

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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What do you think of Mussaline? I think he is a bull-headed autocrat just spoiling for a fight. Well, I hope he gets all he wants of it; its just too bad; it was not he instead of poor Hughie Long.

Things do not look any too good at this moment, but if the rest of the League have the intestinal fortitude to stand behind Briton, it should not take long to make a Good Boy of Mussaline.

It is just too bad that Bullie like him should be allowed to throw the whole world out of equilibrum.

Well, now, if you have time drop me a line, I am dotting down a line or thought each day towards my "50 years on the Pacific Sloop."

Kindest regards,

[signed] Geo. H. Keefer

Read and approved 11 December 1935 by Mr. Keefer, see his letter that date. J.S. Matthews.

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH MR. JAMES KEIL, 1237 EAST 19TH AVENUE, WHO, TOGETHER WITH HIS SON, MR. ROLLAND KEIL, SAME ADDRESS, CALLED AT THE CITY ARCHIVES, 25 MARCH 1939.

Note: Mr. Rolland Keil presented the City Archives with sixty-three 8" x 10" glass photographic plates, taken by R. Broadbridge, commercial photographer, circa 1911-13.

JAMES KEIL. C.P.R. CONSTRUCTION.

Mr. Keil said: "I came here in September 1886, just after 'The Fire'" (June 1886) "and from Regina. I had worked in the mountains during the summer, building snow sheds."

HOTEL VANCOUVER. BANK OF B.C. BANK OF MONTRÉAL. BRICKS. CITY MARKET. CITY HALL. CITY CREMATORY. JOSEPH MANNION.

"I hauled the bricks for the first brick building on the southeast corner of Hastings and Seymour Street, the Bank of Montréal and the Bank of British Columbia, and, I hauled the brick of the City Market, afterwards the City Hall, on Westminster Avenue; the bricks for the City Market came from Joe Mannion's brickyard on Bowen Island; so did the bricks for the crematory; out on the sawdust road east of Cambie Street bridge." (See photo C.V. P. Dist. 34.) "I hauled both."

HOTEL VANCOUVER.

"Then I hauled the lumber for the first Hotel Vancouver, hauled it from a float at the foot of Howe Street; it came from Moodyville; most of the lumber for the Hotel Vancouver came from Moodyville." (See photos C.V. P. Can. 45 and 47, and see "STREET ENDS CASE," 1905.) "Clements was superintendent of the building of the Hotel Vancouver, and Harry Abbott's house, and used to examine every load before it was dumped off, and any load which did not suit him, he would say, 'Take it down to the oil house'; he had an oil house down on the lot near the northwest corner of Dunsmuir and Howe Street, where he built two houses; he had a big fence all around the lot."

VOLUNTEER FIRE BRIGADE. R.D. PITT. FIRE, MARCH 1887.

"The fire brigade was all volunteer in those days, and the fire brigade boys lived all over the city; the hall was down on Water Street, and there was a bush fire up around Hastings and Pender, above Victory Square. So the boys started out with the hose reel; we had a fire engine too, the 'M.A. MacLean'; we hauled it by hand; there were no horses" (note: the "M.A. MacLean" was horse-drawn) "and somehow we ran over a man, R.D. Pitt" (R.D. Pitt was real estate agent) "was his name, right on the corner of Carrall and Water Street, and we broke his leg. He slipped and fell, and got in the way."

HAMILTON BUILDING. L.A. HAMILTON.

"L.A. Hamilton was building his building on the southeast corner of Hastings and Granville. I had to stand there all night, with two teams of horses and four men, to save his furniture if the fire came across Granville Street, but it didn't come."

CLEARING C.P.R. TOWNSITE. D.B. CHARLESON'S CAMP, 1887. C.P.R. LOCOMOTIVES (FUEL).

"Charleson, who was clearing the townsite for the C.P.R.—we called it the 'C.P.R. camp'—had his camp down at the south end of Granville Street, right by Drake Street; that must have been in January or February 1887, because I came here in September 1886; and he had twenty-five thousand cords of wood down there, cut for the C.P.R. engines, piled up on False Creek right where Robertson and Haskett's is now; there was no sawmill there then, and the cord wood all went up in smoke; that fire burned it. That was what Charleson was doing at that time. The camp was right where Wadds Bros., photographers, have their place now." (1318 Granville Street.)

DEADMAN'S ISLAND BURIALS. DR. LEFEVRE, CORONER. SUICIDE. CEMETERIES.

"One day we found a man hanging in a stump near the camp; he had committed suicide; just exactly where Wadd's place is now, by Charleson's camp. It was a great big cedar stump, all burned out, and tall, and he had climbed up with a rope around his neck and jumped down inside the hollow of the stump and hung himself. Jack Stewart, Chief of Police, came; then they held an inquest at the camp; Dr. LeFevre came and was coroner, and Chief Stewart, and a couple of fellows came, took the body down to Carrall Street, and rowed over to Deadman's Island and buried him. I don't know what the fellow's name was, but that was the last burial on Deadman's Island, at least I never heard of another."

CHINESE RIOTS, FEBRUARY 1887.

"We had three or four Chinese in that camp, cooking for us, and at the time of the 'Chinese Riot,' February 1887, the rioters came and took them away."

BUILDING WATER WORKS. FIRST NARROWS. HUGH KEEFER. D.B. CHARLESON.

