Early Vancouver

Volume Two

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Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1932.

Supplemental to volume one collected in 1931.

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snow the night before, and the sun shone brightly, making the forest, which came very close to the embryonic city in those days, glitter with its white covering."

LOST OVER FALSE CREEK.

"Making our way across the Westminster Ave. bridge we followed the trail along the bank of False Creek until Leamy and Kyle's mill was reached. This, the third mill in Vancouver, and the first south of the creek, stood near where the end of the magnificent new Connaught Bridge is now. Here we struck a skid road, and started to climb up the hill, through dark stretches of forest and small clearings, until after a couple of hours tramp we ran into a clearing where lots of new stakes, planted by surveyors formed a second growth almost as thick as the original.

"To our amazement we found written on one of the stakes, 'Twenty-Second Avenue,' and then we realized what a distance we had come. Not wishing to retrace our steps on the skid road, we made our way easterly along the rough trails, and blazed lines until after some hours hard work we emerged on the Westminster Road, wet from head to foot. As we pushed through the bush the newly fallen snow would drop in miniature avalanches down our backs, and from time to time, when walking along, some fallen monarch of the forest, we would slip off into the deep snow. You can imagine how overjoyed we were to reach the road, and how gladly we turned our faces towards home and dinner. Such a tramp, however, had its reward in the keenest of appetites, and a willing capacity to enjoy the festive turkey and other seasonable delicacies.

"In spite of many drawbacks incidental to a new place, we old-timers used to enjoy ourselves in those days."

CHRISTMAS THIRTY-FIVE YEARS AGO IN VILLAGE WHERE VANCOUVER NOW STANDS.

The Daily Province
Saturday.
December 21st 1912

(This story, and the preceding one, was probably written by Mr. Carter-Cotton, son of the Hon. F.L. Carter-Cotton, and formerly a reporter on his father's daily, the *News-Advertiser*.

"What kind of a Christmas did they have in Vancouver thirty-five years ago? How did you spend your holiday?" These questions were asked the other day by the *Province* of an old-timer—one of the bright old men whose memories of early events in this city has not even been dimmed.

"What kind of a story would you like?" queried back the old-timer. "How would you like a bear story—for there were plenty of the black fellows then in the woods where West End apartment houses now stand? Or I might tell you how Captain W.R. Soule arrested Tompkins Brew, how the Victoria special constables turned white, or ---."

"But has that anything to do with Christmas?" the interviewer asked.

"No," was the quick reply, "but those incidents come into my mind when I think of Christmas. There are many people in Vancouver today who can remember the city as it was twenty-five years ago; but when it comes to pushing back the hands of time ten years more it is almost like communicating with another generation. The ten years preceding 1887 you might regard as a period of slumber or stagnation. The people were looking forward during the earlier years to the settlement of the railway terminal question—just as Sir Charles Tupper pointed out in an admirable article last Saturday. Everything was much undecided, and there was a very strong pull in favour of Bute Inlet."

TIMES WERE PRETTY DULL.

"With such an unsettled condition of affairs, can you blame those who were here in not investing money in property? Indeed, there was no property to buy. The Hastings Mill Company would not sell, the townsite of Granville was a reserve, and you could not get a foot of it from the government for love nor money. You ask—why did we not squat? One reason was we were law

abiding people, and when we understood the townsite was reserved we considered it our duty to obey the law. Squatting was of later date. All property outside of Granville townsite and Gastown was held in 160 acre blocks, and these were not for sale. Of course, if we could have purchased property I think some of us would have done so, but whether we should have emerged as millionaires is a conundrum, for anything purchased would either have been eaten up in taxes, or parted with years ago to avoid such a catastrophe."

EARLY VANCOUVER PICTURED.

"Burrard Inlet, as far as population was concerned, was a very small place in 1877. There were two mills doing business on the inlet, then—mills, too, that were renowned all over the world even at that early period, for the quality of the lumber that they shipped abroad. They were the Moodyville Mill and the Hastings Mill. Both of these mills employed a large number of hands. The manager of the Hastings Mill was Capt. Raymur, who had formerly been a ship captain, as well as ship's husband for Anderson, Anderson & Co., the owners of the mill in London.

"Mr. R.H. Alexander was next in authority at the Hastings Mill, and he had with him in the office Mr. Ainslie Mount, whose father had been an employee of the Hudson's Bay Co. in Victoria. Mr. Henry Harvey was manager of the mill store and also postmaster. Mr. Chas. Coldwell, afterwards Alderman of Vancouver, was the mill foreman, and Mr. P. Caffney, the engineer, completed the roll of the official class. Capt. W.R. Soule was the mill stevedore.

