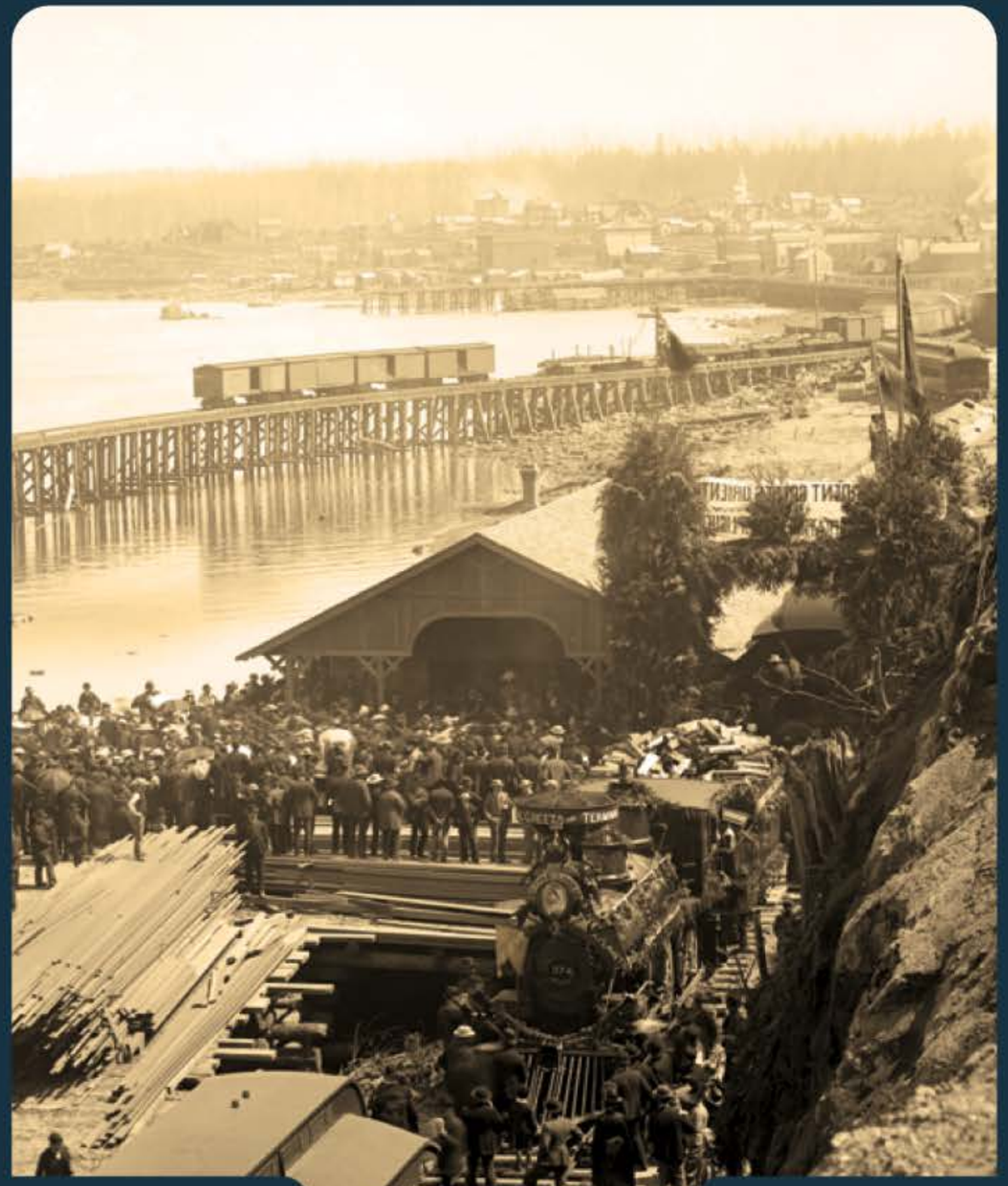


At 12:45 p.m., 23 May 1887, the first CPR passenger train reaches the Vancouver Depot at the foot of Howe Street, hauled by Locomotive #374.

