

Early Vancouver

Volume Six

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Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1940-1945.

Supplemental to volumes one, two, three, four and five collected in 1931, 1932, 1934, 1939 and 1944.

About the 2011 Edition

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SUMMIT HILL. STEEP HILL. NORTH ARM ROAD. GRANVILLE STREET SOUTH.

Conversation with Miss M.E. McCleery, 26 June 1940: "Summit Hill was the highest; up hill, over the top, and down again. Steep Hill was a different place. Summit Hill was at 37th Avenue; Steep Hill starts at about 15th Avenue. These hills meant that the horses walked, and had to pull."

CONVERSATION WITH GEORGE WASHINGTON JAMIESON, AND MRS. JAMIESON, 368 EAST SEVENTH AVENUE, WHO VERY KINDLY CALLED AT THE CITY ARCHIVES THIS MORNING, AND I TYPED AS HE TALKED, 15 DECEMBER 1941.

GENEALOGY.

Mr. Jamieson said: "I was born near Bowmanville, Ontario, eighty-three years ago, in 1858, on 21st October; my father was James, and my mother Mary Jane; you see, I was brought up with my grandparents, but Father came from Waterloo, Ontario, where he had been a farmer; originally they came from England. There were five brothers and two sisters in the family; just one left now, brother, who lives in Seattle; retired, William, unmarried."

CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY.

"I came up to Vancouver to teach, in 1888, part way by C.P.R.; I had an awful time getting here; the C.P.R., you know, they came so slowly that every day I walked half a mile and then jumped on the train, a kind of, it wasn't a modern train at all, a little better than a freight train. I went to school at Toronto, went to Normal School, and the Toronto University; I helped another fellow through to get his B.A., and I did not go back. Not married at that time; I was thirty years old then."

NORTH ARM SCHOOL, 1888. MUNICIPAL HALL, RICHMOND.

"Oh, say, that brings us to that point. Have you got a picture of that school in the mud hole.

"This picture here" (No. C.V. P. Out. 254, N. Out. 100) "this building is both Municipal Hall and School, But this is someone else here as teacher. That's Mr. Kinney; I taught after him. He took ill, and he went down California; that would be pretty nearly the first of 1889. I had all these children, Sexsmith, Vermilyea, and Sweets, here in the photo."

SEA ISLAND. SEXSMITH.

"The school went down a lot, and I went over to Sea Island and brought over seven or eight children, and at night took them home again in the boat; went over in the boat in the morning and got them at a bit of a wharf on Sea Island, and took them back at night. At the time I boarded with a family; you see, at that time Sexsmith had a lot of houses, and I forget the name of the family who lived in one of them."

SLATES. BLACKBOARDS.

"When we opened the school in the morning the first thing we did was, one of the pupils lit the fire, cordwood; you know we got our cordwood across the river; it was all bush then; you cannot hardly imagine what it was like, fir cordwood and a stove heater, and a fine lot of boys and girls. We had home made desks; two in a desk, and I had a very decent—for the time—'throne' to stand on. And the children all worked on their slates. No blackboards around the wall, not a blackboard in the place at first, but after a while I got the school board to put up a four by four blackboard on the wall. The youngsters used to drink their water out of the ditch; we did not have a well nor piped water; there was no one around there at that time; the nearest building would be a quarter of a mile away. The children came to school, say, do you know, between you and me, I had some of them come five miles. That five miles? Capital T E R R A capital N O V A; now this Terra Nova was a little village right down on the Fraser, and the children came up the river bank. I was the only teacher that could get them to walk that five miles, and they walked back again. The building was about, I imagine, about 300 feet from the river bank, and sometimes some of them did come by boat, but only sometimes.

"You see, there was nothing around there much; no wild animals, nothing but small brush wood.

“When we started in the morning I rang the bell on the school steps. The children were all around out in the grass playing, and, as for the mud, the mud on their boots, they had to carry it with them” (into the school.) “The first thing in the morning was the Lord’s Prayer. After that I don’t recall what we did, but I think we took arithmetic first; the children wanted to get the worst over first.

“About half the children went home to lunch, and the other half brought it with them, and, if it was raining, ate it in the school. And if it were not, in the yard, but the yard wasn’t fenced; they had the whole of Lulu Island for the school yard. Then we closed up about 3 p.m. and all went home.”

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL.

“The school in the mud hole on Lulu Island, it was afterwards used as a Municipal Hall at one end, and school at the other. And say, I’ll tell you a good one. The trustees were, some of them, members of the wonderful Municipal crowd, and every Friday afternoon I went in with the Councillors to help the Chinamen get their dykes. They, the Chinamen, paid the money for the dykes.

“I taught the other four and a half days, and on one half day, Friday, went into the meeting of the Municipal Council and helped them do their business; I did not take minutes; I just talked.”

CHINESE. DYKES.

“About two hundred Chinese lived close to the school, down river; they were fishing for salmon at the Terra Nova Cannery. Say, do you know that this is fifty-odd years which we are talking about; all this happened fifty-odd years ago, and it is hard to remember.

“The Council meetings took place on Friday afternoon. Well, I used to go in and help them out. I’ll tell you, there was a lot of figuring to do that they weren’t too good at, and say, afterwards the Chinamen wouldn’t take a dyke until my name was on it, on the contract; you see, some of the Chinamen would contract to build two hundred feet of dyke, and some four hundred feet, and they wanted my name on the paper before they would accept the contract. We didn’t bother with law then, but the secretary and I would work it out how many cubic feet; you had to do that for the Chinamen, and then the Chinamen would accept it as settled and go to work.”

Major Matthews: Did you have any quarrels in the Council?

Mr. Jamieson: “No. We didn’t; always peaceful every time. I’ll tell you, between you and I, they did not talk much; they came in to do their business, and as soon as they did it, they went home.”

At this point Mr. Jamieson tired, said, “That’s enough for today.” So I read it over, while Mr. and Mrs. Jamieson listened, and at the conclusion, he exclaimed, “Good.” We gave him an 8 x 10 photo of his old school, and both departed smiling.

J.S. Matthews.