

Early Vancouver

Volume One

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2011 Edition (Originally Published 1932)

Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1931-1932.

*A Collection of Historical Data, Maps, and Plans Made with the Assistance of
Pioneers of Vancouver Between March and December 1931.*

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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20 JULY 1931 - GRANVILLE STREET. J.R. SEYMOUR.

"S.L. Howe, now the Honourable S.L. Howe, provincial secretary, built the building on the northwest corner of Georgia Street and Granville, the old C.P.R. tennis courts," said Mr. J.R. Seymour, an early druggist of Vancouver. "I paid him seventy-five dollars a month rent for the first year, gradually rising to ninety dollars for the last year, 1904. My first drug store was on the corner of Seymour Street and Hastings" (northwest corner), "my second as above, exactly the same store as now, the Georgia Pharmacy. I sold both my stores in 1904 to Messrs. McDowell, Atkins and Watson, at that time the big drug firm of Vancouver, for \$25,000.

"Of course, there was not much business at Georgia and Granville in 1900, when I first went there.

"There were plenty of vacant lots on Granville Street between Robson and the C.P.R. Depot."

The present rental of the same store is, in 1931, \$1,350 per month.

18 DECEMBER 1931.

Mr. Henderson, proprietor of the Georgia Pharmacy, tells me that (about 1928, and before the stock market crash) Mr. Howe sold his building, he believes for \$825,000, of which \$200,000 was cash and a mortgage of \$600,000.

At the time his monthly rental for the same store exactly as he rented for seventy-five dollars per month to Mr. Seymour in 1900, was \$1,500 per month. On account of the depression he succeeded in getting this reduced to \$1,400, and he is now paying \$1,350, but is moving to a building now in process of erection, facing the Hotel Vancouver, on Georgia Street. This he is doing because he has been notified that a new lease will be granted only on condition that he pays \$1,400 for the first year, then \$1,500, and finally \$1,600 for the third year, per month, and with a six months notice clause to vacate.

And this ground was, less than fifty years ago, a forest jungle.

20 JULY 1931 – HOTELS.

THE CARTER HOUSE

The Carter House stood on Water Street, between Cambie and Abbott, and faced the inlet. The first one was burned down in the Great Fire. It was a hotel well known to all pioneers, and construction work to replace it was commenced the day after the fire, the lumber collected on the ground. It was owned by Lewis Carter (Welsh spelling of Lewis), the uncle of W.F. Findlay (see elsewhere), who has a photo of it. It is also to be seen in the photo of the first train arriving. Mr. Findlay says it was the first three-storey building in Vancouver, both before and after the fire. Mr. Carter had worked on the survey party which brought the C.P.R. line from Port Moody to Vancouver.

J.A. Mateer disputes this, and says the first three-storey building was on the south side of Hastings, between Carrall and Abbott streets, and known as the C.P.R. Hotel, built four days after the Great Fire and owned by McPherson.

NOTE ADDED LATER:

The C.P.R. Hotel was built first as a two-storey, and afterwards raised to three storey, but the Carter House was the first three-storey. The C.P.R. was subsequently known as the Northern Hotel. W.F. Findlay, 12 April 1932.