

Early Vancouver

Volume Six

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Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1940-1945.

Supplemental to volumes one, two, three, four and five collected in 1931, 1932, 1934, 1939 and 1944.

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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"Mr. Burwell was a great fisherman; he has some of his writings in *Rod and Gun*. He was a modest man; did not push himself; he was consulting engineer to the City of Vancouver for some years, but he could not get on with some of the aldermen, and gave it up." (The old story, meddling aldermen.)

"ROMANCE OF VANCOUVER."

"Morley, that man who is writing about the 'Romance of Vancouver' in the *Sun* newspaper; oh, pooh, it didn't happen" (as he writes of it) "that way at all."

Note: I did not ask Mrs. Burwell what she was referring to; there has been so much criticism of Morley's "romance" that the question was not necessary.

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH MR. THOMAS A. HOLLAND, 2618 COLUMBIA STREET, VANCOUVER, B.C., A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE INTERNATIONAL TYPOGRAPHICAL UNION, AND AT PRESENT ON THE STAFF OF THE VANCOUVER DAILY PROVINCE, WHO VERY KINDLY TELEPHONED THAT HE WAS BRINGING UP TO ME A RELIC OF SILVER CREEK, HOPE, B.C., 26 JULY 1940.

DEWDNEY TRAIL. HOPE-PRINCETON TRAIL. SILVER CREEK. DAN MCGILLIVRAY.

Mr. Holland (on arrival) said: "This piece of wood" (a piece of cedar, about eighteen inches long by six inches wide by one inch thick, partly decayed), "you can have; I give it to the citizens of Vancouver; you see, the carving on it is 'D. McGillivray July 6 1881.' This is the story.

"My wife, Mary A. Holland, daughter of Mr. M.G. Duquette, who lives with us, went on a vacation in the summer of 1938 to Silver Creek, three miles west of Hope, and our camp was, approximately, one quarter of a mile up Silver Creek, from the main Cariboo Highway; the largest tree thereabouts is an old cedar, and is situated in line with the ore chute of the present working mine, and directly in front of the present barn. I am not sure whether my father-in-law or my wife found the carving, but anyway, Dad" (Mr. Duquette) "cut it out of the cedar tree, out of the big cedar.

"I don't know what it means; perhaps you do. I presume as an old railway construction man myself, I know that in leisure hours folks so employed have a desire to always come back and see the results of their handiwork, and so they like to leave marks, and I suppose that Mr. McGillivray was motivated by exactly the same impulse. That's all I know about it."

MEMO OF CONVERSATION OVER THE 'PHONE WITH MR. W.C. DITMARS, FORMERLY OF ARMSTRONG AND MORRISON, NOW (HIS OFFICE) 744 WEST HASTINGS STREET, VANCOUVER, 2 AUGUST 1940.

DAN MCGILLIVRAY.

Major Matthews (City Archivist): Mr. Ditmars, a Mr. T.A. Holland of 2618 Columbia Street called me on the 'phone the other day, and told me he had a piece of cedar wood which had been cut out of a cedar tree in 1938 by his father-in-law, Mr. M.C. Duquette, also of 2618 Columbia Street, and asked me if I wanted it.

I said "Yes," and he brought it up. It has letters carved on it with a penknife, "D. McGillivray, July 6th, 1881"; it was cut out of a huge cedar tree at Silver Creek, near Hope; I think that is on the Dewdney Trail. Do you know if Mr. McGillivray left any relatives; our files are very "weak" on that point?

Mr. Ditmars: "Oh, yes, why, Mrs. General J.A. Clark, and Mrs. Hobbs Fernie of the Jericho Country Club, and Mrs. Colonel R.M. Blair, and I think he had a son; he must have carved his name on that tree during C.P.R. construction."

NEW WESTMINSTER WATER WORKS. FIRST PNEUMATIC HAMMERS. FIRST HYDRAULIC RIVETING MACHINE. "KING OF CONTRACTORS."

"When I first came to Vancouver, J.C. McLagan, editor and owner of the old *World* newspaper, used to call Dan McGillivray the 'King of Contractors.' He built the Mission Bridge, C.P.R., the one over the Fraser at Mission."

Note: photographs C.V.P. Out. 250, also C.V.P. Out. 178, and C.N. 505, taken 8 February 1891 were taken at the opening; one shows a large group of workmen; another a large group of officials, including Mr. Abbott, Mr. Cambie, Mr. Armstrong, Mayor Oppenheimer, etc., etc., etc., and singularly, three ladies.

Mr. Ditmars: (continuing) "Mr. McGillivray built the New Westminster Water Works, and the plates for the pipes were brought out from Scotland, and fabricated at his shops on Lulu Island. W.H. Armstrong was this superintendent; Mr. Morrison was the foreman of his shops. It was in those shops that were used the first pneumatic hammers in British Columbia, and the first hydraulic riveting machine."

BITUMINOUS ROCK. ASPHALT, VANCOUVER STREETS.

"In 1891, Mr. McGillivray had a contract for paving certain streets in Vancouver with bituminous rock; it came from California; they called it bituminous rock in those days; we call it asphalt now."

CONVERSATION WITH T.W. BOYD, 1203 WEST BROADWAY, PARTNER, BOYD AND CLANDENNING, 9 FEBRUARY 1938.

"Then after we had the clearing contract, clearing and slashing the forest off the C.P.R. Townsite, that is, D.L. 541, we had the contract for clearing Cordova, Hastings, Pender from Carrall to Burrard; all between Pender and Cordova, right down to the C.P.R. station, and also clearing Granville Street—everything off Granville Street right down to False Creek. McGillivray planked Hastings Street, but we had the sidewalks."

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH MRS. SAMUEL BLAIR, 1333 RICHARDS, WHERE SHE HAS BEEN LIVING FOR THIRTY-SIX YEARS IN THE SAME HOUSE, WHO KINDLY CALLED AT THE CITY ARCHIVES ACCOMPANIED BY TWO OR THREE OF HER GRANDDAUGHTERS, 26 JULY 1940.

SAMUEL BLAIR.

Mrs. Blair said: "Mr. Blair worked for the city for thirty-five years, and we have lived in our home, which we built ourselves, at 1333 Richards Street, for thirty-six years, perhaps it is thirty-seven."

ST. ANDREW'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. FIRST WEDDING.

"We were married in the little school room on Georgia Street which served as the St. Andrew's Church before St. Andrew's was built, on the 9th April 1889; ours was the first marriage in the congregation of St. Andrew's—Rev. E.D. McLaren had just come to Vancouver, and he, fine man, married us. He started Chalmers United Church."

WATER FROM WELLS.

"When we went to St. Andrew's church, we had to take a lantern with us. We lived in the 1200 block when we were first married, and there was two planks about that wide; when we went to church and we had to keep on those planks; if you did not keep on the planks you went down, bang, in the ditch."

"And we got our water from a well in the back yard; dragged it up with a rope; the well was quite deep, too, and of course if you wanted a Saturday night bath in a tub, why, you had to go and haul the water up first."

RICHARDS STREET. BLACKBERRIES.

"When we went to live on Richards Street, I used to go out and pick blackberries right off the back of our lot, and off Pacific Street too; we used to take the child on one arm, and the pail on the other, and pick berries right on Pacific Street and on Richards Street."

"We have five children, two boys and three girls; all are living in Vancouver, and all have their own homes, and they have six children. Our eldest child was:

1. Francis Blair, married to Miss Edwards; they have a son and a daughter.
2. Thomas Blair, married Miss Thompson, and they have one son.
3. Mrs. Coulter, my daughter Ruby, now Mrs. W.R. Coulter; they have a son and a daughter.