"The Moodyville Mill had for its manager Mr. Hugh Nelson, afterwards senator, and lieutenant-governor of the province. Mr. Ben Springer, everywhere respected and beloved, was next to the manager, and head bookkeeper. Mr. Hermann Brantlecht was assistant, Mr. David Shibley Milligan was storekeeper and postmaster, while Mr. Philander Sweet was mill foreman, and Mr. Murray Thain was the company stevedore. Murray was sometimes assisted in this work by Capt. John Thain, his brother, whose residence was in Victoria. Of all these officials I think only Hermann Brantlecht is still living. I forgot to tell you of Jim Lockhart, the mill engineer, one of the cleverest men in his particular line that has ever been on Burrard Inlet. He too has passed away. James Van Bramer, who ran the ferry between Hastings, Moodyville and Gastown, or Granville, also lived at Moodyville, nor must I forget that Nestor in the two boat businesses, Capt. Smith, Sr.

"At that time there were no hotels or saloons in Moodyville, but there might just as well have been, because there was one hotel at Hastings kept by Maxime Michaud, a French Canadian who was reputed to be wealthy, and there the men obtained all the liquor they desired."

CELEBRITIES OF THE TOWN.

"Now as to Gastown, called after that celebrated philanthropist Gassy Jack, or Jack Deighton. To get an idea of old Gastown, picture to yourself a road extending from what is now the Alexandria Hotel, west as far as 113 Water Street, which corresponded with the western boundary of Gastown. The northern side of this road was open, and faced the sea." *[The Sunnyside Hotel stood on the north west corner of Water and Carrall Street.]* "Where the Alexandria now stands there was the Sunnyside Hotel. Many people who are resident in the city today will remember it as it is not many years since it was pulled down to make room for the present structure. This hotel had the front resting on the bank, and the rear extending out over the water and supported on piles. It had been built with an eye to convenience as well as comfort, for in the floor at the back was a trap door, through which one could lower groceries, clothing, and other comforting articles into the canoes beneath."

GEORGE BLACK.

"Next to the Sunnyside dwelt Mr. George Black, well known all over British Columbia as an ardent and patriotic Scotsman, and poor indeed would be the Scotch dance or picnic if Black, in Highland dress, were not there to give the affair a 'go.' Next to his residence Black had his butcher shop, where he or his man Robinson dispensed meats to the residents and shipping of Burrard Inlet. I can see Black now in my mind's eye as, with a preliminary twist to his curled moustache he would lean, one hand on his hip, and the other resting on his knife, whose point

was pressed into the block, tell some amusing story about something he had seen or heard of late.

"On the opposite side from the Sunnyside, and facing it, was the Deighton Hotel, managed by Messrs. Clarke and Cudlip. Poor Tom Cudlip had played his last game of cinch, and passed in his checks. He came from a good Cornish family, and had great expectations through a young son he had, but who unfortunately died of diphtheria in 1878. Capt. Clarke, his partner, is still alive and in good health and lives here in Vancouver. Capt. Clarke had many little confabs with Lord Beresford when he was here, and whom he knew in early days when he (Clarke) was master, pilot, boatswain and cook of Governor Seymour's yacht."

FIRST VANCOUVER JAIL.

"West of the Deighton Hotel was the 'lock-up' where those under arrest by Jonathan Miller, constable and collector of taxes, were kept in limbo. Mr. Miller's position in those days was no sinecure. A pretty hard crowd used to find their way to Burrard Inlet form other parts to escape arrest, and it consequently fell to him to put them in the skookum house. This was more often effected by strategy than by main force. But when Miller had the drop of them he never funked his duty, and never failed to land his man. Mr. Miller was also a school trustee, but I will allow him to tell of his trials and tribulations as such in his own way.

"A little further down was a Chinese store. The proprietor of this shop or store had a boy who attended school, and who was a wonder in his class. I have heard since that he turned out well, and was about to leave for China to an important position in the British Embassy, when he was struck down by the hand of death. The Granville Hotel, of which Joseph Mannion was proprietor, occupied a position corresponding to the centre of the town. Joe is still alive. His hotel was well patronized. He had a taking way with him, and always a pleasant smile and address to those who called upon him. Mr. Mannion had many stories to tell about his early experiences in seeking for gold. Having had a good education he could converse on any subject of interest. He knew Davitt and Dillon, the Irish Nationalists, and went to school with one of them."

MCKENDRY, THE BOOTMAKER. JOHN FANNIN, PROVINCIAL CURATOR.

