

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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“Mr. Langlois had visited Los Angeles, where he had seen the activities of the Los Angeles Investment Company who had undertaken, in Los Angeles, a similar construction programme, and in a very large way. Upon his return the Prudential Builders Ltd. was organised, and a large plant started for manufacturing houses—many of them the ‘ready made’ type—at their factory on Dufferin Street, now 2nd Avenue West. I was in charge of the sales at Talton Place from the beginning to the end.

“The houses were good houses; very well built by the ‘ready made’ plan; that is, they were built at the factory, fitted, then pulled down, transported to Talton Place, and the walls re-erected; it was a scheme which, actually, had been originated by the Prudential Builders Ltd. to meet the needs of a host of new settlers establishing themselves in the prairie provinces. The Royal City Mills, E.C. Mahoney, manager, on Carrall Street, False Creek, had the patent on that type of construction. Ultimately, upon my representation to the directors that the houses were too expensive, that type of construction was abandoned.

“We sold vacant lots from \$2,500 for inside lots to \$3,000 for corners. Where homes were erected upon them, and all ready for occupancy, the homes sold from \$6,000 for the lowest, to a brick one on seventy-five feet on Sixteenth Avenue, I sold for \$14,000; many were sold on the installment plan.

“Following the outbreak of the Great War, the Dominion Trust Co. went bankrupt; this similarly affected the National Finance Co., and in turn the Prudential Builders Ltd. The factory on 2nd Avenue West was subsequently destroyed by fire.

“I repeat, it was the first organised attempt of home building in Vancouver, and long before the institution of the Town Planning Commission. There were difficulties and vicissitudes, of course, but today, thirty years after, Talton Place, as a locality, is as neat and picturesque as any similar one I know of.”

Approved, 18 October 1939.

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH MISS K.H. MCQUEEN, 1453 LAURIER STREET, VANCOUVER, DAUGHTER OF THE LATE ALDERMAN JAMES MCQUEEN OF VANCOUVER, 30 MARCH 1937.

ALDERMAN MCQUEEN. MAGISTRATE MCQUEEN.

Miss McQueen said: “Alderman James McQueen was born in the township of Beverley, Ontario, Wentworth Co., in 1839, and came to Vancouver in September 1891. In 1873 he married Mary Jane Whetham, and their children were:

Miss Ann McQueen, unmarried.

Miss K.H. McQueen (myself).

[*Magistrate*] George R. McQueen, who is now a Police magistrate at the City Police Court.

“Just the three of us. Father served as Alderman on the City Council, and of course was brother-in-law to James Whetham, Dr. James Whetham, M.D. and executor of his estate. Dr. Whetham died in March 22nd 1891. He had built the Whetham Block on the northeast corner of Cambie and Cordova streets.”

DR. JAMES WHETHAM, M.D. CHARLES WHETHAM. WHETHAM BLOCK.

“My uncle James had extensive interests in and about Vancouver; he was quite wealthy. His brother Charles, Charles Whetham, M.A., of Toronto University, was principal of the first private school for boys, the ‘Whetham College,’ which occupied quarters in the Sir Donald Smith block, at the southeast corner of Granville and Georgia, where Birks jewellery store is now; it was the first private school for boys in Vancouver. Dr. James Whetham is a wealthy man, and it was he who financed the school.”

“NEWCASTLE.” COAL. CAPILANO INDIAN RESERVE. WEST VANCOUVER.

“As you will see by this letter, he received permission from the Indian Department at Ottawa to prospect for coal on the Indian Reserve at the First Narrows, in December 1889.”

Note: “Newcastle” is shown on Admiralty charts as a place on the West Vancouver shore just outside the First Narrows, and as mentioned in the report of 4 March 1890 by Mayor Oppenheimer to the effect that efforts to discover coal there have been commenced. (See Mayor Oppenheimer’s brown book with title outside, *Mayor David Oppenheimer*, Vancouver. JSM.)