

Early Vancouver

Volume Three

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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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became manager of the mill, the heads of the mill sent for Ainsley to come back. Ainsley was the heart of the Bachelors' Club. He died about 1893 or 1894 of typhoid fever."

TYPHOID.

"After the fire, typhoid was terrific; a sort of epidemic; not a hospital; they kept the patients in bed and home; I know Mrs. Miller kept her daughter at home when she had it. There were a lot of people in tents; there was little sanitation; water from wells, and no sewers."

THE GREAT FIRE.

"We were at Moodyville, and I just went out to get the pudding for dinner, and looking out of the door I saw the terrific smoke coming from Gastown; such a terrific smoke. And then I saw the steamers coming out—the *Robert Dunsmuir* and a little boat called the *New Westminster*. They were half way across" (to Moodyville) "with the refugees. It must have been about three o'clock when they landed at Moodyville. We went down to see them land; it was tragic to see the people come ashore; their shoes were charred."

JONATHAN MILLER. POST OFFICE.

"Jonathan Miller was carrying a big cash box in both hands in front of him; I think it must have been the post office papers because he had just been appointed postmaster at Vancouver, and his spectacles were lying on top of the cash box as he carried it in front of him. He walked up solemn like; he always looked solemn. He turned to Mrs. Miller and said, 'Mother, I've saved my glasses.' Carrie Miller, now Mrs. Todd Lees, had on a thick winter dress, and it was a frightful hot day, very hot. She said that when she came from church in her summer clothes, she had put them away, and when the fire came she just reached up and put on the first dress which came to her hand, and it was the thick winter dress. Mrs. Miller had a prayer book in her hand and said to me, 'Alice, I saved my prayer book.'"

CAPTAIN POWER OF MOODYVILLE. MASONIC HALL.

"We did what we could to help. The people were taken to the hotel at Moodyville and served with supper; my sister and I served at table, and Captain Power of Moodyville was there, and when bedtime came they were taken to the Masonic Hall, and given blankets from the store; they just slept around anywhere they could. Mr. Springer asked my sister and I to get things from the store.

"It was very pitiful to see them sleeping. The people were all very tired, and very quiet. Some had just the clothing they wore, nothing else, and many did not know where their children were; it was very, very pitiful. Mr. Springer asked them not to soil the Masonic chairs; they were all lying around on the floor and on the platform.

"We took the Miller girls to our home that night, and after we had got into bed we were talking things over, and I asked Carrie just what she thought about it all. Carrie said, 'My only thought was to get Ma out of the fire.' Mrs. Miller was in a panic; you see, they had to walk through the burning coals, the fire, and she, well, they had to push her. Then I asked the younger one, Alice Miller, what she thought about it and she answered, 'Thank goodness, that old coat I hate got burned up.' Miller was mean with the girls."

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH ALASTER HAVELOCK CAMERON, WHO DECLINED TO STATE WHERE IN VANCOUVER HE LIVED, 17 MAY 1935.

SEYMOUR CREEK TRAIL TO CARIBOO.

"I came to Hastings Sawmill on May 2nd 1875 and that year worked on the building of the Seymour Creek Trail to Cariboo. The trail was built with the idea of getting cattle out that way from the Cariboo, but only four bands of cattle, about three hundred head to a band, ever came out that way; the trail was cut twelve feet wide, and graded three feet in the centre and covered with 'mattox' (gravel, etc.) for the horses and cattle to walk on."

BIG TREES.

"The biggest tree I ever saw in British Columbia—it was a cedar—was, as near as I could judge, nineteen and a half miles up the Seymour trail; it was on a flat as you approach the rise of the creeks to the summit and benches, and on a flat, about two hundred yards down from the trail towards the river. I would have run the trail by it had I noticed it early enough. I put a small tape line around it, as high as I could reach,

and it was sixty-three feet around, and about sixty feet before it forked; a cedar, of course. May be there yet if it has not been burned. No; never heard of George Cary.

"The next year, 1876, I worked building bridges from Hope to Princeton, and the next spring hewed timbers for the first bridge across the Fraser at Lytton."

(Note: Mr. Cameron, very elderly, does not inspire my confidence in matters of figures. He probably did see a very big tree; there was one in Stanley Park, a cedar, reputed to be fifty feet around. The big tree on Georgia Street was about forty-eight or –nine.)

NOTE ADDED LATER:

He died 13 September 1940.

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH VICKER WALLACE HAYWOOD, ONE OF THE FIRST FOUR POLICEMEN ON THE VANCOUVER CITY POLICE FORCE, 23 MAY 1935.

FIRST POLICE.

"The first police force was appointed before the fire of June 13th 1886; I was one of them. I was burned out; lost everything—clothes, blankets, everything. The first police force was appointed quite a while before the fire.

"I came here in September 1885 from Prince Edward Island, via Portland, Oregon, and then by boat via Tacoma and Victoria. Worked on the dry dock at Esquimalt, then went laying track for the C.P.R. at Ducks, near Kamloops, and came back to Vancouver in September 1885, and stayed here ever since."

DEPUTY CONSTABLE.

"At first I worked as Deputy Constable to Constable Jonathan Miller; it was through him that I got on the Police Force."

THE OLD JAIL ON WATER STREET. COURT HOUSE. CLEARING AWAY THE FOREST. HASTINGS STREET.

"The old jail was just an old shack of a place; two or three cells in it; they used to hold Court in it. The jail yard was just an ordinary yard with a board fence about ten feet high around. Cordova Street and Abbott Street were not properly cleared when I came here in 1885. Hastings Street or about Hastings Street was just timber; a trail through it. From Abbott Street west was just trees."

THE "EIGHTY-FIVE ACRES." C.P.R. TOWNSITE.

"The '85 acres' was logged off, but not cleared in 1885. In the fall of 1885 they started to clear the townsite from Abbott Street west." (Note: not quite correct; a little later than the fall; probably early 1886.) "I think Hartney had something to do with the clearing; or Chinese McDougall."

CAPTAIN J.A. CATES.

"Cates and I were partners in the Terminal Steamship Company, which is now the Union Steamship Company in part; he and I were together in the Klondike Rush."

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH J.N. DAWZY, 2361 TRINITY STREET, VANCOUVER, B.C., 27 FEBRUARY 1935.

THE GREAT FIRE. NUMBER OF BUILDINGS LEFT.

"I arrived in Vancouver on June 14th, 1886, about noon the day after the fire, and of course was struck with what I saw, and was impressed; the recollection of it has remained in my mind very clearly.

"There were just five houses standing. There was the old Bridge Hotel on Main Street, or Westminster Avenue, False Creek; a frame building next to it; a little house on the southeast corner of Prior Street occupied by Harry Chase, and Regina Hotel on Water Street near Cambie, and the C.P.R. building opposite David Spencer's store, about where the C.P.R. depot is now."