"If Burrard Inlet had mills which turned out lumber of worldwide reputation, it also had shoemakers who were justly celebrated for the quality of the leather they put in their boots and shoes, as well as the careful and substantial manner in which they were made and finished. One of these shoemakers was McKendry, who had a small room adjacent to Mannion's Hotel, and which was always well patronized by those who took an interest in what was going on in lumbering on the coast, and other interesting gossip. The other subject of St. Crispin was John Fannin, who lived at Hastings, and who afterwards became curator of the provincial museum. Both of these old-timers turned out an article which was in great demand in all parts of the province. Many of their orders came from far off Cariboo, and though their charges were high, they were paid with pleasure."

ISAAC JONES, CUSTOMS OFFICER AND HARBOUR MASTER.

"CRAZY GEORGE."

"Mr. Isaac Johns, customs officer and harbour master, lived in a neat dwelling to the west of Mannion's. Ike, he was called, was from Bristol, England. He was a capable musician and much in demand for concerts at New Westminster. Often we would sit and listen to 'Crazy George' performing on the flute, of which he was a perfect master. But, of course, Crazy George was of later days. He came here from Peru on a lumber vessel. He was in the band of one of the men of war of the Peruvian navy, and became mentally affected by his having been jilted by his ladylove. Poor George, he was kind to children. I hope he has the flute I gave him in the hospital for the insane, where I understand he is at present. At a date later than that of which I speak, George lived in a small house at the south end of the Main Street bridge."

HOLE IN WALL—HOUSE OF CHEER.

PETER DONNELLY.

"'The Hole in the Wall' was the next dwelling, as well as house of cheer, beyond the dwelling of Ike Johns. Mr. Peter Donnelly was the proprietor, and a thorough Scotchman. On the opposite side of the road, facing the south, was the Methodist parsonage. This dwelling is now used for a fruit business *(f)* and is 113 Water Street."

(f) Incorrect. Parsonage destroyed in Great Fire and never rebuilt; he refers to Methodist Hall, etc.

Peter Donnelly was also known as "Robertson."

"Coming back to the Deighton Hotel, it is worth mentioning that a two-plank wooden walk extended from Gastown to the mill. It was a lovely walk on a hot day, as it went through close timber and brush."

THE MAPLE TREE.

"At the Deighton Hotel was a large maple tree whose extended branches gave ample shade to the verandah of the hotel, and was a favourite lounging place for the 'tired' Siwash. A wide road extended from the Deighton Hotel to False Creek, flanked by trees of the primeval forest.

FALSE CREEK BRIDGE.

"At the bridge across False Creek was George Black's slaughter house. After crossing the bridge, the trail extended down to the Fraser River."

JERICHO AND JERRY ROGERS.

"In addition to the many employees of the mills clustered in their immediate neighbourhood, were numerous logging camps, both on the inlet itself, and scattered along the coast in the several timber claims belonging to the companies. Jerry Rogers had a large camp, for instance, at Jericho, where some of the finest timber that was ever cut was got out and towed by the powerful tug *Maggie Rogers* to the booms at Hastings Mill. Angus Fraser had a camp on Bowen Island, and Furry and Dagget had another camp in what is now known as Stanley Park, removing some of the giant timbers from that now famous reserve. This camp was the last of five different camps which at one time or another worked within its boundaries."

HAND LOGGERS. BIG TREES.

"Scattered along the coast from the head of Johnston's straits to Burrard Inlet were the shacks of scores of hand loggers who cut timber on their own account and sold them to the mills after they had been scaled by the mill scaler. These men were usually in partnerships of two. Some of their dwellings or shacks were located in most picturesque spots. Many of these shacks were hidden in the dense foliage which surrounded them, and their locality could only be divined by the chutes they built on which the immense sticks glided into the water. For it must be remembered that in those days no logs were taken, nor even looked at, which contained a knot to mar the beauty of the flooring into which much of it was cut. The trees cut down were usually those which hadn't a branch below sixty or seventy feet from the ground. Oh, they were giants in those days. Sticks have been turned out from the mills 30 x 30 x 120 feet long. There was a great demand at this time for square timber of large size for China, and a great deal of it went there."

HAND LOGGERS, ETC.

"Most of these loggers led a very lonely life. There were very few steamers churning the waters of the northern coast in those days, except one or two bound for Alaska, and an occasional tug in search of some hand loggers' boom which was ready for the mill. Months might go by, and these men would never see a stranger. You may imagine therefore that they looked forward to Christmas time with a happy anticipation of fun and frolic. Those who were any distance away would take advantage of some passing tug, perhaps a couple of weeks before Christmas, and make their way to 'Gastown.' They were, on the whole, a good class of men. Brawny and well developed they were the finest of axemen. Those who arrived first in Gastown usually spent the most of their time on the waterfront keeping a sharp lookout for others who were expected from

day to day. Every man was known, and it was a daily speculation with those already arrived as to whether Jack or Jim or Tom would be the next arrival."

