

Early Vancouver

Volume Five

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Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1936-1945.

Supplemental to volumes one, two, three and four collected in 1931, 1932 and 1934.

About the 2011 Edition

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curves on the street car corners were better than they used to be, and Jimmy retorted, 'Yes, I put them in, but we put them in by hand.' The curve in the rails in those days, in the first street car tracks, were all done by hand. Nowadays the curves in the rails are put in by machinery, before they are laid, but when the first street car curves were put down in Vancouver, it was all done by hand."

THE FIRST NURSE.

City Archivist: Remarkable thing, Dr. Robertson, that you, the doctor, and J.B. Kay, a patient, both of the first hospital, are still with us to celebrate the Golden Jubilee year.

Dr. Robertson: "Don't recall Kay. The hospital was a two-storey affair; only two beds I can recall upstairs. Hughes, who was cook as well as nurse, slept up there, and afterwards there was a woman used to come; she slept up there. I was never up there more than once or twice; the four beds and kitchen were downstairs; it was right beside the track, but of course there were no ties on the right of way from Port Moody; I walked on the grade."

As narrated to me today, 19 February 1936.

J.S. Matthews.

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION OF A FEW MOMENTS WITH MRS. JONATHAN ROGERS OF VANCOUVER, 16 FEBRUARY 1938.

Who very kindly called at the City Archives and presented me with a small and a large copper medallion, issued by C.W. McCain, in 1901, etc., made from the historic steamer *Beaver*, and also with a coverless copy of the first edition of the history of the *Beaver*, autographed by the author, C.W. McCain.

S.S. BEAVER.

Mrs. Rogers: "Of course, you know, Mr. McCain blew up the *Beaver*; that was to increase the value of his own relics, so that no one else should get any more."

Major Matthews: Well, may I presume to point out, this office has to be very, very careful what they record.

Mrs. Rogers: "Quite so. All I know of it personally is that Mr. Rogers" (Mrs. Rogers's husband) "told me he" (Mr. McCain) "did; that he blew her up."

DEADMAN'S ISLAND. STANLEY PARK.

"I was in London, and Lord Dunedin asked me, 'How is the island; have you got it still?'"

"I replied, 'Yes, we have,' and he answered, 'And, so you should have; I know something about it; it was proven that it was part of the reserve'" (Stanley Park); "I had the last word in that matter, on the Privy Council."

"Then Lord Dunedin said to me, 'What you ought to ask me is, How much were you offered?'"

Major Matthews: Did Lord Dunedin say that to you?

Mrs. Rogers: "Oh, yes. That I know about positively. Those were his remarks to me; there's no hearsay about that."

DEADMAN'S ISLAND.

The judgment of Lord Dunedin, of Privy Council, London, England, in the Deadman's Island case, Attorney-General of B.C. versus Attorney-General of Canada, 1906, Appeal cases, page 552. (In Corporation Counsel's Office, City Hall.)

BY AN OLD TIMER.

To have served under every mayor since the incorporation of Vancouver, is the unique distinction held by two civic employees, Chief J.H. Carlisle, head of Vancouver Volunteer Fire Brigade, Vancouver's Fire Brigade, and Josiah Romang, janitor of the City Hall.

VANCOUVER VOLUNTEER FIRE BRIGADE. CHIEF J.H. CARLISLE. JOSIAH ROMANG. SAM PEDGRIFT.

Although Chief Carlisle became head of the fire brigade in the fall of 1886, on the hurried departure of Sam Pedgrift to the land of the Stars and Stripes, the fire brigade was then a volunteer organisation and his appointment was made by election, by the members, and he continued to carry on his dray and teaming business. Chief Carlisle's first civic appointment was to the office License, Fire and Health Inspector, to which he was appointed by the City Council on 24 January 1887, at a salary of \$75 per month. These duties he performed, as well as acting as chief of the volunteer fire brigade, until the city established a paid department, when he became its chief and was relieved of his other office.

Mr. Romang, or "Joe" as he is usually called, arrived in Vancouver shortly after the Great Fire, and well remembers the day when he and his wife landed at the Hastings Mill wharf, off the old side-wheeler *Princess Louise*. "That was the only wharf in those days," explained "Joe." "Vancouver was then a very small place, and nearly the whole site of the present city was covered with blackened stumps or standing timber. At first, my wife and I boarded at the old Brunswick Hotel on Hastings Street, kept by Pat Carey. A few months later I bought a lot on Homer Street, and built the first residence on that street. The lot was on the east side, just south of the lane off Pender Street, and soon after the Methodist Parsonage was built opposite it and also a house, in which the late Mayor Garden and several others kept Bachelor Hall. I sold the lot many years ago and the house was pulled down."

HIRSCHBERG. J.P. LAWSON. MOUNTAIN VIEW CEMETERY. H.P. MCCRANEY. FIRST BURIAL. LELAND HOTEL.

It was in the year 1887, during Mayor MacLean's second term of office, that Mr. Romang's connection with the city started, so that he has been in the city's employ for about 37 years. The late J.P. Lawson, Vancouver's first City Engineer, engaged him to assist in laying out the cemetery, which had just been granted the city by the Provincial Government. H.P. McCraney, who now resides in Point Grey, was one of those who had the contract for clearing the land, and as the contractors finished a section, the engineer surveyed the four corners of the space to be used for burial purposes, and Joe Romang and another man laid it out in plots for graves.

