

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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Hastings & Granville St., Dominion Day 1888. Customs House on right. Tower building built by L.A. Hamilton, next Leland Hotel. First C.P.R. Steamship house flag. Bank of Montreal & Bank of B.C.; Ferguson Bldg erected to first floor only. Four inch planks, 22' to 24', boulders, earth. Lady Mt. Stephen Block & Post Office in distance. City Archives.

Item # EarlyVan_v5_010

[photo annotation:]

Hastings & Granville St., Dominion Day, 1888. Customs House on right. Tower building built by L.A. Hamilton, next Leland Hotel. First C.P.R. Steamship house flag. Bank of Montreal and Bank of B.C.; Ferguson Bldg erected to first floor only. Four inch planks, 22' to 24', boulders, earth. Lady Mt. Stephen Block & Post Office in distance. City Archives.

C.S. Bailey. Vancouver, B.C.

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH MRS. (DR.) J.M. LEFEVRE (L.A. LEFEVRE), PRONOUNCED "LAFAVH," AT HER EMBOWERED HOME, "LANGARAVINE," ON THE EDGE OF THE CLIFF OVERLOOKING SPANISH BANKS, 27 JANUARY 1936.

Mrs. Lefevre, now an elderly lady of much graciousness, snow white hair in exquisitely pretty locks, a complexion of Dresden china, tall, slender, dignified, received me in her little sitting room, where, beside a glowing fire of coals, she was awaiting me. About this time last year (1935) she was experiencing the tribulation of seeing her garden being washed away by a torrent of rushing waters, which tore a new ravine, 150 to 200 feet deep, beside her home; and into which one of her buildings, undermined by the waters, fell. At a cost of fifty thousand dollars, the Provincial Government filled it in again with earth in 1935. This incident followed the severe snow storm of January 1935, which stopped street car traffic in Vancouver from one to three days. Mrs. Lefevre welcomed me, and after a time, conversation turned to the remarkable experiences of her life of fifty years in Vancouver.

ONE OF THE FIRST WOMEN TO CROSS ROCKIES BY C.P.R. TRAIN, JUNE 1886. MRS. HARRY ABBOTT.

Mrs. Lefevre: "I came to British Columbia after the 'Fire,' about two weeks after; *before* the first passenger train which arrived at Port Moody." (4 July 1886.) "Mrs. Abbott, wife of the first superintendent of the C.P.R. in Vancouver, with her family, were with me, and Mr. Abbott sent his private car to meet us in the mountains, and we came on down to Port Moody, and then by boat to Vancouver. Mrs. Abbott went on to Victoria, as they thought it would be better to go there, but I decided to stay in Vancouver with Dr. Lefevre. We came through the mountains in the daytime only, as the road bed was not yet in good order, and it was perhaps dangerous to travel at night; anyway it was more judicious to travel in the daytime."

SUNNYSIDE HOTEL.

