

Early Vancouver

Volume Three

By: Major J.S. Matthews, V.D.

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Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1933-1934.

Supplemental to Volumes One and Two collected in 1931-1932.

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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Contact Information

City of Vancouver Archives
1150 Chestnut Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 3J9
604.736.8561
archives@vancouver.ca
vancouver.ca/archives



persuaded by Victorians to try the newly advocated route by Bella Coola which was emphasised by the islanders as a better and shorter route.

Starting for Bella Coola with a few companions, he took Lieut. Palmer's trail from that Indian settlement with the intention of reaching Fort Alexandria. But in some manner they missed the trail and wandered about in the woods for three months but finally reached their objective.

But when they arrived on Williams Creek the mining season had almost closed, so they invested their remaining money in provisions and started on their return to Victoria, where they put in the winter working on the wharves, loading and unloading vessels. Mannion continued working in Victoria until 1864, when he obtained employment with the Overland Telegraph Company who were at that time erecting the trans-Siberian telegraph.

In 1866, on the cessation of that work through the successful laying of the Atlantic cable, Mannion started for the Big Bend, then enjoying a great reputation as a mining camp, but there he had no luck.

RAN THE GRANVILLE.

Returning to New Westminster, he obtained work in logging camps until 1874 when he bought a half interest in the Granville Hotel, in Granville or Gastown as the village was commonly known by. He continued in this hotel of which he gradually became the sole proprietor, until 1884, when he sold out and bought a ranch on Bowen Island—now known as the Terminal Farm. During his life as a boniface he was an especial favorite of the loggers of the Northwest Coast.

Of late years he has been failing rapidly in health. Three years ago he sought a change of climate in Lillooet, but although it prolonged his life it could not prevent the continuation of his trouble. On Tuesday last he passed peacefully away at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Christie in Lillooet.

EXTRACT FROM THE *VANCOUVER DAILY PROVINCE*, FRIDAY, 24 DECEMBER 1909.

Old Timer was, most likely, Joseph Mannion, as this newspaper clipping, pasted with others of articles by Mr. Mannion in a scrap book, was loaned by his daughter, Mrs. H.A. Christie.

OLD-TIMER TELLS OF CHRISTMAS IN EARLY DAYS

WHAT VANCOUVER LOOKED LIKE THIRTY-FIVE YEARS AGO AS OLD GASTOWN

CELEBRITIES OF YEAR 1874

ETTA WHITE BROUGHT CHRISTMAS GIFTS FROM VICTORIA

MAIL CAME TWICE A WEEK VIA STAGE FROM WESTMINSTER

What sort of day did they have for Christmas in Vancouver thirty-five years ago?

Plenty of people know what Christmas was like in Vancouver twenty-five years ago; quite a few are able to hark back even a quarter of a century; but the thirty-five-years-ago folk are so scarce that they belong to another generation. Add another five years to the back of that and you have the day when Vancouver was but a lumbering, trading village with the deep woods covering all the city peninsula down to the present corner of Carrall and Hastings and all west of Cambie, with a little settlement between comprising the centre blocks of Water Street as it is today.

Picture for yourself this village, long before the days of railways and street cars, long before the days when it was known as Vancouver; and listen to the tale of the patriarch of the Old Timers' club.

"What did it look like?" echoed the old gentleman, as he pulled his chair before the fire. "Better let me tell you a story of a bear hunt over where the corner of Westminster Avenue and Dufferin Street is now located. Don't like bear stories? Well there were plenty of them—bears and stories in the early days. Perhaps you would like to be introduced to 'Gassy' Jack—for Vancouver was Gasstown in one stage of its existence. His real name was Jack Deighton and he was one of the philanthropists of the early days. Granville townsite was at that time reserved from sale or settlement, by an order-in-council of the provincial government. The waterfront was cleared of timber for a short distance from high water mark, sufficient to allow of the erection of buildings, and the providing of a good roadway between the buildings and the beach.

"The hotels then in existence, and usually doing a good business, were, taking them on the south side of the roadway and beginning at the eastern end of the street, three, with dwellings for residents at intervals between. The first building at the eastern end was the Deighton hotel, managed by Clarke and Cudlip. Adjoining to the westward were the lock-up and the residence of Jonathan Miller, who at that time was a provincial constable and a collector of votes and taxes. Mr. Miller had some very risky duties to perform and in connection with his duties as constable. Especially may this be said when he had any criminal warrants to execute, for at that time there were some very dangerous and lawless characters in the country who were not inclined when the authorities wanted them, to submit quietly to arrest.

"To the west of Mr. Miller's was the Granville hotel, where Mr. Joseph Mannion held forth in the interests of the benighted logger and the wayfarer. On each side of this building were a number of small buildings or shacks in which those lived who found an occupation in connection with the lumber trade. Mannion's was a very popular resort. He was a man who, in business, had a good address, was well educated, and exceedingly well informed more especially on matters in connection with Ireland. Another man who lived in close proximity to Mannion's was McKendry, a boot and shoe doctor. He has a very extensive patronage. His work was always first-class and some of his patrons lived in far-off Cariboo. A little further to the westward was the dwelling of Arthur Sullivan and his brother, and next to that was another hostelry called 'The Hole in the Wall,' with Mr. Robinson, prop'r, whose name a few years previous was Peter Donnelly. Between Sullivan's and the 'Hole in the Wall' Mr. Ike Johns, customs' officer and harbormaster, had his domicile, together with his family."