Vancouver Exposed

A History in Photographs

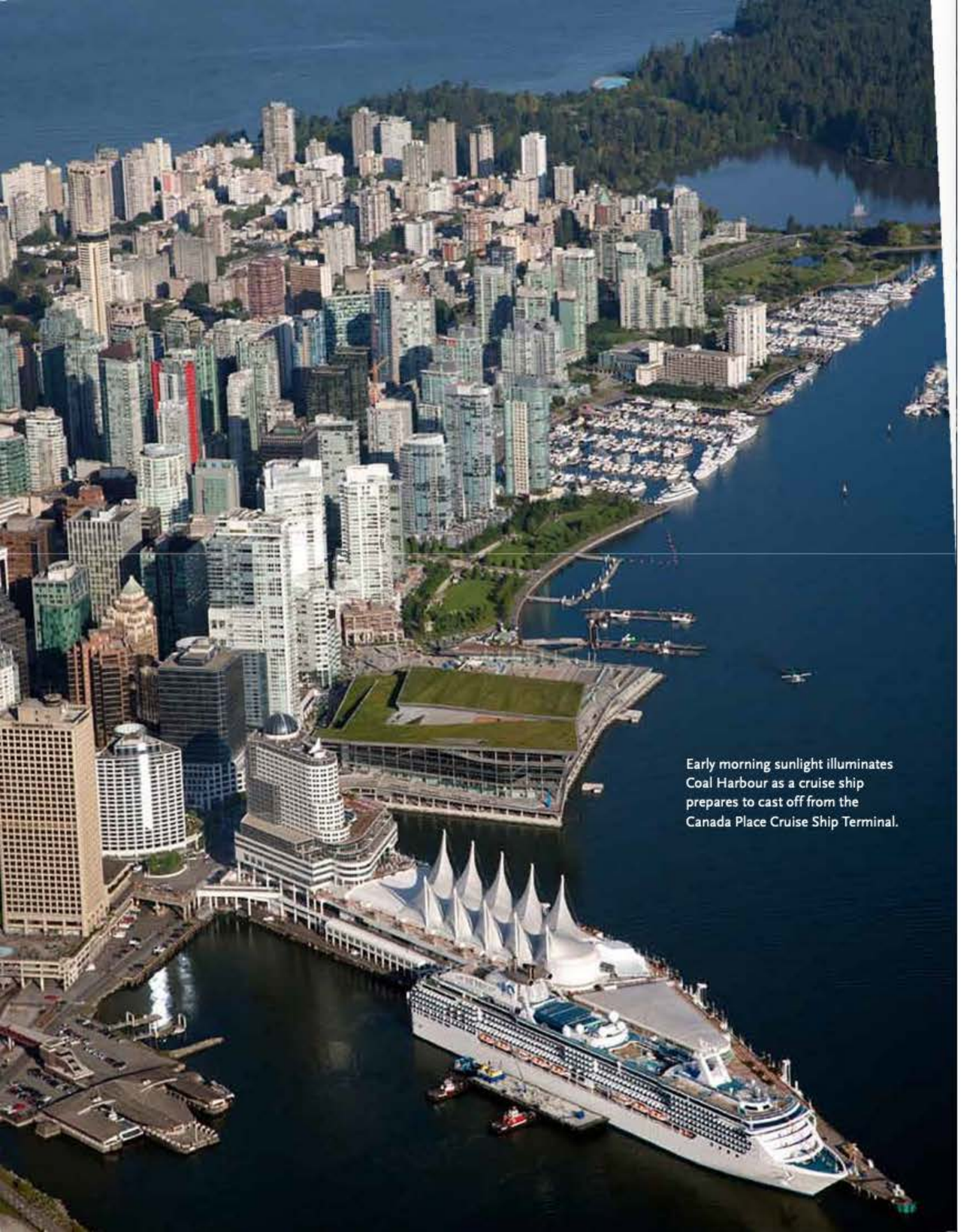
DONALD E. WAITE

Vancouver Exposed

A History in Photographs

DONALD E. WAITE

Foreword by Gregor Robertson, Mayor, City of Vancouver



Early morning sunlight illuminates Coal Harbour as a cruise ship prepares to cast off from the Canada Place Cruise Ship Terminal.

