

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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CONVERSATION WITH MR. W.C. DITMARS, PIONEER, OF 744 WEST HASTINGS STREET, FOR MANY YEARS WITH THE PIONEER CONTRACTING FIRM, ARMSTRONG AND MORRISON, 28 AUGUST 1945.

ROSS AND HOWARD. ARMSTRONG AND MORRISON. B.C. ELECTRIC RAILWAY CO. FRED STEEL, PIONEER.

Major Matthews: Mr. Ditmars, a pioneer, Mr. Fred Steel, and his daughter, Mrs. Boardman, called this morning and left me, for copying, a photo of the southwest corner of Carrall and Hastings streets. It shows a well-paved street, a row of express wagons, horse-drawn, a small shack used as an office, a high building of boards and a sort of smoke stack, apparently on Pender Street. Did Armstrong and Morrison ever heat bituminous rock (asphalt) there?

BITUMINOUS ROCK PAVING, 1891. FIRST ASPHALT PAVING. FIRST PAVING, 1891. CORDOVA STREET. ALEXANDER STREET.

Mr. Ditmars: "They did; it was heated in a kettle out in the yard, against a board fence on Carrall Street, on the site of the present B.C. Electric Railway Building, southwest corner of Hastings and Carrall. It was the first material used for paving streets in Vancouver other than wood planks. I remember them tearing up the wood planks on Cordova Street in readiness for bituminous rock—the first paving in Vancouver other than wood planks—1891, from Granville Street, eastwards on Cordova Street.

"The bituminous rock came by a small sailing schooner from San Louis Obesto" (sic) "in California. It was asphalt mixed with sand, and was put in the top of the heating kettle and pulled out of the bottom and shovelled by hand into two wheeled hand dump carts, and taken to the site to be paved, where it was rolled by hand rollers. The heating in the kettle made it plastic."

DONALD (DAN) MCGILLIVRAY. W.H. ARMSTRONG. ALEX. MORRISON. ARMSTRONG AND MORRISON.

"Dan McGillivray was contractor and W.H. Armstrong" ("Fatty") "was superintendent and Alex. Morrison was foreman. I cannot recall all the streets which were paved, but Robert Armstrong, brother to W.H. Armstrong—he lives at Sardis now—he would know."

ROSS AND HOWARD.

Major Matthews: Mr. Ditmars. Whose building would the tall one be; it looks as though it was on Pender Street behind.

Mr. Ditmars: "That would be Ross and Howard's; at first they had a place down on Alexander Street where Simson, Balkwill and Co. were afterwards, and then they moved over to a place beside Armstrong and Morrison on Carrall Street. I recall, too, that there was a man named Campbell; he had a cobbler's shop on the southwest corner of Carrall and Hastings streets."

B.C. ELECTRIC RAILWAY. HARRY HEMLOW.

"At that time, 1891, the first tram station—red brick one which was pulled down to make way for the present one—had not been erected. The interurban had a little office on the south side of Hastings, just east of Carrall, and Harry Hemlow was in charge."

THE NAME DEADMAN'S ISLAND. JERICO. JERRY'S COVE.

Report of address of R.H. Alexander, manager, Hastings Sawmill, before Canadian Club. 23 February 1911, *Canadian Club Printed Report*, 1910-1911, page 14.

"I was somewhat amused lately to see a legendary Indian story as to the origin of the name 'Deadman's Island.' It has no such poetic origin. The fact is there was no cemetery nearer than New Westminster, and occasional waifs and strays were buried on the island, and from that the mill hands gave it that name. What is known as Jericho, where the Country Club is located, was so called from 'Jerry' Rogers, who had his house and camp there; *someone called it Jericho in fun*, and the name stuck."

Note by JSM: In isolated Burrard Inlet, they had to make fun somehow. Sobriquets was one way, so nearly everyone had a nickname; there were very few who had not.