PARSONAGE STILL STANDS

"On the north side of the roadway, west of Robinson's was the Methodist parsonage, corresponding to the present position of Allen's flour and feed store, 113 Water street. In fact, the building is still in existence. To return to the eastern end of this house was the Sunnyside hotel, which was built on piles and extended the length of the building out over the water. On the western side of the Sunnyside was the residence of that fine old-timer, whom many Vancouverites will have a kindly remembrance of, George Black. No Scotch gathering of the early days could be complete without the presence of George, who in his younger days must have been a great athlete. When dressed out in kilt and bonnet he made a splendid appearance. He was an expert dancer of all Scotch reels and dances. Black was the inlet butcher, and his slaughter house, erected first at Hastings, was in 1879 situated on False Creek at the end of the trail. His meats were dispensed from a building on the waterfront, just west of his residence. His patrons were the milling companies, the shipping, which was considerable even in those days, and the many residents of the inlet. His factotum was a man named Robinson, who attended to the shop while George was away purchasing cattle or 'chasing' Scotch picnics or gatherings. A short distance from the Deighton hotel on the False Creek trail, almost where the Bodega now stands on Carrall street, was the residence of Angus Fraser, a neatly-built cottage. Fraser was at that time running two logging camps on the Fraser River. The building and hotels described composed the burg of Gasstown."

FERRY WAS A FEATURE

"The waterfrontage extended from the Sunnyside hotel to the Methodist parsonage, and consisted of a beach which, when the tide was high, was very shallow, for a considerable distance from the shore. To allow passengers landing from the ferry a long floating wharf about

four feet wide, and consisting of two-inch planks nailed to logs which crossed them at intervals of ten or twelve feet, extended out to sufficiently deep water to allow of the little steamer mooring alongside. The ferry was owned by James Van Bramer, who carried on a regular service on the inlet as follows: leaving Moodyville at 7.30 a.m., the steamer came across to Gasstown, and leaving there called at the Hastings Mill, picked up the medical officer of the milling companies and returned to Moodyville. Then it ran over to Hastings and met Lewis' stage from New Westminster which brought in a daily mail from New Westminster. The mails from Victoria for the mainland were carried each way twice a week, and likewise from the upper country. So that twice a week the stage mail consisted of Victoria and upper country mail. Receiving the mail from Lewis the ferry would return immediately to Moodyville, deliver the mail for that place and then proceed to the Hastings Mill with the mail bag for Granville and the Hastings mill people."

EARLY HASTINGS MILL

"From 'Gasstown' a two-plank trottoir led up to the Hastings mill, through heavy timber and underbrush which afforded, on hot, sunny days, a delightful little walk. About three-fourths of the way up a little church, called St. James, met the gaze of the wayfarer. At the end of the plank walk were the Hastings mill and the dwellings of the employees. The mill at that time was under the management of Capt. Raymur, whose earlier days were spent at sea, and who had acted as ships-husband to the firm of Messrs. Anderson and Anderson before the scene of milling operations had been transferred from Alberni to Burrard Inlet. Here one might as well tell of a fact which is not generally known. Any visitor to Kew gardens, London, must have noticed a very tall single flagpole which rears its tall head not far from the glass structure for exotic plants. That flagpole was a gift from the Messrs. Anderson, and was cut in Alberni, and carried to London, where, in removing it from the vessel, ten feet of it were broken off. Next in authority to Capt. Raymur was Mr. R.H. Alexander, who presided over the office, and with him was Ainslie Mowat, a son of an old Hudson's Bay official, whose relatives lived in Victoria. Mr. Alexander and his family resided in a comfortable cottage close to the office. The Hastings mill store, which is still in the same place, was in charge of Mr. Henry Harvey, who was also postmaster. Mr. Charles Caldwell, later an alderman of this city, was mill boss, and a Mr. Gaffney, whom Capt. Raymur had selected from a score of applicants for his eminent abilities as an engineer, was the engineer who superintended the mechanical department of the concern.

"In connection with the loading of the vessels, Mr. William Soule was the stevedore who was generally entrusted with the stowing of cargoes. The medical officer at that time was Dr. Walkem, who also was under contract with the employees of the Moodyville Lumber company on the opposite side of the inlet. Last, but not least, mention must be made of the little schoolhouse, where in early days the children of the settlement about Gasstown and the Hastings Mill received their education. The teacher was Mrs. Cordiner, and an admirable school teacher the lady was. Her husband was at that time in charge of the blacksmith shop. He died in Vancouver a short time ago."

