

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

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MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH GEORGE F. UPHAM AT CITY ARCHIVES, 10 MARCH 1937.

OPERA HOUSE. GRANVILLE, B.I.

Mr. Upham said: "The 'Opera House' which Mr. Hedley Otton of San Rafael, California, sends you an account of, was a rough two-storey shed on what is now Trounce Alley, but then the lane to the stables at the back of the Deighton House and Jonathan Miller's court house on Water Street. It was between and behind Miller's and Johnston's house, which was between Miler's and the 'Deighton.'

"It was a place with bare bunks on the ground floor, and if you had your blankets, they would let you sleep in it at fifty cents a night. Upstairs was a dance hall, just a roughish sort of room; hold about twenty-five couples; coal oil lamps, wood stove and cord wood; dance there in anything you liked, boots, moccasins, logger's caulks; anything you liked to, it was all the same. Ask Harry Chase; he knows."

JOSEPH MANNION.

"Joe Mannion's first wife, of course, was an Indian, but his second wife was white, and a fine good woman, too, she was. She brought up those stepchildren well; she looked after them wonderfully and properly; no woman living could have done it better; one is now Mrs." (Dr.) "H.A. Christie."

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH GEO. F. UPHAM, 1125 WEST 12TH AVENUE, VANCOUVER, 7 APRIL 1937.

FOWLS AND THEIR EGGS. EARLY STREET CARS.

Mr. Upham said: "What do I know about chickens in the early days of Vancouver? Well, they were the usual barnyard variety; mostly Plymouth Rocks, or Black Minorca. The Minorcas were wild birds. Everyone had hens in their back yards; sometimes they got out.

"I remember one time Alex Struthers told me someone had moved out of a house down on Haro Street near Bute Street, and that a couple of hens had been left; the hens were 'sitting' out in the clearing. So I got a box that night and went down and I got a hen and thirteen chickens; it gave me a bit of a start in life. I did not look for the other one; thought I had done well enough. Then soon after, my mother-in-law gave me a Plymouth rooster and twelve Plymouth hens; that would be about 1891.

"The first Black Spanish I ever heard of in Vancouver, or ever saw here, was one that Dr. Fowler brought here. He came up from San Francisco in 1886, and two or three years after he was living in Sedro-Wooley, or Bellingham, and he and his wife brought a pair of Black Spanish hens here from some place in Washington."

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH MR. JAMES EDWARD SMITH, 1630 CHARLES STREET, VANCOUVER, 3 MAY 1935.

STREET CARS.

"I was the first baby to ride on the street cars of Vancouver. The story goes that when the first street car came out of the Prior Street barn, that Mr. Snyder, our next door neighbour, grasped me from my mother's arms, and said as he did so, 'He's going to be the first baby in Vancouver to ride on a street car.' Mother is said to have protested that my face was dirty, and that I was not dressed. But Mr. Snider said 'that did not matter. Car was coming; no time to wait,' jumped on the car in the middle of the block—it stopped for him—went a short way, and got off.

"The car in question was out for a trial spin from Prior Street as far as Hastings Street; Westminster Ave. was a bit of a rough thoroughfare then." (He may mean Front Street barn; don't think Prior Street barn was built; the Vancouver Street Railway's Carhouse was on Front Street early in 1890. The *World* panorama map of 1890 shows no buildings on Prior Street, but does show a siding turning in there.)

YALETOWN.

"My father came to Vancouver about 1887, and first went to live in Yaletown. Then he squatted where the B.C. Electric Railway Company located their first barn, but the Vancouver Electric Railway Company

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.