Vancouver Exposed

A HISTORY IN PHOTOGRAPHS

DONALD E. WAITE

Editing: Helmi Braches

Design & Composition: Johannes Schut

Printed & bound in China

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Waite, Donald E. (Donald Ender), 1944-

Vancouver exposed : a history in photographs / Donald E. Waite.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-9866897-0-3

1. Vancouver (B.C.)--History--Pictorial works. I. Title.

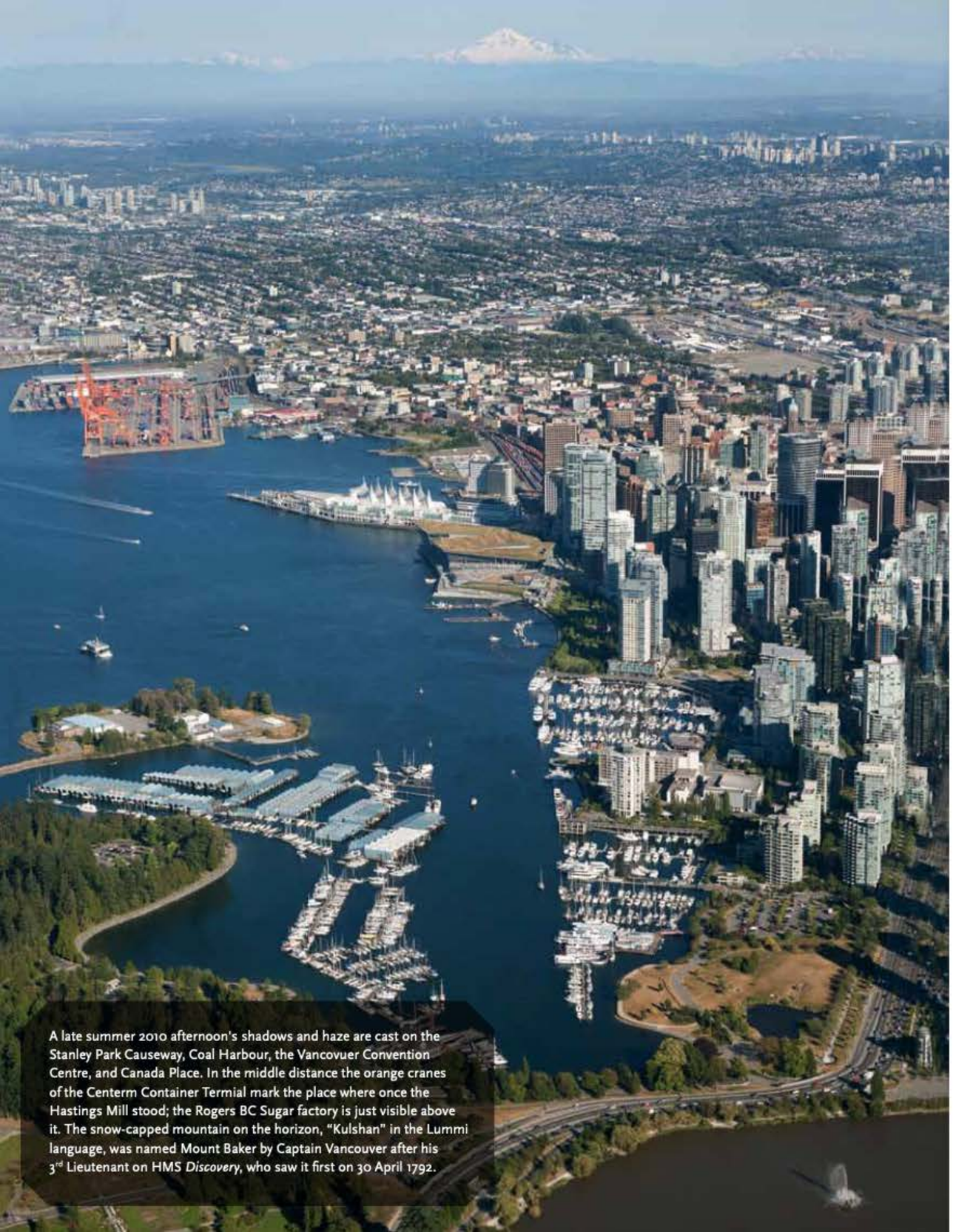
FC3847.37.W35 2010 971.1'33030222 C2010-905188-2

You are reading an edition of this title created to be printed in paperback by Amazon's publication services. Formatting and visual adjustments may be present as such.