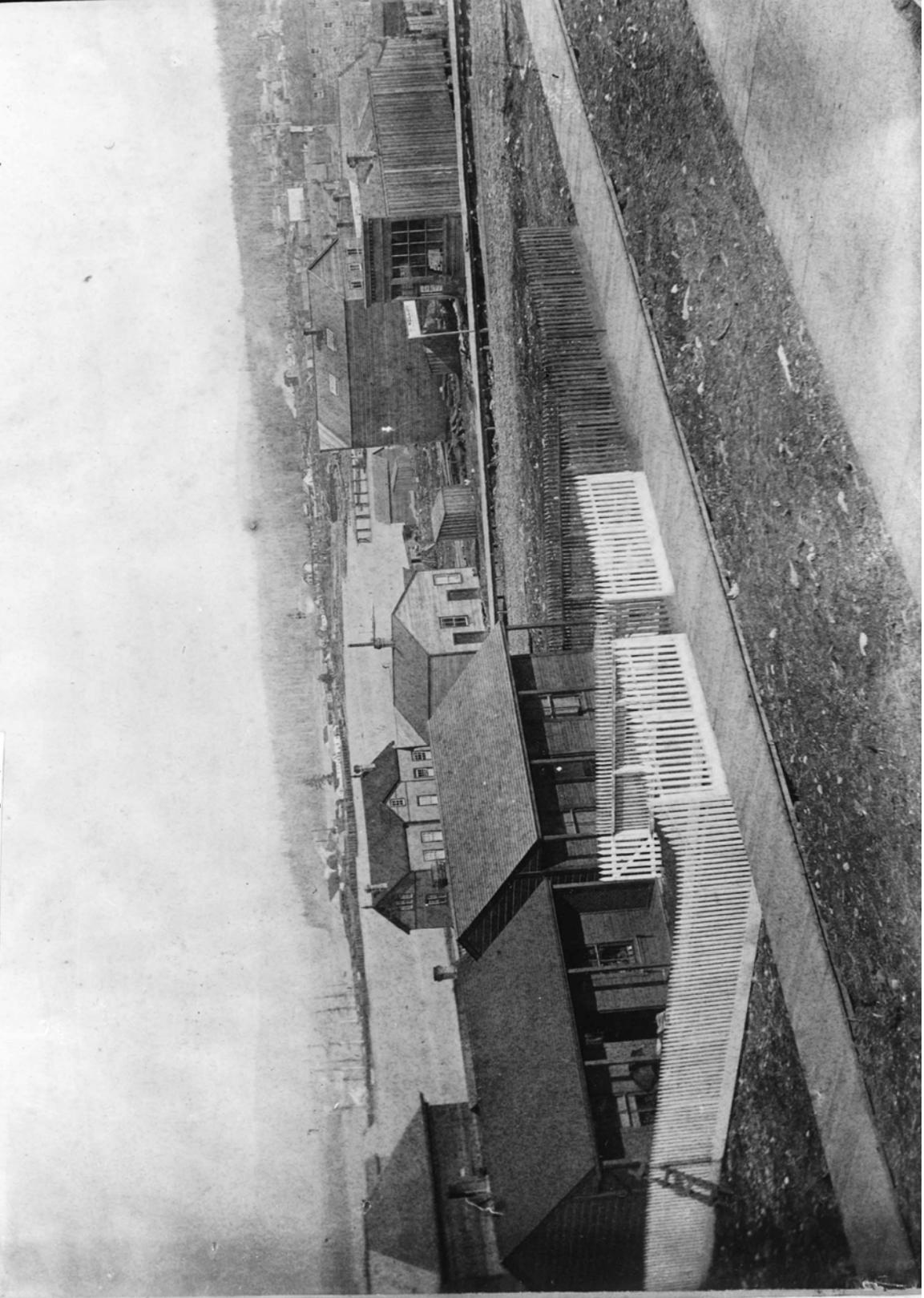
"At first we lived in a hotel on Water Street; I forget the name." (Probably Sunnyside, where all C.P.R. officials stayed.) "Then after about six weeks, Dr. Lefevre got a little cottage built on Hastings Street" (north side) "near Seymour Street—the Leland Hotel was almost opposite across the street, and we lived there until our house on the" (north west) "corner of Hastings and Granville—over the cliff—was built; it was where the Customs House is now." (See photo P. Str. 128, N. 88.)

FIRST SALE C.P.R. LOTS.

"Did you ever hear of how they stayed up all night waiting for the C.P.R. Land Office to open in the morning?"

City Archivist: Yes, Mr. Graveley told me. I will read you what he told me. (Read about Mr. Ferguson having his hand on the door knob, etc.; Graveley conversations.) Mrs. Lefevre smiled, but at that moment there was an interruption, and the subject was dropped. The C.P.R. Land and other offices were in the wooden Ferguson Block, corner of Carrall and Powell streets, and was burned in the "Fire" [of] 1886.

