

## **Early Vancouver**

### **Volume Four**

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

**2011 Edition (Originally Published 1944)**

*Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1935-1939.*

*Supplemental to Volumes One, Two and Three collected in 1931-1934.*

### **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 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the City's founding. The project was made possible by funding from the Vancouver Historical Society.

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Exact location:- north corner of Lots 22 & 23, Block 251, D.L. 526, south side Fourth Ave, 100 yards east of east side of Granville St South.  
 Photo by L. A. Hamilton, 1886, presented 1940, by Mrs John Leask, Collingwood Ont City Archives. J.S.M.

L. A. Hamilton's Camp, False Creek, 1886. Block 251, Fairview, looking (camera) south. The exact site was on south side of Fourth Ave, one hundred yards east of the east side of Granville St South, and on the west bank of a creek flowing in a ravine. John Beatty, squatter & bulpuncher, with his Indian wife, had lived in one of these board & batten side, cedar shake roof shacks, but in 1886, occupied by Mr Hamilton, widower, his daughter Isobel, born Oct. 3, 1880, and his sister, Miss Hamilton, later Mrs John Leask. Here the Hamiltons took refuge from devastation. Great Fire June 13, 1886. George Cary towed them across, "Louie" tended camp; a skid road lead, south on the left; False Creek, slightly below, was in front. Canoe, paddles, swing for child, rustic seats, water from nearby creek in pipes (iron); observe old cedar log foundation, of old cabin. Wire & telegraph pig on tree may be clothesline. Miss Isabella J. Hamilton, (Mrs John Leask) L. A. Hamilton's sister, with his motherless daughter on her knee, Isobel, and John Leask, seated. See map "C.P.R. Town site," on rollers, issued by A.W. Ross & Co., presented by H. R. Bray. See two companion photos, (1) Miss Hamilton in canoe, (2) log skid road & 2 logs, at back of cottage which is partly concealed in trees.

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*[photo annotation:]*

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City Archives. J.S.M.

## **[LETTERS FROM L.A. HAMILTON.]**

Lorne Park,  
15<sup>th</sup> August, 1935

J.S. Matthews Esq.,  
City Archivist,  
Vancouver.

Dear Major Matthews:

Your interesting letter of the 19 July received. An extra pressure of business has delayed reply. The sketches I sent you were done chiefly as a matter of personal enjoyment, at the same time, having in view the change of scene that the landscape would undergo in preparation for the Great City which would come shortly into life. Also made at the request, with others, in answer to a letter from Frank Leslie's magazine asking for views to be published in that magazine—my work that I sent was accepted and paid for. By the way did you receive from me a sketch of the entrance to the inlet showing the S.S. "Beaver" passing through? There was a special interest in this work for year or more after I made the sketch, "The Beaver" was wrecked at the very place where I sat when making the drawing. I always felt that it was a great mistake that the City of Vancouver hadn't removed the wreck to a site in Stanley Park. It would have been a matter of great interest to sight-seers to see the hull of the first steamship that navigated on the Pacific Ocean, coming out as she did all the way from England under her own sail and steam. If I did not send it to you, it has got mislaid somewhere, either in our home here, or was lost in the mail. We had a case on somewhat similar lines at my old home at Collingwood. A gun boat, "The Nancy," was sunk during the war of 1812, to prevent her being captured by the Americans. A few years ago the wreck was discovered under several feet of water. The municipality went to the expense of raising her, putting her up in the park along side and now she is a great attraction to tourists both British and American. I had a number of trips back and forward between Victoria and Vancouver on the "Beaver," was, consequently, attached to her and was sorry to hear that she had been left where stranded and taken away piece by piece. Glad to hear that progress is being made towards celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

Yours sincerely,  
L.A. Hamilton.

Watercolour was received and framed.

Kissimmee,  
27<sup>th</sup> April, 1936.

Dear Major Matthews:

I have been very neglectful in answering the two letters you sent me concerning chiefly the naming of the streets in Vancouver, the fact is I have been under Doctor's orders to do as little brain work as possible. I think I informed you that I had shortly after coming down here a serious collapse due to some breaking down of some nerve brain. My memory has failed me considerably, and it is hard to remember the names of those I have been meeting here and many of the old ones have been blotted out entirely. It is therefore impossible now to hark back to the days when I named the streets of Vancouver. one must not forget that a hard and fast contract was made between the Govt. of B.C. and Railway Company to make a complete plan of the new City taking in the large plot granted by the Govt. running down to the North Arm. Lot 185 owned by Brighthouse & Co., the Village of Granville, and the property running down to the Hastings Mill known then as the 85 acre steal; this of course carried with it the naming of the streets. I had a free hand in the property lying south of False Creek so there I was able to adopt the modern system of naming the avenues 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> etc., and the streets I called after trees as Alder street, Birch Street, Cedar Street etc, preserving them as *[sic]* much as possible according to the arrangement of the alphabet. In order to accomplish this work and have the plan registered in the Registry Office at the date fixed, I think I had about 3 weeks to do this. It meant day and night work to fill the bill. I cannot remember the reason for adopting Eveleigh, Melville or Seaton. If I had the map before me I might come conclusion. I was acquainted with Nicola in "upper" B.C.; whether the name was adopted for that reason entirely, or partially a compromise between Nicola and Nicolas Hamilton, my grandfather, who was commonly known in the Hamilton clan as old Nic.

I was heartily congratulated on the 6<sup>th</sup> of April from several sources by telegram etc; none from Vancouver. No doubt you saw the notice of congratulation contributed to the columns of the "Mail and Empire" by Fred Williams, one of its special writers. In connection with that I received the following telegram:

"Toronto 6<sup>th</sup> April, 1936

"Fred Williams voices publicly our sentiments in the 'Mail and Empire' this morning; this is his and my greeting to the sole surviving father of Vancouver's 50th birthday. Come home in good shape to be the central figure at the Jubilee this summer.

"E.H. Banks, C.P.R. Press Representative."

I cherish above all a long message of congratulation from the President of the C.P.R., Sir Edward Beatty. We had a hard fight at Victoria to gain the name Vancouver. I fancy the old opposition to it has died out.

I received a notice today that a Jubilee programme is being sent to me at your request. I leave here on the 7<sup>th</sup> of May for Toronto, my address therefore after that date will be Lorne Park, Ont.

Sincerely yours,

*[signed]* L.A. Hamilton.

Note: L.A. Hamilton headed the poll at first election.

J.S.M.