Published by:
Waite Bird Photos Inc.
#1 - 23233 Kanaka Way, Maple Ridge, BC V2W 2B7
tel: 604-467-9141 web: www.globalbirdphotos.com

Marketing by:
Single Source Rentals
17957 Kennedy Road, Pitt Meadows, BC V3Y 1Z1
tel: 604-465-1377 web: www.singlesourcerentals.com

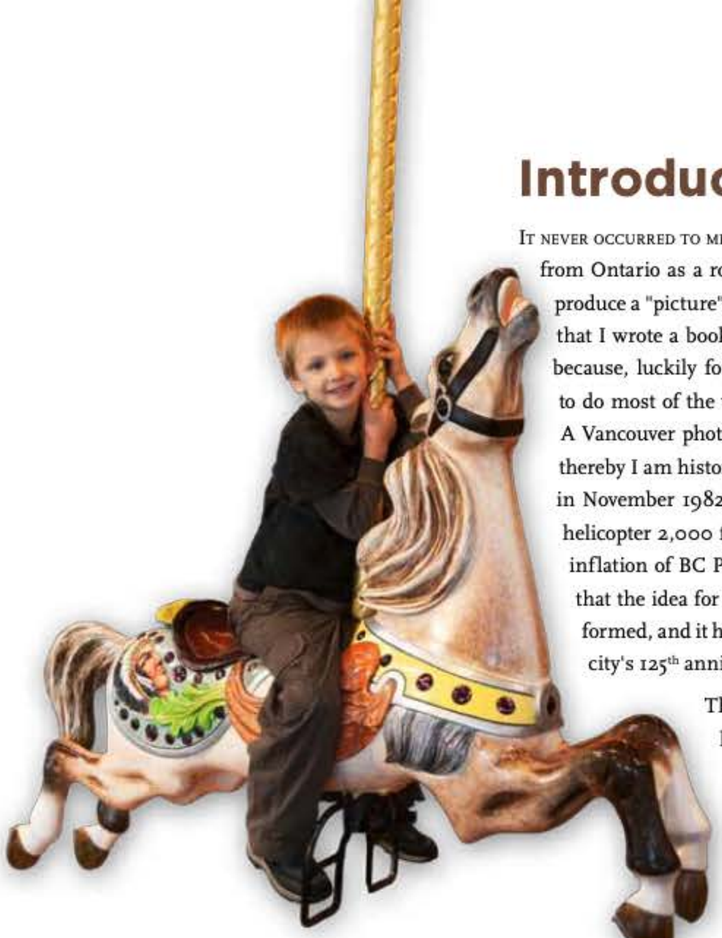
CONTENTS



A late summer 2010 afternoon's shadows and haze are cast on the Stanley Park Causeway, Coal Harbour, the Vancovuer Convention Centre, and Canada Place. In the middle distance the orange cranes of the Centerm Container Termial mark the place where once the Hastings Mill stood; the Rogers BC Sugar factory is just visible above it. The snow-capped mountain on the horizon, "Kulshan" in the Lummi language, was named Mount Baker by Captain Vancouver after his 3rd Lieutenant on HMS *Discovery*, who saw it first on 30 April 1792.

A late summer 2010 afternoon's shadows and haze are cast on the Stanley Park Causeway, Coal Harbour, the Vancovuer Convention Centre, and Canada Place. In the middle distance the orange cranes of the Centerm Container Termial mark the place where once the Hastings Mill stood; the Rogers BC Sugar factory is just visible above it. The snow-capped mountain on the horizon, "Kulshan" in the Lummi language, was named Mount Baker by Captain Vancouver after his 3rd Lieutenant on HMS *Discovery*, who saw it first on 30 April 1792.

