

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

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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MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH MRS. GABRIEL LYCETT, NÉE NELLIE CARD, 221 RENFREW STREET SOUTH, AND A DAUGHTER OF ONE OF THE EARLIEST EMPLOYEES OF THE HASTINGS SAWMILL, AND ONE OF THE CHILDREN SHOWN IN THE FAMOUS PHOTOGRAPH OF HASTINGS SCHOOL, 11 JUNE 1886.

MRS. JOHN PEABODY PATTERSON. "THE HEROINE OF MOODYVILLE."

Mrs. Lycett said: "Mrs. Patterson was a wonderful woman. I recall how, when I was a child, and suffering from croup, she would come in the middle of the night and attend to me. I recall the occasion when she went off to Point Atkinson with an Indian in a canoe; none of the whites would go; they were fearful of the storm, but she went off with the Indian in his canoe." (Note: this gallant incident has been recorded in poetry by Mrs. Nora M. Duncan, 154 East Windsor Road, North Vancouver, and published in the Vancouver General Hospital *Nurses' Annual*, 1936, and also in the *Chatelaine* for June 1936.)

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH JOHN HAROLD (HARRY) MACEY, PRINCE RUPERT, (SHOE BUSINESS), NOW ON A VISIT TO VANCOUVER, AND STAYING WITH HIS SISTER-IN-LAW, MRS. GILLIES, 2925 WEST FOURTEENTH AVENUE, POINT GREY, 30 APRIL 1936.

Records show that Mrs. Macey, his mother, arrived in Granville, B.I. on 1 March 1886; her sister-in-law, Alice Macey, on 1 April 1886. Mr. John H. Macey is the second son of S.T. Macey, and Margaret, née Collins. His mother, now aged 80, is living in Prince Rupert, and for her age is very active. Her three children, all sons, are living.

FIRST BOY BORN IN VANCOUVER, 31 MAY 1886.

Mr. Macey said: "My eldest brother, Frederick Charles Macey, 4546 West Ninth Avenue, Point Grey" (no phone) "was born in Vancouver on May 31st 1886, somewhere on False Creek down towards the Bridge Hotel, I think, Westminster Avenue" (His Worship T.F. Neelands says, "Hastings Street, north side, between Columbia and Westminster Avenue") "and was first boy born in Vancouver; he is a metal worker and now working of the Canadian National Hotel, Georgia Street; Mother is now 80, and very active for her years. I (John Harold) was born in Vancouver May 29th 1888, and my younger brother William later; he is now living in Prince Rupert.

"At one time, when there was that big parade on some holiday in Vancouver and Miss Jackson" (Mrs. Gitchell of the B.C. Electric Railway) "rode in the parade through the streets" (of Vancouver), "they wanted my brother to ride in the carriage too, but he would not go."

COPY OF LETTER, DATED 27 APRIL 1936, FROM HIS MOTHER, MRS. MARGARET MACEY, PRINCE RUPERT.

General Delivery,
Prince Rupert, B.C.,
April 27, 1936.

As one of the pioneers of Vancouver, I would like to give my experience of the big fire.

When my first child Fred Macey was only thirteen days old, I was sitting in the house when one of my neighbors, a Mrs. Holden, ran in to tell me that the town was on fire and that I had better get out. I quickly pulled a colored tablecloth off the table and wrapped it around the baby, and carried him through Chinatown, but as I was too weak to carry him any farther, his Aunt Alice Macey took him and carried him to False Creek bridge. My husband's father then took me by the arm and kept urging me on, otherwise I would have fallen as we were nearly suffocated by the smoke. We managed to get an empty room at the Bridge hotel where we slept on the floor with a quilt for a mattress.

