

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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W.C. THOMPSON. LAWSON AVENUE. "NAVY JACK'S" HOUSE. "NAVY JACK'S" POINT. JOHN SINCLAIR.

Mr. Lawson: "This photograph, that from which this illustration was made, must have been taken about 1909. This small cottage" (on extreme right) "was Harry Thompson's, son of W.C. Thompson. In the centre is Lawson Avenue. The house by the horses is 'Navy Jack's' old place, afterwards our home. The house, partly concealed by trees, was W.C. Thompson's, and the one on the extreme left near 'Navy Jack's' Point was John Sinclair's."

Miss Gertrude Lawson: (interjecting) "When we rowed over from English Bay, sometimes it was rough, and we were glad to run the boat into the mouth of the creek here." (Shown by a break in the foam of waves washing on the shore.)

"NAVY JACK," A GRAVEL.

An interesting feature of the illustration "Hollyburn, the beautiful" is that it portrays the gravel taken from the beach which was loaded onto scows run up on the shore, and floated again at high tide when loaded, from which John Thomas, alias "Navy Jack," took his gravel which has since, until this day, retained his name. "Navy Jack" is a gravel which can be bought by the yard or truck load from any construction material firm in Vancouver. Capt. Cates also took gravel from this "pit."

After showing the ladies numerous photos, papers, etc., and as the hour was growing late, I departed, but not until Mr. Lawson, despite his age and my protests, insisted on accompanying me down hill, in the dark and in the middle of the street—no sidewalks—to the bus stop at Marine and Seventeenth. Mrs. Lawson was in the house during my visit, but was not sufficiently well to appear. I did not see her.

It was a delightful and profitable evening with a pioneer gentleman of much generosity, graciousness and distinction. It is remarkable that he has lived to see his early home in the wilds change into a busy village of banks, moving picture houses, florists' shops, and other retail stores of almost every variety, and through which passes a stream of motor cars and passenger busses.

9 September 1949. J.S.M.

FIRST ELECTRIC LIGHT, BURRARD INLET.

FROM *THE COLUMBIAN*.

Of 1 February 1882:

"The California Brush Electric Light Company have sent an agent to Burrard Inlet for the purpose of lighting the two great lumber mills there."

Of 8 February 1882:

"Moodyville Mills are lighted with electricity."

Same issue (Wednesday) under heading "Burrard Inlet Items":

"The electric light shone from the Moodyville Mills Saturday last for the first time. It is said to work admirably. The cost, I am told, would be about \$4,000."

Of 11 February 1882:

"The Mayor and Council of Victoria will shortly proceed to Burrard Inlet to inspect the electric light."

Same issue:

"The telephone system in Victoria is now complete ..." "... It only remains to light the city by means of electricity to entitle Victoria to take rank amongst the most advanced communities."

Of 18 February 1882, under the heading "The Moodyville Light":

"The Victoria Mayor and Council went up to Moodyville this week to see the electric light erected at the mills. There are ten lamps or burners, each being equal to 2,000 candlepower. The whole thing is a complete success."

The sequel to this was that the City of Victoria installed electric light. Shortly afterwards there was a wind storm, and, during it, the lights went out. The newspapers reported that, as the wind had blown out the (electric) light, they could not see that it was much of an improvement on the (old) coal gas lighting system. J.S.M.

"THE LIGHTS OF VANCOUVER."

I started this years ago, but put it aside and never finished it; if a "finish" is ever possible. I shall put down a few notes in the hope they will help some compiler, or writer, to find "bits" of useful items for a story.
J. S.M.

Sunday, 17 December 1950.

STREET LIGHTS OF VANCOUVER, 1905.

In one of the long boxes, indexed as "OBLONG L.," "OBLONG M.," or "OBLONG S." (corset boxes, we call them) there is a map of Vancouver showing where all the street corner electric lights were situated. None in Kitsilano; few in Fairview; one or two in Grandview, and lots of corners in the West End without a light. I fancy it was photographed.

THE TWINKLING GLOW OF THE FIRES THE NIGHT OF THE GREAT FIRE, 13 JUNE 1886.

The fire was at midday. That night all Vancouver lay black to the bare earth except where, in the distance from the foot of Mount Pleasant hill (Main Street) where the refugees had assembled under His Worship the Mayor awaiting food from New Westminster, the blackness of night was pierced with little lights in the distance, the small fires on the hill beyond, now downtown Vancouver, burning themselves out; just little glow worm lights against the dark background of gloom.

THE ONLY HARBOUR LIGHT ON JOE MANNION'S DOCK AT HIS HOTEL ON WATER STREET.

See photo, "Ridley's Gastown." Joe Mannion's "Granville Hotel" was on the south side of Water Street, about midway between Carrall and Abbott Street. In front was the beach and from this a log float ran out. At the shore end of the float, about sixty feet from the front door, was a post on the top of which was a coal oil lamp. It was the only harbour light on Burrard Inlet (except the lights on the sailing ships tied up to the Hastings Sawmill, or Moodyville Sawmill, so dim that they lit nothing save the gangplank, and not that very well.) When, in the winter, old Hans, the boatman, came from the Hastings Sawmill with the mail and it was foggy and night, he watched as he rowed along the log strewn shore for the light, tied up, and took the mail into the Granville Hotel, facing the beach (now Water Street) and threw the bag on the counter. Everyone helped themselves to their own mail.

DOMINION DAY.

See *Early Vancouver*, Matthews, Vol. 1.

This refers to the local Indians who, on Dominion Day, used to erect a small mast in the middle of their canoes, and tied a rope from the top to the bow and also to the stern, and then tied Chinese lanterns, with a lighted candle inside, all up and down the rope. Then, they would tie about 10 or 20 canoes bow to stern, all in a line, and when it was dark would get a small steam tug to tow them up and down the harbour in front of Water and Cordova Street. It was very pretty to watch.

Forty years later, at the suggestion of Major Matthews, the Kitsilano Yacht Club, foot of Balsam Street, did the same thing but with yachts in place of canoes, and then got a tug to tow them up and down the beach at Kitsilano, and then go over to English Bay at Denman Street and repeat it. It was very pretty.