The first burial to take place in the city cemetery was that of a man named Hirschberg, of Hirschberg and Somes, the first proprietors of the old Leland Hotel, who committed suicide.

CEMETERY ROAD. NORTH ARM ROAD.

Only a small amount of the clearing had then been done, but sufficient brush and timber had been got off to enable the grave to be dug in a corner. The road to the cemetery was in terrible shape in those early days, and the hearses and funeral rigs often sunk down to the axles in the mud.

That job at the cemetery led to further engagements in the City Engineer's Department, and for many years the payroll of the Board of Works regularly contained his name. As rod and chain man, he has assisted in establishing the grade and laying out the streets, and other civic works in all the older portions of the city. A short time after the civic offices were moved from Powell Street to the present structure, Mr. Romang was appointed to the position of caretaker and has held down that job ever since.

During the early years of his tenure as caretaker, the upper floor of the buildings was not used for civic purposes, and was available for hire, for meetings, etc., and "Joe" had to attend to the letting of same. Many exciting political gatherings were held in that hall, in quite a few, of which, the late Joseph Martin took a prominent part.

MARKET HALL, 1890. CITY HALL.

Small travelling theatrical companies also rented the hall, which was provided with a stage, the late Harry Lindley and his company, including "Little Mystic," appearing regularly for a lengthy engagement for many years.

Nearly every successive city council has for many years re-arranged, added to, or altered in some way this apology for a city hall which was erected in 1890, from plans prepared by C.W.H. Sansom for a civic market. This was the first of two buildings which the city has erected for market purposes, both of which have proved dismal failures.

January 27th 1925.

Copied from a penciled manuscript in the Library of the *Daily Province*, discarded as of no further use at the death of Mr. Romang in June 1939.

This manuscript was undoubtedly written by Cecil Carter-Cotton, a son of the Hon. F.L. Carter-Cotton, proprietor of the old *News-Advertiser*. Mr. Cecil Carter-Cotton was a journalist and reporter of high standing, and prior to his death soon after 1925-30, was a reporter on the *Province*. He frequently wrote reminiscences of this character.

J.S. Matthews.

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH HENRY S. ROWLING, SON OF W.H. ROWLING, OF ROWLINGS, NORTH ARM, WHO WENT TO LIVE ON HIS MILITARY GRANT IN SOUTH VANCOUVER IN 1868, TAKING HIS SON, THEN FOUR YEARS OLD, WITH HIM, AT CITY HALL, 15 JULY 1935.

BURNABY LAKE, FIRST LOGGING OPERATIONS. BRUNETTE RIVER.

"It was me who opened up the Brunette River for logging; before I opened it up no logs whatever had been taken out of Burnaby Lake; the only timber which had been cut was the brush, and surveying, and roads; that was about 1890 or 1891 when I was about 26 or 28. We had no contract at all, just logging for the open market; when you first bought land in this province everything went with it, timber, minerals, water rights, and, on the banks, right down to low tide. We took out about five million feet and sold most of it to the Brunette Sawmill at Sapperton. No royalties in those days, at least not on that land, but we paid stumpage of 50¢ or 75¢ a thousand to the owner of the land."

WATER SUPPLY, NEW WESTMINSTER.

"Before I could start to use the Brunette River for logging, I applied to the Provincial Government for a charter to do so; it was necessary to put a dam across the river. The City of New Westminster petitioned against the granting of the charter as they had a water pipe across the stream, and they got an injunction from Judge McCreight to stop us driving logs down the Brunette. The trial was quite a long affair, a long story, but the gist of it is that I won; even with all the petitions, and I succeeded in getting our charter, that is, myself. Afterwards William McPherson joined me. The city thought that the logs would break the supports in the Brunette River which supported the pipes and brought to the city of Westminster from the Coquitlam the only water supply the city had. The supports were never damaged by us."

LOGGING, BURNABY.

"Well, we first built a skid road down to Still Creek to just west of Douglas Road; then we dammed the Brunette, but had to move our rollway landing" (where the logs are put in the water) "as we had dammed the Brunette so high that we could not float the logs under the Douglas Road bridge across Still Creek, so then we commenced to put our logs in the lake on the east side of the bridge.

"Still Creek was a little paradise of a place at that time. The crab apple trees overhung the banks of the creek, and to look down it was like looking down a beautiful sinuous avenue with green overhanging boughs all white with blossoms, and so sweet smelling; when the crab apple trees were in blossom—they were very numerous—the sweet scent was most pleasant. The banks were lined with wild flowers. The brown water was so still that it acted like a mirror, so that when looking down upon it you could see your own face midst the reflections of the white crab apple blossoms on the trees above you. Sometimes we took a little excursion or picnic, party, down to our camp—took them on the little steamer I will tell you about.

"I gave Bill Smith a contract to take the logs down Still Creek and across Burnaby Lake to the dam at the head of the Brunette River; that was before McPherson joined me."