

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, B.I., Hockings, New Brighton, End of the Road, Maxie's, George Black's, Hastings Hotel, Brighton Hotel, "The Most Fashionable Watering Place in British Columbia,"
 Summer, 1884. B.I., Burrard Inlet, site of our first post office, customs, telegraph, ferry landing, playground, seaside resort. "Vancouver Daily Advertiser," May 10, 1884



Looking west from George Black's Wharf, a foreground, built 1884. Summer resort for New West'm'r. Old houses, 1850s. Mouth of creek, 27. File driver. Cattle yard. Proposed C.P.R. line around bluff. Fishing. Boating. Bathing. Beach, 1884. Summer cottages, Westminister families. f. S. Hall, 1884. Mootville

Item # EarlyVan_v5_004

[photo annotation:]

Hastings, B.I., Hockings, New Brighton, End of the Road, Maxie's, George Black's, Hastings Hotel, Brighton Hotel, "The Most Fashionable Watering Place in British Columbia." Summer, 1884, B.I., Burrard Inlet, site of our first post office, customs, telegraph, ferry landing, playground, seaside resort. "Vancouver Daily Advertiser," May 10, 1884[—]

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH MR. A.A. LANGLEY, 5 JANUARY 1938.

Who was born 11 January 1859, came to British Columbia about the first of March 1882; now of 1769 Robson Street, where he resides on his return from the Vancouver General Hospital after six weeks medical care for failing eyesight; the left eye is blind; the other going blind; both compel him to wear dark glasses, and at times he suffers considerable pain. I was received by his granddaughter, about 17, and also her father, Mr. Langley's son.

FIRST VICTORIA-BURRARD INLET FERRY. S.S. MAUDE.

Mr. Langley said: "I'll tell you, Major, about the first regular boat from Victoria to Burrard Inlet.

"It was in the fall of 1882, or 1883, I'm not sure which. It was started with a small side-wheel steamer, the *Maude*, Capt. Holmes; he had little earrings in his ears; one in each ear; little things; I don't know what they were; don't know if they were diamonds, or what; he was an old man then; over sixty, and he started with that boat, the *Maude*; little sidewheeler, and he ran it until Capt. John Irving—he died last year—started up with the *Princess Louise*; that was after "the Fire," I think; I won't be positive about that, but it was after "the Fire" (13 June 1886) "that I was working on the *Princess Louise* for four months, looking after the bar.

"The old *Maude* used to start from Victoria at seven in the morning, once a week; get here at seven in the evening; very slow; twelve hours. She did not come further than the Hastings Sawmill; she tied up at the Hastings Mill store wharf. George Black was living in Gastown then, and David Withrow was running his 'Brighton Hotel' at Hastings. I cannot remember the *Maude* ever going up the inlet to George Black's; she just stopped at the Hastings store."

GEORGE BLACK. DAVID WITHROW. DAN FARMER.

"There was a fellow had a little scow..."

Major Matthews: A little scow propelled with sweeps?

Mr. Langley: "Yes, that's the fellow; little scow with sweeps." (Note: Calvert Simson, storekeeper, Hastings Mill, conversation 14 December 1937, speaks of Dan Farmer, who picked up freight for settlers of Gastown and took it along on his little hand-propelled scow to their floats.) "He would take freight on his little scow down to Gastown and then bring ours along to us at our wharf, George Black's" (Hastings.)

S.S. PRINCESS LOUISE. S.S. R.P. RITHET. S.S. WILSON G. HUNT.

"Then the *Princess Louise* came along, and sometimes the *R.P. Rithet* when the *Princess Louise* was under repair.

"I landed at Victoria about the first of March 1882—I told you about that before—with the whole family of us, and then in a few days we went up to Salt Spring Island on the *Wilson G. Hunt*; she was a sidewheeler too, but a bigger boat than the *Maude*. I never actually travelled on the *Maude*, but she had fairly good accommodation for passengers—as accommodation went in those days. We settled on Salt Spring Island, and I stayed there until that fall.

