

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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THE FIRST COAT-OF-ARMS, VANCOUVER.

From the *Sun*, Vancouver, Monday, 23 January 1928:

TELLS OF THE FIRST CREST. Mr. Hamilton is believed to be the only living member of the first City Council. He spends his time in Ontario and Florida. In a letter in the possession of the *Vancouver Sun*, Mr. Hamilton tells of designing the city's original crest.

In his letter Mr. Hamilton expresses gratification that the neighboring municipalities of Vancouver are joining the city.

"Through all its ups and downs I never let the feeling leave me that ultimately Vancouver would rank with the largest cities in Canada, if it did not exceed them all in population and wealth," said Mr. Hamilton. "We had a great fight in the early days to get the government of British Columbia to agree to make a grant of land adequate on which to build the city which would grow up at the terminus of the Canadian Pacific Railway on the Pacific Coast.

"I took the ground in the City Council that we must lay our plans on a generous scale, and so laid out and established streets far beyond what seemed necessary for our wants. So I can now rejoice that your neighbors are coming into the City, and joining in that progress and prosperity which the future holds in store for them.

"I certainly had vision of the future," continued Mr. Hamilton, "when I blocked out the crest or seal of the city with its motto, 'By Sea and Land We Prosper.'

"Vancouver, with its shipping, its sea borne commerce, its fisheries, its timber, the products of its own lands, and the grain from east of the mountains, is surely living up to the motto of the seal," affirmed Mr. Hamilton.

The change of the coat-of-arms was made while Mr. F.T. Neelands was mayor. The original seal designed by Mr. Hamilton was used on city by-laws for the last time on 16 February 1903, and the first use of the coat-of-arms now appearing was made on 23 February the same year.

NOTE BY CITY ARCHIVIST.

On 5 September 1952, Mr. Hugh Graham Christie, retired City Hall official, brought the newspaper clipping to the City Archives. It was Mr. Christie who recovered the brass City Seal, disused after 1903, from the debris of the fire which destroyed some of the contents of the City Clerk's office, circa 1920-5. Whether Mr. Hamilton's letter was written to the *Sun*, or borrowed from some correspondent is not known. The date of it appears to be Monday, 23 January, and it is calculated as 1928, though it is not known if Mr. Hamilton was in Vancouver in 1928. He was in Vancouver in 1929, and left about the 29 October 1929 to return east.

J.S.M.

The seal designed by Mr. Hamilton is preserved in the City Archives.