

Early Vancouver

Volume Four

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Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1935-1939.

Supplemental to Volumes One, Two and Three collected in 1931-1934.

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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THE GREAT FIRE, 1886.

Mr. Gallagher: (looking at photograph with caption, "Raised from the ashes in three days") "That's right. Why, inside of three days there were twenty wooden building erected."

Note: "Raised, etc.," refers to the "C.P.R. Hotel," (McPherson's) south side of Hastings Street between Abbott and Carrall, which bore a cotton banner across its front emblazoned "Raised, etc." It was three storeys, and was occupied three days after the construction commenced, but whether exactly three days from June 13th is not so certain.

HASTINGS STREET. CORDOVA STREET. WATER STREET. L.A. HAMILTON.

Mr. Gallagher: "You see, after the Fire, Hastings Street was open only from about Carrall to Abbott, and not much at that; beyond Abbott Street, Hastings Street was just a trail; I don't think you could get a wagon along if you tried; same with Water Street and Cordova Street beyond Cambie to the west. Hamilton of the C.P.R. was very good. Hamilton got those three streets opened up, as far as Granville Street, I think; about there; did not cost the city anything; the city had no money.

"What Hamilton did was open up the three streets to about as far as Granville Street, and on Hastings Street, he built a two-plank sidewalk so that people could get along; before that Hastings Street beyond Abbott was impassable for horses" (and wagons.) "It did not cost the city anything."

J.S. Matthews, 2 October 1935.

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH EX-ALDERMAN W.H. GALLAGHER, REAL ESTATE PROPRIETOR, PENDER AND RICHARDS STREET, 20 FEBRUARY 1936.

Now the only man (other than Alderman L.A. Hamilton of the first Council) who was present at the first meeting of the City Council. He still attends to business every day.

C.P.R. CONSTRUCTION (RIGHT OF WAY). FIRST HOSPITAL IN VANCOUVER. WATER.

"I had the contract to construct the C.P.R. grade from Alexander Street to the False Creek trestle" (Granville Street) "and when my men needed medical attention they were sent down to the C.P.R. hospital on Powell Street. My recollection is that at the first the hospital was in tents; then they built a shed for a cookhouse; perhaps they put up a cottage afterwards, I don't recall, but I recall the tents being used as a hospital. The old Hastings Road curved at the foot of Campbell Avenue, and a few yards west of it the C.P.R. grade ran on the old road." (Dr. Robertson says the hospital was a few feet from the C.P.R. grade.) "That was in the spring of 1886 because I was clearing the right of way up by the roundhouse on False Creek when the Great Fire started. I recall the Hastings Sawmill flume, and remember that the people at the hospital used to take water out of it with a dipper."

SAM GREER'S "FORT." GREER'S BEACH.

"The C.P.R. wanted me to contract to construct the grade across the Indian Reserve to Greer's Beach, but I did not want it. I came over and looked at the proposal. The trees on the right of way were cut down, and later I came over again. Sam had about 200 or more ties collected together, and stuck end on" (perpendicularly) "as a barricade, with spaces here and there so that he could shoot. The barricade was a short distance from the beach towards False Creek, and on the proposed right of way."

FURTHER CONVERSATION WITH EX-ALDERMAN W.H. GALLAGHER, 1 MARCH 1936.

FIRST HOSPITAL IN VANCOUVER.

Mr. Gallagher: "I am positive that the first hospital was in tents, because I remember them afterwards adding a rough wooden shelter in the rear for use as a kitchen. In the spring of 1886, before the Fire of June 13, the trees were being cleared off Hastings and Granville Street as far west as Burrard, and men were being hurt, and they were taken to a bit of a cluster of tents near the Hastings Sawmill, then the building at the corner of Powell and Alexandra which was afterwards used as a C.P.R. hospital."