I might say that my husband Sam Macey had gone down to Water St. and when he got there the smoke was so bad he rushed home to change his Sunday clothes so he could help fight the fire. But when he got back to the house, it was on fire and I was gone. He pulled a few things out of the house and threw them down a dry well, one of them being the quilt which I slept on that night. Then he ran through Main St., just a trail, he fell to the ground, overcome by smoke, but

managed to get up again and finally arrived at the hotel with his face badly burnt. Then he went out to see if there were any women around who had no place to sleep, and he brought back enough to fill the room and they all slept on the floor. There was great rejoicing when the men who had been fighting the fire met their wives.

I might say that my son Fred Macey was the first boy born after Vancouver got its name.

Yours sincerely,

[signed] Margaret Macey.

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH WILLIAM HENRY MACEY OF VANCOUVER (BROTHER TO SAMUEL THOMAS MACEY, DECEASED, THE FATHER OF THE FIRST WHITE CHILD BORN IN VANCOUVER), IN THE PRESENCE OF JOHN HAROLD MACEY, OF PRINCE RUPERT, HIS NEPHEW, AND SAMUEL MACEY'S SECOND SON, AT CITY ARCHIVES, 6 MAY 1936.

FIRST WHITE CHILD BORN IN VANCOUVER, 31 MAY 1886.

Mr. Macey said: "Samuel Thomas Macey was my eldest brother, and we are sons of William Couch Macey and Sarah, née Vincent, of the town of Barry, Ontario; Father came originally from Dartmouth, Devonshire. My father went to Toronto when he was twenty-one; when it was 'Muddy York,' and came over the Atlantic in an old sailing ship; no steamers then. Mother came from the next county east of Devon when she was a little girl. They were married at Richmond Hill, near Toronto. Mother was a Methodist, Father what was known as Independent. They had nine sons and four daughters.

"Samuel, my eldest brother, went to Victoria in 1884; he was the only one of our family in British Columbia then. I came next in February 1885. Then, the first week in March 1886, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Thomas Macey, who were married in 1885 in a house in Victoria by the well-known Rev. Pollard, together with Miss Alice Macey and myself, came over to Gastown.

"Frederick Charles Macey was born right over there" (pointing out of the City Archives window, Temporary City Hall, 16 Hastings Street West) "on Hastings Street, north side, between Columbia Street and what was afterwards Westminster Avenue, now Main Street. After the fire, our home stood right up to the level of the street line, and was plastered on its front; in the rear was several shanties as shown here in this map." (Dakin's fire map of Vancouver, November 1889.) "The site is now, I think, about Slater's Meat Market" (119 East Hastings) "but I am not exactly sure. The house, after the fire, was right to the street line, plastered front, one storey, and had shanties in rear."

THE GREAT FIRE, 1886. PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

"At the time of the fire, we hardly knew what was going to happen; whether the fire would miss our place or not; it was jumping about. You know what Edward Cook says about the roof of the Presbyterian church being on fire before buildings nearer the fire caught fire. As he says, the fire was travelling irregularly. Our building would take fire far ahead of others; in the roofs; the fire was first catching here, then there; we did not know how it would end. So Sam put his wife's and sister's clothing in a trunk, left the trunk outside, and told his wife to leave the trunk where it was while he went down towards Water Street to see how the fire was progressing, and if it was coming our way. In the meantime, Mrs. Macey took her clothes out of the trunk, and put them back in the bureau, and when Sam came back he said to me, 'You take the baby,' and then told me, his wife, his sister Alice, and Father to go down to the False Creek bridge, which we did. After we had gone, Mr. Macey, not knowing that that the trunk had been emptied by his wife, threw the trunk, which should have been full but which was empty, into our dry well."

WATER WELLS. DR. BECKINGSALE. A.C. FERGUSON.

"Dr. Beckingsale lived across Hastings Street from us, and A.C. Ferguson had a house right on the lane behind the present Library.

"After we came to Vancouver we stayed here. As you know I voted at the first election." (He was present at the banquet to the surviving voters of the first election, 3 May 1886, given by the City Council, Hotel Vancouver, 4 May 1936.)