

Early Vancouver

Volume Five

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2011 Edition (Originally Published 1945)

Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1936-1945.

Supplemental to volumes one, two, three and four collected in 1931, 1932 and 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 125th anniversary of the City's founding. The project was made possible by funding from the Vancouver Historical Society.

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH HENRY S. ROWLING, PIONEER OF VANCOUVER, 1868, WHO VERY KINDLY CALLED AT THE CITY ARCHIVES TO CHAT, 3 JANUARY 1938.

FOREST FIRES. GILLIES' CAMP. ROYAL OAK.

Mr. Rowling said: "There was a tremendous forest fire started north of the" (River Road) "trail, where Gillies' camp was, just east of our place on D.L. 258, when I was about ten years old; that would be about 1874. A big wind drove it along about as fast as you could walk, and it went a long distance, and was fairly wide; I don't know how wide, but it was more than two miles long; it ran up in the direction of Royal Oak. That is the only really big fire between Vancouver and New Westminster that I can recall."

W.H. ROWLING OF ROWLING. D.L. 258. CHIEF SEMIALANO.

"I don't know who the James Brown is who is recorded as preempting D.L. 330 before Father bought it, but there was such a Brown. He was living on D.L. 258 at the time. I don't know where he went, nor anything about him, except that he was there; because the old Indian chief, Semialano" (sic), "I don't know how his name is spelt, but it was something like that, was in the cabin one day, and Brown was cleaning his" (Brown's) "rifle, and the rifle discharged. The bullet passed" (horizontally) "through the chief's shirt, across his stomach—the chief wasn't hurt."

"Before that accident they had been trying to get him to talk English, but he gave them to understand he could not talk English; he used signs; but when the gun discharged, he lost his temper, and he could swear in English. I used to hear Father talking about it when I was a boy. The old chief couldn't talk English, but" (laughing) "he could swear in it; really good."

JAMES GIRLIN METCALFE. D.L. 328. MARY ROWLING. PREEMPTIONS.

"D.L. 328 was in Mother's name at one time; Mary Rowling."

"This was the way the sections ran. First there was Boundary Road, then D.L. 331 was my brother's, James William Russell Rowling; then D.L. 330, myself, Henry Sayre Rowling; the D.L. 258, Father's, William Henry Rowling; then D.L. 329, W.H. Rowling; then 328, Mary Rowling; and then 327A and B, a long, narrow strip along the river front, that was William Daniels; and then came the road, what we call Fraser Avenue now."

"Across the road was D.L. 313, Cridland's; John Daniels had D.L. 322 at the foot of Ontario Street, and William Daniels had D.L. 327 east of Fraser Avenue."

BELL ISLAND. TWIGG ISLAND. ROWLING ISLAND.

"'Jimmy' Bell got the crown grant of Twigg Island; at one time it was called Bell's Island. Rowling Island was sold after Father died for \$500, and three years later was sold for \$35,000."

W.H. ROWLING.

"Father got mixed up in some slate quarry up the coast, and gave property as security to the Bank of Montréal, but Mr. Sweeny" (Campbell Sweeny), "the manager, said that as long as Father lived he would 'carry him.' But when he died, Mr. Sweeny said, 'He's dead now,' and told me to sell. I sold for \$5,500, but Thomas Kidd, one of the trustees, died, and they appointed another, and then he was coming to see me, and there was a train accident and he was killed, and finally they appointed Mutrie, but there was so much delay, and the price of real estate was going up so fast in the real estate boom that finally I sold for \$58,000. They tried to make me deliver for \$5,500 because I had accepted \$50 as a deposit, but the judge told them that, according to their own evidence, I had told them I did not own the land; that it belonged to trustees, and that they acknowledged I had given them the address of the trustees, and told them to go and see them."

Series of six logging scenes, 1890. Logs from heights above taken by rail down valley from Quilchena, etc., through Kitsilano to English Bay. Camp could also be reached by trail from North Arm Road (Granville St) going west
City Archives JSM



Kitsilano, circa 1890. A logging camp in the unnamed area of forest now Kitsilano. The logs were yarded to logging rail head by yoke of sixteen oxen, load onto cars, and hauled on iron rails by steam locomotive to log dump on shore of English Bay at foot of Trutch St where they were rolled into salt water at foot of Trutch St; boomed and towed to Hastings Sawmill. Scene No 6. This logging camp was in low area near present Quilchena Golf course.
Photo presented, 1940, by John Elliott & Miss Dawson City Archives

[photo annotation:]

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Photo presented, 1940, by John Elliott & Miss Dawson. City Archives.