"Hugh Keefer and Dan McGillvary were directors or something of the Capilano Water Works, and I was over at Capilano with two of Charleson's teams, hauling stuff to the dam; they had a kind of railroad made out of poles; there were some places where we could not get horses at all, so they made a bit of a railroad out of poles, and took the piles along them."

HORSES. MOODYVILLE. S.S. SENATOR. MRS. HUGH KEEFER. HORSES SWIM FIRST NARROWS.

"Mrs. Keefer, who liked horses, she came over, riding on her horse. The only way to get horses over then was to take them to Moodyville on a little scow pulled by the *Senator* and then unload the horses on the little log float at Moodyville, and take the horses to Capilano along the shore when the tide was out, away out and very low; it was the only way you could get them there. Mrs. Keefer was a great horsewoman; she got her horse over that way, and then she came home and left her horse there—and she didn't take a street car coming home either.

"So, one Sunday, she sent a man over after her horse, and there was a bunch of us standing at the mouth of the Capilano River—it was Sunday and we were doing nothing—he came across from the end of the pipe line road in Stanley Park in a row boat, and he was wondering how he was going to get the horse home; he did not like going all the way along the beach to Moodyville, and then take the scow; would take too long, and it was Sunday. I told him to get his boat, and I would put a rope around the horse's neck, and he did, and he started off. We pushed the horse in the water, and as soon as the horse got in the water the tide was coming in very strong, away they went, and boat and horse landed about half the way to the bell house; we did not call it Brockton Point then; we called it the bell house. No harm done to the horse."

LUMBERMAN'S ARCH. BROCKTON POINT. WADDS BROS.

"Well, next thing I had to take three horses over from the south side for Wadds Bros., photographers. So I took the horses along the park road around Stanley Park to the end of the pipe line road, and I towed one over, tied to the stern of the boat, and the other two followed; we had one only tied with a rope; the other two were loose, and it was low water slack, and we landed right at the mouth of the river. I don't know what they did with the horses."

CONFIRMATION BY GEO. T. WADDS, PHOTOGRAPHER, 1318 GRANVILLE STREET, 4 MAY 1919.

Mr. Wadds said: "My brother Bill rode down from Rossland; he had with him three horses, one a good riding horse, one an ordinary riding horse, and a pack horse; we kept the good riding horse for use in Vancouver; the other two we turned out to look after themselves at Capilano where there was plenty for them to eat; they were worn out, and no use. I heard that they disappeared; someone had use for them; we had none, and did not want to shoot them."

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH JAMES KEIL, 1237 EAST 19TH AVENUE, WHO, DESPITE HIS GREAT AGE, CALLED AT THE CITY ARCHIVES, ACCOMPANIED BY HIS DAUGHTER-IN-LAW, MRS. ROLLAND KEIL, AND TWO FRIENDS, 30 MAY 1939.

HOTEL VANCOUVER. B.C. IRON WORKS. VANCOUVER OPERA HOUSE. EARLY ELECTRIC LIGHT. WATER WELLS.

Mr. Keil said: "If anyone has told you that the first Hotel Vancouver got their water from a well, they are wrong. They may have, and probably did, have a well during the construction period, but they got their water from pipes; their water came in pipes; of that I am sure."

(Note by J.S.M.: The Hotel Vancouver was opened in May 1888; Capilano Water was not available until March 1889. Mrs. Jane Nickson, widow of J.J. Nickson, one of the officials who laid the First Narrows water pipes, writes, from Sechelt, 7 December 1937: "The Hotel Vancouver had an artesian well, and the water was very good.")

What has been disclosed is how the water from a well was delivered to the bedrooms and baths, and, in view of the Red Cross Brewery in Tyndall's Creek, adjoining mouth of C.P.R. tunnel, using the water from their dam for making beer, how the sewerage from the Hotel Vancouver was disposed of.)

"These photos here, which I will give you. This one here of a boiler being drawn by four horses, one white, up past the New York Block on Granville Street, was taken in 1890 in front of old 630, now 642 Granville Street. The plates for these boilers were hauled up to the B.C. Iron Works two days before that plant burned down. Then later I had to take them down to the C.P.R. Roundhouse on False Creek to get the shops to roll them on their machines so that they curved the shape of the boilers. Then I hauled the curved plates back to the B.C. Iron Works, where they were riveted into boilers; then I hauled the boilers—three of them—to the Hotel Vancouver.

"You see, when the hotel was first built, it had one small steam boiler, but when they started to build the Vancouver Opera House, they needed more boilers to make electric light for the Opera House, and the three boilers were made by the B.C. Iron Works."

C.P.R. ROUNDHOUSE. FAIRVIEW. FALSE CREEK. EARLY WATER.

"When the C.P.R. Roundhouse was first built they got their water from across False Creek in Fairview. A dam was built in a creek which came down near Heather Street; the dam was near Broadway, just below the present General Hospital. A year or so ago, the remains of the old dam could still be seen.

"I got the four-inch water iron pipes from the C.P.R., and hauled them across Westminster Avenue bridge, and along the clearing in Fairview to the dam they had constructed.

"Then they laid the water pipes under False Creek from the dam in Fairview to the C.P.R. Roundhouse across the creek, laying the pipes on the bottom of the creek."