

Early Vancouver

Volume Five

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2011 Edition (Originally Published 1945)

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

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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BIRTH OF FIRST WHITE CHILD BORN IN VANCOUVER.

“Who was nurse at the time of the birth of Fred I do not know, but Dr. Beckingsale was the doctor; I rather think Alice, my father’s sister, helped.”

HIS WORSHIP T.F. NEELANDS.

(His Worship) “Thos. F. Neelands, who was mayor of Vancouver, 1902 and 1903, boarded with us when he came, 1 March 1886, to Vancouver. He was engaged to my sister Nellie in Winnipeg; both are still living, in Vancouver. When Mr. Neelands was sick with typhoid fever, Nellie nursed him. I actually saw Frederick Charles Macey the day he was born in the Macey home on Hastings Street, and that was about two weeks before the fire, because the day of the fire Mrs. Macey was up and about.

“Sam made an arrangement, soon after we came here, with a contractor by the name of Gillies. Gillies owned a lot and Sam made a contract to work out the price of the lot. He had half worked it out when the fire took place, and after the fire Gillies came to him, and said, ‘We have lost everything; I don’t know how I am going to start up again. How about the lot?’ Sam said, ‘I will call that off,’ and gave him the agreement back. Gillies sold the lot to someone and went away, and that was the end of our home on Hastings Street.”

J.S. Matthews.

FURTHER CONVERSATION WITH WILLIAM HENRY MACEY, 8 MAY 1936.

FREDERICK CHARLES MACEY. THE “GREAT FIRE,” 1886.

Mr. Macey said: “The government sent us over a lot of bell tents, and then the Macey family got about ten dollars worth of lumber, and we built a rough lumber shed down on False Creek, just at the west end of Prior Street, where the B.C. Electric Car barns are now. Mrs. Sam Macey and my sister Alice, who came to Victoria from Ontario, with Margaret” (née Collins), “Sam’s wife, as a sort of chaperone, together with the baby” (Frederick Charles Macey) “lived in the bell tent. Sam, my brother, and myself, slept in the shack. Furniture? We made such as we had and could. The City gave away a lot of stuff; some people got everything they wanted, but we asked for nothing except a little food; we got that.”

C. GARDNER JOHNSON.

“About the Fire, and Sam’s escape. He arrived with his face burnt; he was with Gardner Johnson. You look up what Gardner Johnson tells as his experience; Sam, my brother, was the third man who lay down, face in the earth, to escape from the heat of the fire.”

Approved by Mr. Macey, 13 May.

J.S. Matthews.

[LETTER FROM MRS. MARGARET MACEY.]

June 4th, 1936.
General Delivery
Prince Rupert, B.C.

Mr. J.S. Matthews,
City Archivist,
Vancouver, B.C.

Dear Sir:

Below I am writing further details of my experience of the Vancouver fire as requested by you.

GREAT FIRE, 13 JUNE 1886. HIS WORSHIP, WM. TEMPLETON.

When we left the hotel we went to a shack that my husband had built. All we had there was a bedstead made of boards nailed to the wall, a bundle of straw spread on the boards for a