YULETIDE WELCOMES.

"Yes, it was good to see the welcome which each man received as he ran his boat up by the floating stage in front of Mannion's Hotel. All hands would go down to the landing stage until it would threaten to sink with all on board. Then the handshakings followed. Having moored their craft, they would be led up on the bank—and the drinks that would go round, and the questions, and the laughter—all good humoured, and then the enquires as to their prospects, and as to how much they had cut, and what their last boom had measured. Then out they would all go, and visit some other house of cheer, until they had made the round.

"And I am proud to add that there was little drunkenness among them. They drank, but they were not drunkards. They were a superior class of men to that. Ask Mannion, who is here with us today in Vancouver, or Capt. Clarke. They will tell you the same. Of course, there were many among these happy fellows who never touched any liquor stronger than beer, and some not even that. The most of these men were of a saving character, and had money coming to them at the offices at the mill, and after spending Christmas in Gastown would take a little trip to Victoria, which was at that time the Mecca of British Columbia."

CHRISTMAS IN GASTOWN.

"When Christmas Day arrived the hotels would all be full. The tables always groaned with the best the market afforded. George Black made a point of having the finest of bunch grass beef for those who patronized him on Burrard Inlet. The dinner was the meal on Christmas day as it always is the world over, and these dinners in the hotels of Burrard Inlet were no exception to the rule. Yes, and the boys always had toasts in which their lady loves were not forgotten. Joe Mannion and Capt. Clarke would sit at the heads of their respective tables with smiles broader than their countenances, and that they were not niggardly in any way was amply demonstrated at the close, for cheers for their hosts invariably followed. Then all would adjourn and play cards or checkers in the rooms allotted to those games."

JERRY ROGERS AND JERICHO.

"Leaving the hotels at Gastown and paying a visit to the logging camp at Jericho, there you would receive a welcome spontaneous and hearty. Jerry Rogers was always proud of his Christmas dinners. They were high class, and put on the table with great ceremony. Sometimes a miniature barbecue would be furnished the boys, as the old man affectionately called his workers. Such a dinner; better than you can see in this city today. Venison fat and juicy—suckling pigs and turkeys—none of your cold storage turkeys, either, but killed and dressed a few days before—ducks and geese, both wild and tame—and a huge sirloin of George Black's best bunch grass products. A monster plum pudding with a sprig of holly, and aflame with brandy, wound up the feast, to bind together what had gone before. Small stowage, Jerry called it. How the old man's eyes would twinkle as he watched the feast, and listened to the occasional sallies of wit, which burst from different parts of the table."

SPLENDID AXEMEN.

"That gathering of men represented some of the finest lumbermen on the continent. The axemen had no equals with the deftness with which they wielded the single or double bitted axe. To give a proper touch to the feast, there was always two twenty gallon kegs of beer on tap. The good old man was the happiest of the band, for to make his men happy at this festive time was his single aim. Among those who worked in the camp at that time was Mike King. Mike in those days was dressed in a blue shirt, sans coat, a broad strap around his waist, his hair rather long, curly, and hatless. He was an expert with the axe, and was generally selected on state occasions, such as visitors of the Governor-General to fell the giants of the forest."

HOW JERICHO GOT ITS NAME.

"The only thing which remains to tell of the glories of departed days is the name Jericho. This name was given to the camp by Jerry himself, to conform to scripture, for did not Jeremiah dwell in Jericho?

"The other camps also commemorated Christmas Day after similar methods. There was the Furry and Dagget camp. This outfit was always celebrated for the excellence of their table, which was looked after by the wife of one of the partners."

ANGUS FRASER.

"Angus Fraser, who had a heart as big as an ox, made a special point of seeing that the Christmas dinner should be up to the mark. Being a married man his Christmas was spent partly in the camp, and partly at home." (Also see *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 3.)

LOGGING CAMPS.

"On both sides of the inlet, those who were not connected with the camps spent their Christmas much as they do now. Plum puddings and mince pies engaged the attention of busy housewives for weeks in advance of the festive occasion. Isolated, to a certain extent, from the rest of British Columbia, a social and sympathetic feeling bound all as though in one bond of family. Go into any house where there were children and your ears were greeted with squeaking trumpets and hammering of drums, and even before you reached the door the evidence that Santa Claus had not forgotten the little children of this far western harbour was before your eyes in sleighs being pulled on sawdust and mud, or skates being tested on the same material."

