

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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forced him out; he squatted right on the beach; there was trouble, and they were going to arrest him. Then we moved over to Prior Street to some little old cottages, still there.

“Father helped to grade Georgia Street in front of the Hotel Vancouver.” (The Council let the contract for this work on 19 July 1887.) “The work was done by John Clendenning.” (See photo No. ? of Mr. J.I. Smith, also see B.C. Electric Railway *Buzzer*, 1935.)

FIRST STREET CARS.

“When the first street cars arrived, they side tracked the flat cars down at the first C.P.R. roundhouse on Pender Street back of the present B.C. Electric, and tried to unload them, but were making a mess of it. They asked me how much I wanted to do it. I said sixty dollars. They were little cars—just two and a half tons. So I got a dozen Chinamen, and I had them off in an hour and a half or two hours; then I gave the Chinamen a dollar each.”

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH GEORGE FRED UPHAM, 30 DECEMBER 1937.

FOREST FIRES. WESTMINSTER ROAD. KINGSWAY. FALSE CREEK ROAD. “ROYAL OAK.” “PIG AND WHISTLE.”

Mr. Upham said: “I don’t recall any big forest fires around here after I came in 1885; there has always been little patches burning here or there in summer, but I cannot remember anything especially noticeable.

“What I do recall is that when I was working at the Royal City Planing Mills on Carrall Street, I was to be best man at Harry Berry’s wedding to Alice Howay at New Westminster, so I got a horse and rode over, and, well, I didn’t get lost, but for a mile or so, there was no road.” (Note: Mrs. Berry died in 1888.) “There had been a trail at one time, but it was so grown over you could not find it.

“There was a clearing out there, somewhere about the ‘Royal Oak’ or the ‘Pig and Whistle’; about a mile or more of it; all the forest had gone; you could see a long way through the small trees; lots of oregon grape, blackberries, stumps and stone; dreary sort of place with hundreds of white spikes of dead trees sticking up in all directions; a big fire must have gone through there some time long before 1885 because all the dead trees were whitening.

“But down around Vancouver, I cannot remember any big forest fire; lots of little ones when people were clearing out Grandview, Mount Pleasant, and Kerrisdale.”

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH GEORGE FRED UPHAM, WHO KINDLY CALLED AT THE CITY ARCHIVES, FRIDAY, 7 JANUARY 1938.

THOS. H. BOYD. ARRIVAL FIRST TRAIN, 23 MAY 1887. GRANVILLE STREET. CORDOVA STREET.

Mr. Upham: “I was talking to Tom Boyd yesterday, and he was telling me that he saw the first train come into Vancouver, May 23rd 1887.

“He told me he had the contract to plank Granville Street so that they could get up and down from the C.P.R. wharf where the train stopped under the bank” (Howe Street), “and they had to hurry up like mad to get it finished before the train arrived, and Mr. Boyd laughed as he said, ‘We just drove the last spike in the planks as the train pulled in to the station.’”

Mr. Boyd will be 80 years old tomorrow, 8 January 1938.