

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

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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MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH MRS. WILLIAM BLACK AND HER SISTER, MISS MARY MACDONALD OF 156 EAST EIGHTEENTH AVENUE, VANCOUVER, WHO KINDLY CALLED AT THE CITY ARCHIVES, 2 JULY 1941.

They are the daughters of the late James MacDonald, who came to Vancouver in 1907 and for a time lived in the buildings at the old brickyard on Westminster Road, now Kingsway.

JAMES MACDONALD. BRICKYARD. GARTLEY ROAD. WELWYN STREET.

Mrs. Black said: "My father, James MacDonald, came to Vancouver in 1907, and for a time we lived in the brickyard out towards the old Gladstone Inn on Westminster Road; the brickyard was between Perry Street and Welwyn Street; Welwyn Street used to be Gartley Road, named after an old Orangeman who was the first to live there.

"Dad made our shack from boards which came from the old brickyard. Dad helped to take down the great big smokestack at the brickyard. Father covered our roof with cedar shakes he made himself. He would go to a good big tall spike of a dead cedar, hammer it to see if it was sound or rotten, and then chip it down and split it into cedar shakes. Mother used to get water from the creek at first; we had a big boiler, and we put the water in that and boiled it, and then let it settle, and then used it.

"We used to dip the water out of the creek with a pail. On wash day we would fill up a good big barrel in readiness. Then Dad dug a well."

WATER FROM WELLS.

"The old shack was one of the dwellings belonging to the brickyard, and it was painted, painted red, and we thought that was quite 'classy' to have it painted, to live in a 'painted house.' The Chinamen had lived in it, and when we went into it, it was plastered with grease, that thick" (indicating) "all over the floor; we had to scrub and scrub to get it all off and get the shack clean. It was just a mass of grease. The Chinamen left some of those little bowls which they use to put rice in when they are eating. We thought them funny little things.

"Of course, when we went out at night we had to take a lantern, and Father was working at night, and Mother used to take him something to eat, his midnight lunch; he was working not far away, and one night she took his sandwiches, and she got lost in the trees; we could hear her calling, but we could not find her. When we did she was standing on a burning stump; it was down near the Selkirk School.

"Mother died December 9th 1940, aged 72; Father died November 3rd 1926. There are five children and three grandchildren, all granddaughters.

1. John, who has one daughter, and lives at Britannia Beach.
2. James, who was killed accidentally in 1929.
3. Norman, who has one daughter and lives 13th Avenue West.
4. Elizabeth, that is, myself, Mrs. Wm. Black, 156 East 18th, and I have one daughter.
5. Miss Mary MacDonald, unmarried, the youngest, lives with me.