COST OF EGGS.

"You often hear today of the high price of eggs. But the prices here today are low in comparison with the prices of eggs in 1877. We obtained most of our eggs, turkeys, geese, ducks, and chickens from an Irishman who paid occasional visits to Burrard Inlet with the fowl I have mentioned, and also with potatoes and vegetables which might be in season. Willy Paterson—that was his name—came from Semiahmoo, and did a roaring business here. He always managed to sell his whole cargo, which was carried in a 12 ton sloop. Just about Christmas time, those with eyes bent upon the First Narrows would see this indefatigable trader making his way in on the rising tide. After clearing his sloop at the local customs house, Billy would make the round of Gastown to ascertain how the supply and demand stood in respect to the farm produce which he carried under his hatches. Eggs were always in demand at this period for making 'Tom and Jerries,' and good stiff prices were asked and paid for absolutely fresh eggs. In 1877 eggs were high—in price I mean—and you could not buy them for less than $3.00 per dozen, and we were lucky to get them for that."

LITTLE ONES NOT FORGOTTEN.

"I have told you already that the little children were not forgotten at Christmas time. The population of the province was small and much scattered, and old Santa Claus had very long journeys to make which necessarily took up much of his time. He always came to the Inlet two or three weeks in advance of Christmas time, and took a good look at all the little boys and girls to settle in his mind what kind of a present would suit each one. As his sleigh was always full for the little Indians of the northern missions, and as he had to 'make time,' he always made arrangements with the captain of the *Etta White*, who was a distant relative of his—at least the captain used to say so—to bring up most of the presents from his storehouse in Victoria the day before Christmas, and also a special team of reindeer small enough to make their way down the stovepipes which led into the houses. There were *no chimneys*, consequently he had a tight squeeze to get near any little child's stocking. But he was very good, and never forgot any child. They were all well satisfied and well treated; even the little Siwashes were not forgotten."

SIWASHES.

"The effects of the Christmas generally led up to a kind of ennui which lasted until over New Year's Day. Then the boys would begin to make a move towards their shacks, laden with all kinds of remembrances of their holidays. Let me add that many of the residents here spent their Christmas in Victoria or New Westminster. Some even went as far as San Francisco."

SLEIGHING—BURNABY LAKE.

"We had visitors, too, from New Westminster, as the sleighing was good one winter, and if there was not too much snow on the ice I think a good many used to find their way to Burnaby Lake where they would enjoy themselves immensely."

ROYAL PEOPLE IN ROYAL CITY.

"A visit to New Westminster always resulted in your being well treated there, and they had no bounds to their hospitality. When you went there, you were sure to see Capt. Adolphus Peele, weather prophet, who always greeted you with some reference to the weather. On my visit there a short time since, although I had not seen him for twenty years, he had the same reference to the weather, and the beauty of it was that he was nearly always right. He has today probably the most valuable collection of weather reports of New Westminster District, and of this province generally, that can be found outside the bureau at Ottawa. Mr. Joseph Armstrong was another gentleman who was there then, and is there now. He has not changed in the slightest in the last thirty years.

"When the Christmas week was over in Old Gastown, the little burg went once more asleep for another year."

(From the *Daily Province*, Vancouver.)

Saturday, December 21st 1912.

(Unknown writer.)

HASTINGS STREET EAST. ORANGE LODGE. KEEFER'S HALL. METHODIST HALL, WATER STREET.

On referring this photograph to Mr. Thos. Duke, a very early Orangeman, he said, "Oh, this would be coming down the plank road on Hastings Street, east of Westminster Avenue." Keefer's Hall was on Alexander Street, between Gore Avenue and Westminster Avenue. (Photo, 12 July 1888, Orange Parade.)

"Vancouver Lodge, Orangemen 1560—Special Church Service.

"All members of the Loyal Orange Association residing in Vancouver are called upon to meet in the Lodge Room, Keefer's Hall, Alexander Street, on Sunday, 8th July at 3 p.m. and from thence to march in procession to the Methodist Hall, Water Street, where a special service will be conducted by the Rev. Mr. Robson. Service at 3 p.m. Text 'An Open Bible.'

"Thos. Crawford, Rec. Sec. 1560."

Early on the morning of 12 July (1888) they went to the wharves to meet the Victoria and New Westminster delegation—went from Keefer's Hall—returning by a different route to luncheon. At one o'clock they reassembled and went to the Recreation Grounds (presumably Cambie Street grounds). Afterwards the procession again paraded the streets. It was a rainy day, which would account for the lack of shadows in the photograph.

Note clearing fires burning over towards Grove Crescent.