rubber tired wheels that the mules pulled down the square timber track, and the logs were dumped into False Creek somewhere about Cambie Street. I afterwards used some of the rubber for bumpers in the Hastings Sawmill." (See F.W. Alexander, *Traction Engines re origin in Cariboo of these rubber tired wheels.*)

"Years afterwards, when they were building the Little Mountain Reservoir, Calvert Simson and I went out to see if we could find Rogers' old railway, and we found some of the timbers still lying in the ground."

HASTINGS SAWMILL.

"Old Man Harvey," said Mr. Frame, "was the first storekeeper, the first we have record of, anyway. He was not married, and afterwards moved to New Westminster and had a store on Front Street opposite where the Brownsville Ferry landed. Captain Raymur was manager, and R.H. Alexander, bookkeeper."

"James Harvey was his nephew; he came here first as teller in the Bank of British Columbia, afterwards was of the firm of Loewen and Harvey, financial brokers; he was killed in an automobile accident up country. Edward" (Ned) "his brother, was assistant collector of Excise in Vancouver under J.M. Miller."