Introduction



Author's Grandson Liam Wocknitz enjoys a ride at the Carousel Pavilion at the Burnaby Museum. The carousel was a featured attraction at the Pacific National Exhibition at Hasting Park between 1925 and 1960. Hardly ever has a single location seen as much enjoyment and sadness over the past 125 years as this site, originally called New Brighton.

It never occurred to me 45 years ago, when I arrived out in Burnaby from Ontario as a rookie policeman, that I'd one day attempt to produce a "picture" book on Vancouver. It would be wrong to say that I wrote a book on the "Terminal City" or "Saltwater City" because, luckily for me, several friends and associates agreed to do most of the writing to free me up to sleuth for pictures. A Vancouver photographer once said, "I am photography, and thereby I am history," and that's exactly how I felt on a cold day in November 1982 when I sat half-frozen but exhilarated in a helicopter 2,000 feet above ground taking photographs of the inflation of BC Place Stadium. It was at the time of Expo 86 that the idea for a book titled "Vancovuer Exposed" was first formed, and it has taken until 2010, just slightly ahead of the city's 125th anniversary, to make the dream a reality.

The City of Vancouver had some incredible landscape and portrait photographers in the early days, and fortunately over a million of these images have survived in the Vancouver City Archives and the Vancouver Public Library. It's been very exciting and rewarding for me to go through their archives and select photos that I subsequently restored for this book.

Many outstanding photographs are still in the possession of pioneer Vancouver families, and I thank them for allowing me into their homes to scan photographs or photograph heirlooms. A "history in photographs" of Vancouver can never be complete. On the one hand, there are too many images to choose from, many depicting the same subjects, and on the other hand, there are gaps. So rather than trying to produce a photographic record that couldn't be complete, I have selected images according to the following criteria: first, I feel the photos should be visually rewarding; second, I chose images that have previously not been widely distributed; and third, my priority lay with pictures that are interesting in the sense that they have a story to tell. The result is doubtless a very personal selection, but one I hope the public will appreciate.

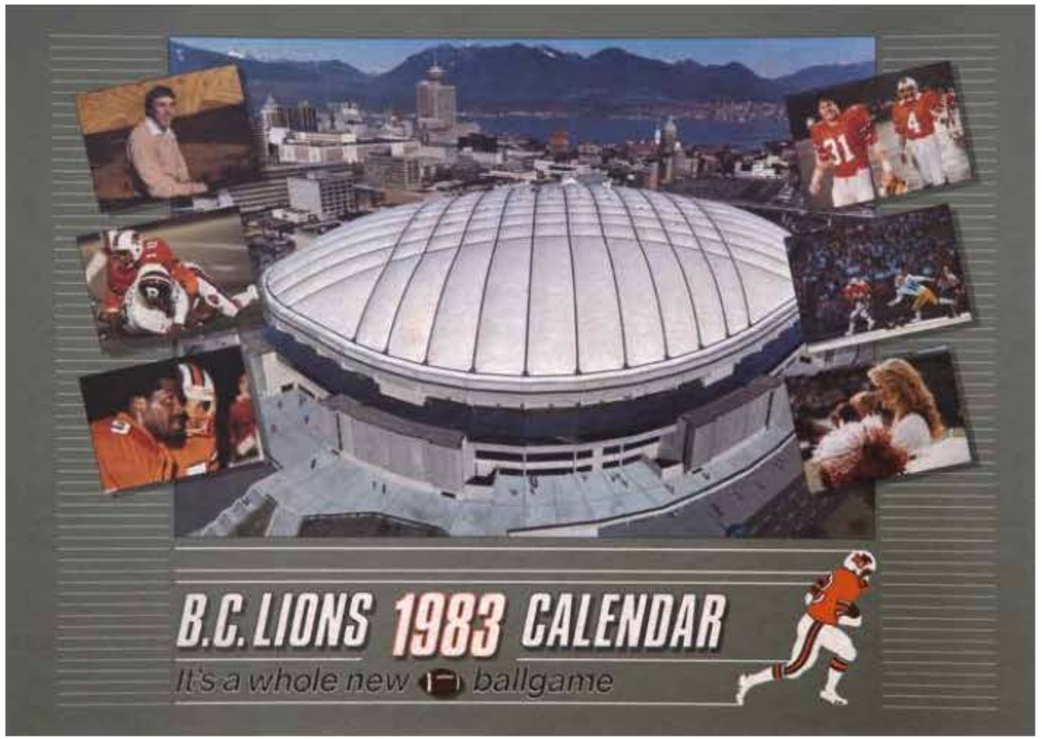
Although the photographs on one level speak for themselves, I felt that some readers would like to know the related stories in words as well. And here I chose the same approach that I used for the pictures: I am not trying to present a new complete history of Vancouver, but rather I selected stories that go with the photographs I found interesting. Wherever possible I included personal accounts, as they, like the pictures, create the liveliest images in the reader's mind.

