

Early Vancouver

Volume Two

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Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1932.

Supplemental to volume one collected in 1931.

About the 2011 Edition

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THE MOST PRETENTIOUS BUILDING IN VANCOUVER, 1889. CORDOVA STREET, 1889. THE DUNN-MILLER BLOCK. THOS. DUNN, JONATHAN MILLER.

J.S. Matthews, 1932. The building, still standing in 1932, was commonly known as the Dunn-Miller Block, and is at the east end, south side, Cordova Street West, a few steps from Carrall Street. In 1932 the ground floor store shown in the photograph taken at the time it was being built in 1889, is numbered 26 and 28 Cordova Street West, the first used as the Crown Saloon at one time, the second now used as a second-hand store. The remainder is used for a cheap café, rooms upstairs, etc., etc.

At the time this building was erected it was the largest and most pretentious in Vancouver, much more so than the Bell-Irving Block at the southeast corner of Richards and Cordova streets (demolished July 1932 to make way for an automobile parking ground for David Spencers Limited) which was erected the same year (see photograph).

The Dunn-Miller Block was the westerly continuation of the Lonsdale Block, also built 1889, which it resembled almost exactly in design. "Modern" in 1889, it was without basement, no central heating, nor elevator although three storeys, but was the largest brick building at the time.

Part of the block was owned by Jonathan Miller, afterwards our postmaster for so many years, and part by others, among them said to be Lord Lonsdale. At one time the building was the centre of mercantile activity. Thos. Dunn and Co., hardware merchants, the largest in Vancouver, were located in it, Stark's Glasgow House (dry goods) and Wm. Ralph, ranges.

MCDONOUGH'S HALL (SEE PHOTOGRAPH). ST. ANDREW'S CALEDONIAN SOCIETY. COLUMBIA STREET.

W.F. Findlay, 1 April 1932. "McDonough's Hall, on the southwest corner of Columbia and Hastings streets was built in 1887 by Mr. McDonough, afterwards for a short time proprietor of the Oriental Hotel; it still stands, practically the only very early building on Hastings Street; I know of no other so early although there is at least one other wooden original building—next door, between Main Street and Carrall Street; no wooden buildings now exist west of Carrall Street on Hastings; all gone.

"The St. Andrew's Caledonian Society held their first ball in the McDonough Hall on November 30th 1887; this society is the oldest of its kind in Vancouver.

"At the time it was built, and for a long time, it stood alone as the only building in the bushes of Hastings Street; there were some Chinese shacks on Dupont Street near it, but on Hastings Street it was the only building." (See *Early Vancouver*, Matthews, 1931.)

CENTRAL SCHOOL. COURT HOUSE. CAPT. E.S. SCOULLAR.

Capt. E.S. Scoullar, 31 October 1932. "The architect for the Central School facing Victory Square was Mr. Sorby; the contract was let to Turnbull and Co. by the provincial government together with the first Court House on Victory Square, and which, after the present Court House on Georgia Street was built, was demolished. The firm of Turnbull and Co. consisted of E.S. Scoullar, William Turnbull and Thomas Grey, both deceased. I was then head of the firm, and financed it. The bricks in the building were made in New Westminster, where the firm had a large brick yard. The contract was completed in 1889; the superintendent of construction was the late Joseph Dixon of the firm of Dixon and Murray. The foreman carpenter was Hugh Wilson. The heating and plumbing was done by E.S. Scoullar and Co., Cordova and Water Street, Vancouver and Columbia Street, New Westminster.

1932 – BIG TREES. H.P. McCRAHEY.

"The biggest cedar I ever saw stood close to W.H. Gallagher's office at the corner of Pender Street West and Richards Street. I came here on January 29th 1885—Water Street was planked then. When I first came out I walked with Mr. Patterson—he was afterwards lieutenant governor—from Chemainus to Victoria, and on the way we passed a big fir and measured it. It was fifty-four feet in circumference, and

was the biggest tree I ever saw; cedars are usually bigger at the butt, but they taper as they go up; firs are more even in their circumference.”

THE BIG TREE ON GEORGIA STREET (REAL ESTATE OFFICE?)

“We cut off two sections and they stood for a long time in front of Ross and Ceperley’s office on the south side of Hastings Street between Homer and Hamilton streets, where David Evans had a tailor shop afterwards—you can see them in the old photo which the Native Daughters have at the old Hastings Mill store on Alma Road. The other sections were sent to the Toronto Exhibition; perhaps they did send a section or two to the Jubilee Colonial Exhibition in England.”

THE GREAT FIRE. REGINA HOTEL.

“There was nothing west of the Regina Hotel; the reason that the Regina Hotel escaped the fire was that it was out of the fire zone; the wind blew the fire right past it.

“I was stopping at the Sunnyside. We saw the fire, and I said to my partner, Mr. Stephenson, ‘Let’s go and look after our stuff.’ We went up the corduroy road, that is, Cordova Street now, but did not get as far as Cambie Street. When we got back to the Sunnyside it was on fire; the fire was so quick. They can say what they like, the fire started back of the Regina Hotel.”

SUNNYSIDE HOTEL.

(Looking at photo of fire with tent in centre.) “The sort of pier on the waterfront—looks like piling” (points to photo) “might be the remains of the Sunnyside Hotel which was in part built on piles out over the water; it could not be the C.P.R. trestle, for the C.P.R. had no trestle work here then.” (Note: see the “first train into Vancouver,” this volume, 20 or 22 March 1887.)

