

## **Early Vancouver**

### **Volume Four**

**By: Major J.S. Matthews, V.D.**

**2011 Edition (Originally Published 1944)**

*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**

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### **Contact Information**

City of Vancouver Archives  
1150 Chestnut Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 3J9  
604.736.8561  
archives@vancouver.ca  
vancouver.ca/archives



attached a rope and let the anchor down. Things looked 'bad'; there we remained—in the fog—an impatient, nervous excursion crowd off on a picnic, annoyed at the delay and the loss of our holiday.

"Presently, out of the silence and mist, we heard a rooster crow; the master ordered the anchor up; rang for 'slow ahead.' He knew where he was; we passed in to Burrard Inlet.

"It was Navy Jack's rooster which had crowed; 'Navy Jack' was, at that time, the only inhabitant of what we call West Vancouver. That rooster was one of the first navigating aids to mariners of Vancouver."

Excerpt: Mayor David Oppenheimer's address to City Council, 18 January 1892, as he retires after four years as Mayor of Vancouver: "A lighthouse is contemplated on Observation Point."

Note: Observation Point, i.e. old name of Prospect Point.

### **MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH A.W. FRASER, 3614 TANNER STREET, OFF JOYCE ROAD, 4 MAY 1939.**

[He] came to Vancouver in the fall of 1888, and who was one of the first members of the first militia in Vancouver, old No. 5 B.C.B.G.A. His signature is on the first page of the first roll, and shows as 21 years old; actually he was 19 at that date.

#### **S.S. PREMIER. S.S. CHARMER. SMALLPOX. "BATTLE OF THE HOSES."**

Mr. Fraser said: "I saw the trouble the time the *Premier* tried to land her passengers when we had the smallpox scare. I did not see the start; the news soon spread, and by the time I got there, there was a big crowd down on the C.P.R. wharf. The news soon spread through the little city.

"It was this way. Capt. O'Brien was in command of the *Premier*, as she was then; afterwards the *Charmer*, and the *Premier* was an American ship; flew the American flag, and had been down at Seattle and of course, when she came in she had to pass the customs, and the health officer went on board and he found smallpox, and would not allow the passengers to land, and Capt. O'Brien was determined to land his passengers. So Capt. O'Brien mustered his passengers, and said he would land the whole crowd of them, and then the fun started."

#### **FIRE BRIGADE. RIOT. POLICE.**

Major Matthews: Who started the fun?

Mr. Fraser: "The *Premier*. The news spread like wildfire, and in those days we had only three or four policemen in town, and they could not handle the situation, so they called out the fire brigade. The fire brigade was all volunteers then, and I don't know just all about it, because I was not there at the start, but the *Premier* turned her steam hose on to drive the crowd of onlookers on the wharf further back, and some of the crew on the *Premier* started to throw lumps of coal, and then the fire brigade turned on the" (cold water) "hose, and someone cut the ship's line, and she drifted off into the harbour, and hung about for a while, and then she turned and headed for Port Moody, and of course there was no road to Port Moody then, and she went to Port Moody quicker than they could, and she went up to Port Moody and there was no one there to stop them landing the passengers."

Query: Port Moody or Hastings?

### **MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH MR. W.H. GALLAGHER, FORMER ALDERMAN.**

Now the only person living in Vancouver—Alderman L.A. Hamilton now in Toronto is the other one—who was present at the first meeting of the first City Council, May 1886. I finally persuaded him to go to Steffens-Colmer Studio and have his photograph taken.

### **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 13<sup>th</sup> 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."