Hastings St at Seymour, spring 1887. L to R: Roof, White Swan Hotel, Cottage (white fence), F.C. Immes, Cottage, (dark fence) Dr & Mrs J.M. Lefevre, C.P.R. offices on Cordova St, Hastings Mill, Cookhouse, Store, School R.H. Alexander residence, "Princess Louise Tree" has disappeared, C.P.R. line & trestle in position, City Wharf at Carrall being built, Capt. H.A. Millen's real estate office on Seymour (white sign), City Hall on Powell St (white square), Water from wells, No sewerage, dirt earth outhouses, Hastings St natural earth with six foot plank sidewalk, and 20 foot plank road. Photo presented by Dr E.W. Morrison, Lefevre Block, now Empire Bldg, 603 Hastings St W, erected here Oct. 1889, by Dr Lefevre.



Item # EarlyVan_v5_011

[photo annotation:]

Hastings St. at Seymour, Spring 1887. L to R: Roof, White Swan Hotel. Cottage (white fence) F.C. Innes. Cottage (dark fence) Dr. & Mrs. J.M. Lefevre. C.P.R. offices on Cordova St. Hastings Mill, Cookhouse, Store, School. R.H. Alexander residence. "Princess Louise Tree" has disappeared. C.P.R. line & trestle in position. City Wharf at Carrall being built. Capt. H.A. Mellon's real estate office on Seymour (white sign.) City Hall on Powell St. (white square.) Water from wells. No sewerage, dry earth outhouses. Hastings St. natural earth with six foot plank sidewalk, and 20 foot plank road. Photo presented by Mrs. E.W. Morrison. Lefevre Block, now Empire Bldg., 603 Hastings St. W., erected here Oct. 1889, by Dr. Lefevre. City Archives.

GENERAL POST OFFICE. CUSTOMS HOUSE.

"They offered us \$20,000 for our home, but we did not know what they wanted it for; I think they afterwards sold it for about \$70,000 or \$90,000 for a post office."

LAND SALES.

City Archivist: Here is an old tax notice for the year 1889 for the property owned by Dr. Lefevre. Major Akroyd, of Innes, Richards and Akroyd, found it and gave it to me. You see the taxes on his property for 1889 were \$404.77; the same property today pays \$69,086.50.

Mrs. Lefevre: "Yes, but Dr. Lefevre did not buy all that property; he just paid one deposit on it, and held it for resale."

THE "BATTLE OF THE HOSES." SMALL POX IN VANCOUVER. FIRE BRIGADE.

"Did you ever hear of the 'Battle of the Hoses'? That's what I call it. You see, we had small pox; they said it came from Victoria, and when Capt. Johnny Irving came in with his boat from Victoria, the police would not let the passengers land. Capt. Irving was going to land his passengers, but they sent for the fire brigade, and turned the hose on his lines to stop him, but the Captain retaliated by turning on his steam hose on them. The firemen won, and Capt. Irving had to take his boat up the Inlet. I think he went up to Hastings Townsite.

"WATER STREET DANCES."

"They called them 'balls,' but they weren't balls. (Mrs. Lefevre had been, as a young and beautiful lady, a guest of Their Excellencies, Lord and Lady Dufferin; visited them at their Government House, Ottawa, before coming to the coast.) "They were held in some room on Water Street or Powell Street, or somewhere down there. There was no dressing rooms, and the decorations were so funny; first a gum boot, then an umbrella, then a lantern, and a gum boot and an umbrella and a lantern; alternately hung on the walls all around the dance hall as decorations."

THE STORM OF JANUARY 1935.

City Archivist: Mrs. Lefevre, may I offer my congratulations on your fortitude and courage at this time last year? You had the sympathy of all Vancouver at that time of tribulation.

Mrs. Lefevre: "Thank you, but the police did not notify me to leave; that's not correct; they have repaired the damage pretty well, but they cannot put my beautiful garden back again."