Although the seed for this book was planted more than 25 years ago, it began in earnest only two years ago, and since then I've collected almost enough material for two books.

I am happy to say that the production of this volume has been one of the most enjoyable projects of my life—and the people with whom I came into contact as a result, some of the most interesting in all of Canada.

Donald E. Waite

Maple Ridge, July 2010



BC Place Stadium when inflated on 14 November 1982 was the largest air-supported dome stadium in the world. On that crisp and cold winter day the author was seated in a helicopter hovering over False Creek and snapped photographs. The top half of this image from the BC Lions 1983 calendar is an air photo, while the bottom half is artwork.

Acknowledgements

This book is the work of many people, with my input being mostly the selection of the final photographs and the chronology of the stories, plus the writing of the stories not otherwise marked. The first person in Vancouver to help me with history was the late Major James S. Matthews, then City Archivist. I was an RCMP constable in Maple Ridge in 1968, trying to write a story on the oldest church on the mainland of BC for the *RCMP Quarterly*. I contacted Major Matthews by phone, and he sent me the requested material. I learned only recently that he must have been over 90 years of age when he talked to me.

Seven or eight years later, I was writing the *The Langley Story Illustrated* and interviewed a lady in New Westminster who introduced me to her friend Percy Williams, the fastest runner in the world in 1928. It pleases me that he is included in this book.

Due to the nature of this book I spent many hours in archives and had the pleasure of encountering many helpful people: at the Vancouver City Archives — Leslie Mobbs, Heather Gordon, Carol Haber, Megan Schlase, Nancy Mulligan, Jeannie Hounslow, Melanie Hardbattle, Glen Dingwall and Chak Yung; Vancouver Public Library — Kate Russell, Andrew Martin, Melina Bowden, Kim McCarthy, Michelle Greig and Alison Rintoul; British Columbia Provincial Archives — Gary Mitchell, Don Bourdon and Derek Swallow; Beatty Street Drill Hall — Keith Maxwell, Bruce Kadonoff, Archie Steacy, Ron LeBlanc, Dwayne H. Snow and Diana Morency; Bessborough Armoury — Peter N. Moogk and Victor Stevenson; Seaforth Armouries — Colin Stevens; Grand Masonic Lodge of BC & Yukon — Trevor McKeown; Vancouver Maritime Museum — Lisa Glandt; Canadian Pacific Railway Archives in Montreal — Jo-Anne Colby; the Vancouver Jewish Museum — Jennifer Yuhasz, and at the Old Hastings Mill Store Museum — the Native Daughters of B.C. Post #1. I must also thank Debbie Sparrow of the Musqueam First Nations, Larry A. Hope and Arthur R. 'Bud' Ryckman.

I am grateful to all the people who have contributed text to this book: Daphne Sleigh, Jacqui Underwood, John Atkin, Keith Maxwell, Dan Lemieux, Jim Harrison, Henry Wing Yip, Linda Reid neé Kawamoto, Bernie Kilroe, Kinley Engdahl-Johnson, Allan Duncan, Janet Nicol, Norma L. Young, Lerae (Mrs. Hugh) Brigden née Parrott, Diana Morency and Dwayne Snow.