"There was a Capt. Douglas lived there, and he had a little schooner, and we wanted about 8,000 feet of lumber for a house, so we chartered her to get it from the Hastings Sawmill; the schooner was not very big, but she had been up north seal hunting, and was big enough to carry 10,000 feet of lumber, above and below; so I got the job to carry the lumber, and my wife and I came up on the schooner to Burrard Inlet; we sailed through the Narrows; no tug; and I loaded the lumber at the Hastings Mill onto the schooner, and then the wife and I stayed here."

S.S. MAUDE.

Major Matthews: What makes you think the *Maude* was the first ferry boat between here and Victoria?

S.S. LORNE. S.S. PILOT. S.S. ALEXANDER.

Mr. Langley: "Well, she was. I don't know how long she stayed on the run, but it was a couple of years anyway; I could not say positively. There was no boat, no regular boat when I came here. The tugs used to come and go from Moodyville. There was the tug *Lorne*, and the tug *Pilot*, and there was a sidewheeler

tug *Alexander*, she was a powerful boat, too. But there was no regular passenger service; people had to catch the old sidewheeler *Enterprise* at New Westminster if they wanted to go to Victoria.”

FOREST FIRES. HOLLYBURN. WEST VANCOUVER.

“There were no big forest fires in my time; none big enough for me to remember, except one, it was in the fall of 1883 or fall of 1884; there was a big fire along West Vancouver; along Hollyburn, where those British Pacific people are making a place; we used to go out, along Hastings, at night, and look at it; all that timber along that ridge is second growth. There were no big fires around Burnaby Lake; not in my time.”

HASTINGS, B.I. BRIGHTON HOTEL. GEORGE BLACK’S.

“There was a lot of people used to come out to George Black’s hotel from New Westminster. I have seen one hundred people sit down to dinner in the hotel of a Sunday; oh, there was a lot of people came to Hastings of a Sunday or holiday. Did you say you counted eighty in that photograph; there would be all that on a busy day, and more. There was no store west of Black’s hotel, but there was a Chinese wash house, and the slaughter house, and cattle pen, and a man named Bruce” (sic); “his daughter married Chris Behnsen; Behnsen lives in Victoria now; Bruce” (sic) “had a little sawmill.”

Major Matthews: Looking back over your long life, with all its tribulations, what do you think of it all. Do you suppose the world will ever live through so wonderful an age again; a wild wilderness of forest grown into a great city, and all the marvellous inventions since you were a boy; what do you think?

Mr. Langley: “I was just going to say that. I don’t know, if I was offered the chance to go through it all again, if I would accept; the struggle, the disappointments, the planning, and the scheming, and the failures. But I think just as wonderful things are to come as we have seen.

“At first we used to chop the trees down with an axe, and it took almost all day to cut a big one; then we got saws. At first we had oxen, and they were slow, and then they got horses, and then donkey engines to drag the logs to water, and that’s the way it developed, and then we got electricity and all that came with it, and I suppose we will go on developing in the future in the same way.”

Major Matthews: Do you think we’ve got any more sense?

Mr. Langley: “No; none to spare. I’d rather be living in those days, though; there was no unemployment, no relief, and no nickels; no nickels and coppers; nothing less than ten cents.”

I rose—after an hour’s visit—to go; it was obvious he was tiring; and shook hands with the feeble, kindly old gentleman, once the manager of “the Most Fashionable Watering Place in British Columbia,” George Black’s Brighton Hotel, Hastings, Burrard Inlet, and who voted at our first civic election. His son and granddaughter escorted me to the door.

The *Maude* was carrying passengers and freight regularly to Port Moody from Victoria as late as the end of March 1884, but the *Princess Louise* is described as “the regular liner” as early as 12 February 1884. The *Port Moody Gazette* of 29 March 1884 describes them as “the C.P.N. Co.’s steamers.”