

Early Vancouver

Volume Seven

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2011 Edition (Originally Published 1956)

Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected between 1931-1956.

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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around a big long building. I don't recall how long, or how the light got in. Some of it came from the fire in the middle."

Note by J.S.M.: This was the Indian village which Lady Dufferin, wife of His Excellency the Governor General—the first one to visit Burrard Inlet—1876, wished to visit after the Vice-Regal party had been welcomed formally on the Hastings Sawmill store wharf. She was escorted up a narrow sinuous trail through the stumps, wide enough for one person to pass along, and met an old Indian woman, bent and mostly skin and bones, known locally as "The Virgin Mary." To the chagrin of the local elite, Lady Dufferin shook hands with her.

ROYAL CITY PLANING MILLS. HASTINGS SAWMILL CO. B.C. MILLS, TIMBER AND TRADING CO.

"They formed the Royal City Planing Mills and took over the Hastings Sawmill, and then the B.C. Mills, Timber and Trading Co. was formed. John Hendry had no plans; he just said, 'Put one machine here, and put that other machine there.' They got into financial trouble. Sweeny, manager of the Bank of Montreal, was one of the directors. They wanted to get rid of R.H. Alexander, but Mr. Sweeny said "No" and "So long as you have an overdraft Alexander must remain on the board"; he had confidence in Alexander. If it had not been for Sweeny the mill would have collapsed."

CALVERT SIMSON.

"I came here in 1884. I left London in November 1883, and reached Victoria in May 1884. I was in Port Chalmers, near Dunedin, New Zealand. Then I reached San Francisco on the ship *Zambesi*, and went down the States to Arizona and all around, and then up to Bend, Oregon, and Walla Walla, Washington. The way I know, roughly, the dates is that I had a draft for seventy pounds, £70, and I cashed ten pounds, £10, in Portland, Oregon, and have the date. I was up the Columbia River, and recall watching them make the loggers take off their boots, and they gave them slippers. The loggers' boots had iron spikes in them, and that ruined the decks. After I reached Victoria in May 1884, I went over to New Westminster, and got a job as night watchman at one dollar a day. The chief night watchman was also a cook, and he used to cook salmon, with all the trimmings, parsley sauce and so on, for our midnight meal. In England we got salmon once a year, and then at two and six a pound, but here the mill hands were fed on it, and that surprised me. I worked for the Dominion Sawmill."

BEN WILSON, 1884. GRANVILLE, B.I., 1884. JOSEPH MANNION.

"Then I got a job with Ben Wilson, storekeeper on the beach, now Water Street, at Granville, now Vancouver. I got sixty dollars a month and found. I stayed at Joe Mannion's Granville Hotel, and Ben Wilson paid Mannion ten dollars a month for my board and room, and the hotel took it out in groceries."

HASTINGS SAWMILL STOREKEEPER.

"Then I went over to the Hastings Sawmill as storekeeper, and continued as such until 1891. But I never did find out the exact date of my arrival at New Westminster."

CONVERSATION WITH MR. CALVERT SIMSON, PIONEER, FORMER STOREKEEPER AT THE HASTINGS SAWMILL, VANCOUVER, WHO CALLED THIS AFTERNOON AT THE CITY ARCHIVES, 9 NOVEMBER 1953.

Mr. Simson came to Burrard Inlet about 1884—sixty-nine years ago—and is now showing signs of becoming frail; he must be nearing ninety.

CAPT. GEO. MARCHANT. S.S. BEAVER.

Major Matthews: Mr. Simson, did you know Captain Marchant of the *Beaver*? What sort of a man was he?

Mr. Simson: "An old drunk. They were all drunk the night the *Beaver* went on the rocks. He used to live at the City Hotel; you know the City Hotel down on Powell Street; third or fourth rate place for those who fitted it. He was drunk most of the time."

Major Matthews: Well, what was the end of it?

Mr. Simson: "His friends supported him."

Note: W.H. Evans, who was an engineer on the *Beaver* at the time of her wreck—see *Early Vancouver*, Matthews, Vol. 6—contradicts Capt. Marchant's declaration before the United States consul that the crew slept on board the night of the wreck. He says he and some others got off, waded ashore, walked through the Park, and were soon back at the Sunnyside Hotel barroom, which they had left when the *Beaver* started out on her voyage to Thurlow Island. The bartender was surprised to see them back so quickly after saying good bye and promising to call in a week.

Mr. Evans told me that it was not the current which was responsible for the wreck—not solely. After they had left the dock it was found they were short of stock on whisky and beer, or both, and the crew persuaded Captain Marchant to go back for a stock. He could not turn around in the Narrows, so waited until he got beyond Prospect Point, and then turned around, and cut his turn too close.

EXTRACT FROM CAPT. JOHN T. WALBRAN'S *B.C. COAST NAMES*, PAGE 469.

STAMP HARBOR, Alberni canal, Barkley Sound.

After Captain Edward Stamp of the British Mercantile marine, who noticed the fine spar timber of Puget sound when loading in his vessel in 1857 a cargo of lumber for Australia, and described it to shipbuilders and contractors in England on his return there in the autumn of that year, but the high freight to Europe precluded shipments. The gold discoveries in the colony of British Columbia in 1858 induced him to leave the sea and settle in Victoria, where he started a commission business as E. Stamp and Company. In 1859 the imminence of the American Civil War and the probability of the export of spars from the southern states being discontinued, drew the attention of two London firms, Thomas Bilbe & Company and James Thomas & Company, to the north-west coast of America as an alternative source of supply for spars they had contracted to deliver in Europe. Knowing Captain Stamp, these firms employed him as their agent on the coast to ship spars, and gave him an interest in the contracts. Puget sound was the chief place of supply. (*Colonist*, 5 April 1860.) Disputes having arisen between the parties, principally owing to the construction of a large sawmill at Alberni, built in 1860, Captain Stamp retired from the concern in 1862 and ceased to do business in Victoria. Settling in Burrard Inlet, he started and carried on there a large sawmill which he disposed of in 1868. Member for some time of the Legislative Council of British Columbia for the district of Lillooet. Retired to England, 1869. (*Colonist*, 4 January and 17 June 1869.) Died in London. Named by Captain Richards, H.M. surveying vessel *Hecate*, 1861.