BURRARD HOTEL.

“The Burrard Hotel stood at the northeast corner of Hastings and Columbia streets. It was afterwards rebuilt on a different site, where the Balmoral Hotel was afterwards, southwest corner Cordova and Carrall. Faucets, the soda water man, and the bartender, were found burned to death in front of the Burrard Hotel.” (Great Fire.)

“A.W. Ross of Ross and Ceperley was brother-in-law to Mayor MacLean—his office was on Hastings Street between Hamilton and Homer streets; was built out of relief funds; so was Mayor MacLean’s house” (see photo of it still standing in 1932) “at the corner of Oppenheimer and Dunlevy streets. Alderman E.P. Hamilton built a shack on Trounce Alley; I slept in it the third night after the fire. It was Harrison, the contractor, who was killed up the C.P.R. line and whom they were burying at New Westminster at the time of the fire.” (See J.W. McFarland and Geo. L. Schetky.) “General J. Duff Stuart and Harold Clark” (Clarke and Stuart, stationers) “were clerks in Tilley’s stationery store before they started out for themselves, and the only phone was in the back of the store; see Jimmy Tilley’s widow, she may be in town. Alderman Balfour’s widow is also living, and A.J. Mouat of the Library is still here. Geo. L. Allen of the shoe store has a little store out in Point Grey now. The customs officer was old Mr. ‘Ike’ Johns; he presided at the Customs House on Water Street.”

THE FIRST PUBLIC LIBRARY.

H.P. McCraney continued (after Mrs. Pollay’s account of the founding of the public library was read to him.) “That’s about right, but Bodington did not come until afterwards, but perhaps she is right. Jackson, the jeweller, was between Abbott and Carrall streets—perhaps the library was over Thos. Dunn’s at first, but I know we were over McLennan, McFeely’s later.”

Note: in connection with the above George Cary says that he was contractor for John Devine, and built for John Devine the store which Mc. and Mc. occupied. Mrs. Pollay says that John Devine had an office upstairs across the hallway from the library. (See old directories.)

CLEARING THE LAND.

“We,” continued Mr. McCraney, “that is, Stephenson and McCraney, had the contract to clear the land between Georgia and Dunsmuir streets, and between Burrard Street and the C.P.R. tracks.” (False Creek.) “Three hundred dollars per acre; we just sawed off the stumps and left in more than we took. I

should not be surprised if the root and stump of that great tree on Georgia Street is not in there yet—about the front of the Strand Theatre.”

Note: Mr. Forbes, Forbes Realty Co., 510 Homer Street, 10 May 1932, states that his father felled the great tree, that it stood close to the lane between Hastings and Seymour, but at the back of the lot now occupied by the tall Vancouver Block, and that it fell northeasterly, which illustrates the difficulties of a historian in recording from pioneer memories, for one says it stood about the corner of the lane and Georgia, that it fell northwest; another that it fell southeast; all contend the other fellow is wrong.

KERRISDALE. MAGEE

“I used to go to Hugh Magee’s via the North Arm Road, now Fraser Avenue, and then turn west along the River Road, now Marine Drive. The North Arm Road was through long before, at least 1880,” (see Jemmett’s map of Indian Reserve, 1880) “years before the C.P.R. cut through the Marpole which we call Granville Street.”

GASTOWN. THE INDIAN (METHODIST) CHURCH. THE FIRST CHURCH.

Dick Isaacs (Indian name Que-yah-chulk), 14 October 1932. One-armed Indian who lost the other arm many years ago in a sawmill, and who now lives at North Vancouver Reserve (Ustlawn).

“I recall the old Indian church over at Gastown quite well. It was a little bit of a place on the shore; it was not sideways to the shore, but one end nearest the water. There was no tower on it, such as we have here now at North Vancouver, but just a little bit of a bell tower, and a bell. Inside it was not fixed up like the Catholics fix up the inside of their churches, it was just plain, and about thirty feet long. It was wide enough for us to have three benches for us to sit upon—all in a row across the church, three of them.

“Lots of Indians used to go there from Stanley Park” (Whoi-Whoi, now Lumberman’s Arch); “there was a big settlement in Stanley Park then. Mr. Daylick” (Derrick) “was the first minister I remember, then Mr. Bryant; Mr. Tate used to come sometimes.

“I don’t know how old I am, may be 60, may be 70, but I remember ‘Old Chief’ Capilano. The ‘Old Chief’ died, then Chief Lah-wa succeeded him. Lahwa was married in the little Indian Church at Gastown to a Fraser River Indian woman. Afterwards Joe became chief, he was a relation to the ‘Old Chief’s’ wife. Joe was a good Catholic; that was why they made him chief.

“‘Portuguese Joe’ was the first to keep store at Gastown. He had a store near the Indian church, at least, that was where it had been; Ben Wilson built his store behind it. When Portuguese Joe went there first there was just one man, that was Portuguese Joe, in Gastown.

“My sister was Aunt Sally of Stanley Park.”

(Note: Aunt Sally was a famous character on account of her residence in Stanley Park until quite recent years—after the war.)

“Puchahls was the name of the place where the C.P.R. Depot and docks are now. Lots of big trees there, lots of bushes, much shade and little sunshine.”