OUT TOWARDS POINT GREY

"On English Bay Mr. Jeremiah Rogers carried on a logging camp, having as a conveyor of supplies and tower of logs the steamer *Maggie*, with William Rogers, lately deceased, as master. Jericho was at that time laid off with roads for hauling logs by means of road engines with wheels something like the macadam crushers employed by the corporation on the streets of Vancouver. These wheels were very broad and so fashioned as to give a little on going over the unequalities of the ground, such as going over skids on which the logs slipped along behind the engine. These road engines had been purchased from Mr. Barnard, the father of the Cariboo express business, who had bought them to carry the mails on the Cariboo road, but they turned out a complete failure for such work, and Mr. Jeremiah Rogers purchased them for his logging camp. Jerry, as Rogers was generally called, had a great many schemes in his head, and once in 1874, applied to the late Judge Walkem at that time premier of the province, to be allowed to preempt or purchase Deadman's island for a shipbuilding yard, but Mr. Walkem replied that the property was part of the naval reserve, and could not be disposed of.

"Moodyville was the site of the Moodyville Milling company and the mill there was originally a small water mill, and was purchased by Moody, Dietz and Nelson, who before that time carried on an express business at Yale. In the place of the water mill the present structure was erected. For power for the mill a double set of marine engines, which had been in H.M.S. *Sparrowhawk*, was installed. They were a beautiful set of engines and worked very smoothly and noiselessly. Sue Moody, the head of the firm, was drowned in September, 1875, when the steamer *Pacific* went down off Cape Flattery, after being run into by a German bark on the way to the sound and which left Barclay sound the day previous. Only two lives were saved from the wreck of that vessel."

FIRST MASONIC LODGE

"Mr. Nelson lived in Moodyville and was a senator, having taken the place of Senator Carrall, deceased. He resided in a beautiful cottage on the hill above the mill, and which is still in existence. George Dietz, the other partner, lived in one of the houses close to the mill. Mr. Andrew Welch of San Francisco, became largely interested in the company, in fact he was in 1879, the principal owner. The late Mr. Ben Springer, a most popular gentleman, was at that time head bookkeeper. He dwelt in a cottage on the ground above the mill, and had the late Mr. Murray Thain, who was then stevedoring at Moodyville, as a neighbor. The store was presided over by David Shibley Milligan. Mr. Philander Swett was the mill boss. At Moodyville was situated the mother lodge room of Mt. Hermon, A.F. & A.M. It was situated over the institute or reading-room and was accessible by a long flight of steps at the rear end of the building. Here for some years the brethren were called from refreshment to labor and labor to refreshment once every month.

"Though insignificant as a member of the genus homo, a little Chilian about five feet high was one of those who made Moodyville his headquarters. He is only mentioned here from the fact of his being a mighty hunter after bear, which were in those days very plentiful in every direction about Burrard Inlet. This Chilian had a record of having killed seven bears in six days, and all in the vicinity of Moodyville. A great attraction for bruin was the grease with which the skids were served on Harmon's logging road. This road was at the end of Moodyville in the direction of Lynn creek. One day the little Chilian had a dispute with a bear who not liking the Chilian's manners had chewed up his right thumb. He met Dr. Walkem on his arrival from the Hastings mill. The doctor removed the thumb at the junction of the hand proper. Next day H.M.S. *Rocket* came in from Victoria, and Dr. Walkem, accompanied by the surgeon from the *Rocket*, took a stroll in the direction of the Chilian's shack. They saw the Chilian, and on asking him what he had done with the piece of thumb which had been amputated, he took both men to a little garden at the house. Removing a large cross which surmounted the burial place, the Chilian disinterred a cigar box from whence he extracted the missing member rolled round and embalmed with cotton and pitch as securely as any Egyptian mummy."

THE REAL CHRISTMAS

"Christmas in those days was as keenly looked forward to by adults and children as it is today in Vancouver. Any gifts that were made were generally purchased in Victoria, and to accommodate folk of the Burrard inlet the steamer *Etta White* belonged to the Moodyville company, and usually made a trip to that city a few days before Christmas for freight and supplies. Her return would witness all of her spare space taken up with all sorts of packages, which Santa Claus had sent on before so as to lessen his burden when crossing the gulf, and in order that he might be conveniently at hand on Christmas Eve. Just previous Christmas week the inlet had an annual visit from a Billy Patterson, who hailed from Semiamoo. He came in a sloop which was well filled with farm produce of all kinds. Housewives of Vancouver will not growl at 75 cents a dozen for eggs when they learn that according to the supply and demand, Mr. Patterson charged all the way from 75 cents to \$3.00 a dozen for fresh eggs. But turkeys and geese were sold at moderate figures in comparison with these latter day charges for those much sought after table birds.

"Christmas Day was in those days spent in very much the same way as it is spent now. The only difference was that Santa Claus had much greater difficulty in entering a house with his gifts for good little boys and girls. In those days he had to get down the stove pipe which usually projected through the roof and which was more often five inches than six inches in diameter. The usual

"Some of the inlet people paid their friends in New Westminster a visit and vice versa. Very often many spent their Christmas in Victoria. The hotels of "gass town" were at this time always well filled with loggers and workers in the bush who made a point of coming to town to spend their Christmas."

