

Early Vancouver

Volume Six

By: Major J.S. Matthews, V.D.

2011 Edition (Originally Published 1945)

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

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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Note: photographs C.V.P. Out. 250, also C.V.P. Out. 178, and C.N. 505, taken 8 February 1891 were taken at the opening; one shows a large group of workmen; another a large group of officials, including Mr. Abbott, Mr. Cambie, Mr. Armstrong, Mayor Oppenheimer, etc., etc., etc., and singularly, three ladies.

Mr. Ditmars: (continuing) "Mr. McGillivray built the New Westminster Water Works, and the plates for the pipes were brought out from Scotland, and fabricated at his shops on Lulu Island. W.H. Armstrong was this superintendent; Mr. Morrison was the foreman of his shops. It was in those shops that were used the first pneumatic hammers in British Columbia, and the first hydraulic riveting machine."

BITUMINOUS ROCK. ASPHALT, VANCOUVER STREETS.

"In 1891, Mr. McGillivray had a contract for paving certain streets in Vancouver with bituminous rock; it came from California; they called it bituminous rock in those days; we call it asphalt now."

CONVERSATION WITH T.W. BOYD, 1203 WEST BROADWAY, PARTNER, BOYD AND CLANDENNING, 9 FEBRUARY 1938.

"Then after we had the clearing contract, clearing and slashing the forest off the C.P.R. Townsite, that is, D.L. 541, we had the contract for clearing Cordova, Hastings, Pender from Carrall to Burrard; all between Pender and Cordova, right down to the C.P.R. station, and also clearing Granville Street—everything off Granville Street right down to False Creek. McGillivray planked Hastings Street, but we had the sidewalks."

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH MRS. SAMUEL BLAIR, 1333 RICHARDS, WHERE SHE HAS BEEN LIVING FOR THIRTY-SIX YEARS IN THE SAME HOUSE, WHO KINDLY CALLED AT THE CITY ARCHIVES ACCOMPANIED BY TWO OR THREE OF HER GRANDDAUGHTERS, 26 JULY 1940.

SAMUEL BLAIR.

Mrs. Blair said: "Mr. Blair worked for the city for thirty-five years, and we have lived in our home, which we built ourselves, at 1333 Richards Street, for thirty-six years, perhaps it is thirty-seven."

ST. ANDREW'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. FIRST WEDDING.

"We were married in the little school room on Georgia Street which served as the St. Andrew's Church before St. Andrew's was built, on the 9th April 1889; ours was the first marriage in the congregation of St. Andrew's—Rev. E.D. McLaren had just come to Vancouver, and he, fine man, married us. He started Chalmers United Church."

WATER FROM WELLS.

"When we went to St. Andrew's church, we had to take a lantern with us. We lived in the 1200 block when we were first married, and there was two planks about that wide; when we went to church and we had to keep on those planks; if you did not keep on the planks you went down, bang, in the ditch.

"And we got our water from a well in the back yard; dragged it up with a rope; the well was quite deep, too, and of course if you wanted a Saturday night bath in a tub, why, you had to go and haul the water up first."

RICHARDS STREET. BLACKBERRIES.

"When we went to live on Richards Street, I used to go out and pick blackberries right off the back of our lot, and off Pacific Street too; we used to take the child on one arm, and the pail on the other, and pick berries right on Pacific Street and on Richards Street.

"We have five children, two boys and three girls; all are living in Vancouver, and all have their own homes, and they have six children. Our eldest child was:

1. Francis Blair, married to Miss Edwards; they have a son and a daughter.
2. Thomas Blair, married Miss Thompson, and they have one son.
3. Mrs. Coulter, my daughter Ruby, now Mrs. W.R. Coulter; they have a son and a daughter.

4. Miss Kathleen Blair; she stays at home with me.
5. And the youngest is Eileen, Mrs. D.L. Heaspit; they have one daughter.

“When Mr. Blair died, on the 10th or 11th November 1936, he had one of the largest funerals ever held in the city.”

Note: see page 150, Obituary Book.

[LETTER FROM GEO. BARTLEY.]

3636 West Third Avenue,
Vancouver, B.C.
August 13, 1940.

Major J.S. Matthews, V.D.,
City Archivist.

Dear Major: Your kind letter of August 6 received, for which please accept my sincere thanks—for I am now on your honored list in the City Archives.

Concerning the News-Advertiser, of which we had a brief chat on Monday (Aug. 5), I will add a few further notes.

The Morning Advertiser (daily), five-column and four page paper, was started by Wm. (Billy) Macdougall. It first appeared on May 8, 1886. He used a Washington hand-press (now being used as a proof press in the Vancouver Sun Job Office.)

On June 1, 1886, the Daily News was initiated by R. Harkness (editor) and James Ross, proprietors. After the great fire—The News (No. 12) on June 17 and for several weeks, was printed at the Columbian office, New Westminster, and brought over to Vancouver by horse and rig. Harkness left for California shortly before the printing of the News was resumed in Vancouver.

The late Hon. F.L. Carter-Cotton arrived in Victoria via Port Moody about a month after the Great Fire. In the fall of 1886 he purchased the Advertiser and became its managing-editor.

Early in 1887, I believe Messrs. Gordon and Cotton purchased the News, after which the News and the Advertiser were consolidated and became the News-Advertiser, being issued from the building on Cambie Street, corner of the lane, in the rear of where the present Dominion building is now situated.

An Illustrated Christmas Number of the News-Advertiser on which I worked, was sent to press in the building at the corner of Cambie and Pender Streets. The type was set in the lane office. There was no heat in the new building at the time, and Geo. Pound, Sr., veteran pressman, did the press work on it by putting coal oil lamps under the press for heat. This Christmas Number was supposed to be out about the middle of December, 1889, to catch the Old Country mail, but did not appear till February, 1890. Mr. Cotton never issued another special number. In the Fall of 1897, the Millar & Richards wharfdale press was sold by the News-Advertiser to a paper in Revelstoke. This was the press the Illustrated Christmas News-Advertiser was printed on.

In 1896, the News-Advertiser set up another wharfdale press, similar to the one on which was printed the Christmas number. This machine had been used by the Vancouver Morning Telegram. Mr. R.G. Gallagher, manager of that paper when it failed, took the press to Nanaimo, where he printed a weekly for a few months. Postmaster Jonathan Miller on a foreclosure of mortgage sold the press for \$100 to the News-Advertiser. Afterwards it was sold to Geo. Bartley of the North Vancouver Express for \$700 (now the North Shore Press.)

On April 4, 1910, Mr. Sam Matson, of Victoria, bought the News-Advertiser, but not the building.