

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

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right opposite the door of the house I live in. The old man was holding down one of the Squatter claims, not for himself, he was representing some party, I don't know who. I took no part in the incorporation of the city of Vancouver, do not know how they raised the money, I have never been much of a public man and as I told you we sold out soon after the fire and I worked a good deal on the Fraser till 1890, when I came here. So Mrs. Eldon is still living. I must try and see her if I get down to Vancouver this year which I hope to. It is some five years since I have been a night away from home. I had many a good meal in the Strathie restaurant. Sorry to hear Dr. Brydone-Jack is so sick, rather strange I was looking for Capt. Scoullar's address the day before I saw his death in the paper, and Mr Tisdall gone as well. I got quite a shock when I heard over the radio he was dead. I hardly ever went to Vancouver without having a hearty handshake with him. All my people are dead. I am the last of the line, the name dies with me. How I should enjoy a few minutes talk with you. I may look you up this summer if I get to Vancouver. What a lovely poem you sent me. [*J. Francis Bursill's "Tis infamy to die and not be missed."*] I am fond of poetry. I must try and memorize it for it might be useful at some of the meetings I preside at. Rather strange that a poor educated man like me should be called on so often to act as chairman at all sorts of meetings, one reason given me was that I do not weary the people with long speeches; I could not make a long speech if I tried, but I have a good clear voice which can be heard at the far end of the room.

Again thanking you for your kind letters.

Yours sincerely,

[signed] Wm. Mashiter.

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH MR. WILLIAM MASHITER OF SQUAMISH, NOW AGED 87, WHO IS ON A VISIT TO VANCOUVER FOR THE FIRST TIME IN SEVERAL YEARS, AND WHO CALLED AT THE CITY ARCHIVES, CITY HALL, HASTINGS STREET, ACCOMPANIED BY HIS NIECE, WHO LIVES WITH MRS. J. GREGG, 1152 WEST HASTINGS STREET, SEY. 821, SEPTEMBER 1936.

Mr. Mashiter looks very active for his age, and says that this summer he cut, then raked, then stacked, all his own hay, had a couple of students help him throw it on the wagon, but put it in the barn himself; a remarkable feat for one so aged. He formerly had a store at his farm, one mile from the Squamish dock, but has discontinued it.

CORDOVA STREET. FRASER AVENUE (CEMETERY ROAD.) MOUNTAIN VIEW CEMETERY.

Mr. Mashiter said: "I was here before the 'Fire,' and when the C.P.R. came through some of us who had 'squatted' got their lots, but I was grouped together with others, and they did me out of mine; Vancouver did not treat me very well. I had been in Oakland in the land boom, then heard of the boom in Seattle, and went to that, then finally heard of the boom in Vancouver, and came on up, but afterwards left Vancouver, and went to Squamish; lost most of my property for taxes when the depression came after 1930, but still have some property in Vancouver.

"Talk about mud. Why, Cordova Street from the C.P.R. Depot up the slope was worse than the road from the dock at Squamish ever was; it took two horses all they could do to haul 600 pounds up that slope; and, out the cemetery road" (now Fraser Avenue) (see F.W. Hart) "it took four horses to haul a coffin out. Why, we couldn't even get lumber out to Mount Pleasant."

MOUNT PLEASANT.

"A man with a wife and eight children wanted me to build him a shelter, anything that would do to shelter them, he wanted it quick, so I built it out of cedar shakes; you could not get lumber out there for the mud. So I just took a cedar tree and split shakes; he told me on a Saturday night to build it, and I had it finished by Wednesday night; just three rooms, not much of a place, but it was a shelter, and I got the shakes right there on the ground."

SQUAMISH. MOODYVILLE SAWMILL. CATTLE. PEMBERTON MEADOWS.

“The land on which I have my place was preempted in 1874 by Van Bremner of the Moodyville Sawmill. There was a shortage of cattle; the sawmill wanted beef to feed their loggers, and they drove cattle out from the Pemberton Meadows, and when they got to Squamish, turned them out in the fine grass meadows; it was a fine place, high grass, so Sue Moody decided to preempt the place, and got 410 acres. Sue Moody went down in the *Pacific*, and after that the place went to pot; the 410 acres lay vacant; then George Magee bought it, dyked it, and made a hay ranch; he was logging too, and wanted beef; then he sold it, and I have a portion of it.

“He gave me ten acres to stop on it and look after it, and I have it yet. It is a bit too big for what I want, but too small to cut up.”

NORWEGIANS.

“Squamish ought to have done better. There has been a lot of bungling. They settled a lot of Norwegians there, but they put them in an impossible place, and when the water came, there was four feet of water in their houses. Then they moved the Norwegians to Plumper’s Pass, and finally they went to Bella Bella, and are there yet.

“There was a time when we got 300 tons of timothy at Squamish, and some people wanted to start a creamery; they had 60 head of cattle, and plenty of money, \$10,000 or \$12,000, and they wanted a lease of the Indian Reserve from the Indian Department, but the Indian Department would not give it to them, and that industry was lost, too, to Squamish. There has been a lot of bungling by the government.”

Mr. Mashiter died January or February 1938 and at Squamish. The exact date is 10 January 1938.

[LETTERS FROM R. MATHISON.]

Kelowna, B.C.
June 9, 1936.

Dear Major:

I ought to sell this to the highest bidder, but I’ll give it to you.

DOMINION DAY, 1886. ROBERT KERR.

This is the only copy in existence, and is a proof of the first page of the program that was to have been gotten out for Vancouver’s Celebration of Dominion Day, 1886, but which was prevented being held on account of “The Fire” of June 13, that year. Later on, when in business for myself, I printed raffle tickets for the “Robert Kerr” but it did not take place either, as the vessel was sold to the C.P.R. for use as a coal hulk. There was no numbering machine in town then, and I changed the form on the press to number each ticket. The official program for this year should incorporate this (1886 proof) in miniature with an imprint “Weekly Herald Job Department,” and a short note of explanation.

DAILY NEWS. LIQUOR LICENSES.

If the “Sun” want to be up-to-date, they should reproduce the “Daily News” of June 20, 1886, a copy of which I sent you, and two pages of three columns each with the name of the paper, names of proprietors, the date line and forty-one applications for liquor licenses. Bob Harkness rustled the copy for it on Saturday, and it was printed in the “Columbian” office that night as no Sunday work was allowed in that office, and to comply with the law they had to be published by 20th. Fifty copies were printed, but most of them, Bob put under a log.

Sometime when I’m in Vancouver ask me for a fish story on him. Bill Lewis was foreman of the “Columbian” at that time, but for years past has been a “bee” man out from New Westminster. If he is still alive, and I think he is, you ought to meet with him as he should be able to give you some old time stuff.

With kindest regards,