I also would like to acknowledge the many individuals who provided stories, photographs or other help: Pat Wilson, John Symons and Peter Cherniavsky for the Rogers Sugar story; David Lomas, Steve Nasby, Frank Kennedy and Gordon Westrand, with the International Longshore & Warehouse Union; Pat "Trish" McGeer for the Ballantyne Pier story; members of the Austin George Edward Taylor family regarding Austin Cottrell Taylor; Grace and Hoy Yip for the Yip Sang story; Sohan Singh, Sohan Singh Pooni and Kesar Bhatti for the *Komagata Maru* story; Betty Guinness and Glenn Madsen, Cultural Program Coordinator with the District of West Vancouver, for the Lions Gate Bridge story; Vern Bethel, owner of the 1939 Royal McLaughlin Buick; David Ritchie and Crystal Shostak, RCMP Squamish, for the Railway Hotels & Lions Gate Bridge stories; and Jacqui Underwood needs to be mentioned again for much valued assistance in bringing the book to fruition.

Many of the descendants of the pioneers allowed me to make high-resolution files with my laptop and scanner at their kitchen tables of images that until now have never been published.

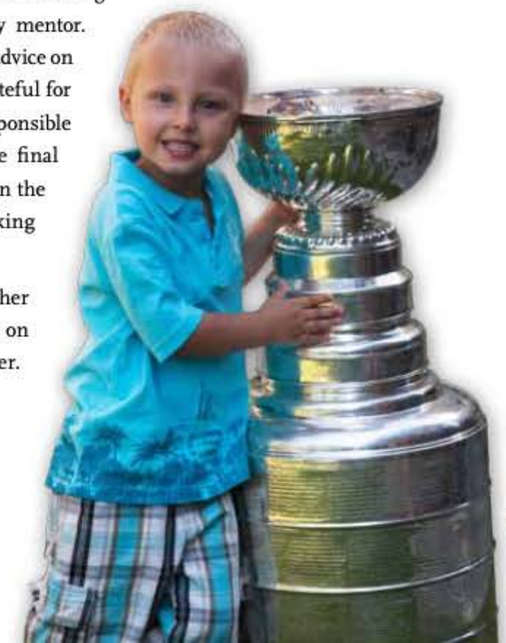
I want to especially thank Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson for writing the foreword and Premier Gordon M. Campbell for writing a testimonial.

Thank you also to the individuals and businesses who, by placing an advertisement, have made it possible to keep the selling price of the book at a reasonable level.

There are four people whose support and guidance ensured that this book project would become a realty. Of course, I am referring to Helmi Braches, my editor, and Fred Braches, my mentor. Through the entire two years Fred's generous giving of advice on a number of topics and issues was invaluable. I am grateful for Helmi's careful edits; nonetheless I am ultimately responsible for any errors. I must thank Johannes Schut for the final design. He and I spent many hours working together on the book, moving the photographs and text about and making decisions on the book's layout.

And lastly I thank my wife and soul mate Tina for her unwavering and loving support while this project was on my mind for almost two years. I dedicate this book to her.

The author's grandson Brett Wocknitz poses with the most-sought-after and most-prestigious hockey prize in North America — Lord Stanley's Cup.



Captain Vancouver

For 10,000 years the land belonged to the First Nations people.

In 1791 Don José María Narváez, commander of the small Spanish sailing vessel *Santa Saturnina*, was the first European to ever sail a vessel on Burrard Inlet waters. The Squamish First Nation at Elyamu (Jericho) were astounded to see a strange apparition with "three dead trees" on it, and elderly sages concluded that it was an island that had broken free from its fastenings beneath the sea. The younger braves from the village watched and saw men on board with pallid, almost white, faces. The village elders believed that the dead were coming back. Narváez was an explorer, and his rough maps were perfectly intelligible to a seaman.

A year later Captain Vancouver, after whom the city was named, arrived on the west coast in His Majesty's Ship *Discovery* and began exploring Burrard Inlet. Here's what the British Navy Captain Vancouver wrote in his journal:

> On a nearer approach it was discovered that they were a brig and a schooner, wearing the colours of Spanish vessels of war ... these vessels proved to be the brig Sutil, under command of Señor Don D. Galiano, with the schooner Mexicana, commanded by Señor Don C. Valdés. Señor Galiano, who spoke a little English, informed me that they had sailed from Nootka on the 5th of June to complete an examination of the Gulf of Georgia, which had, in the preceding year 1971, been surveyed by some Spanish naval officers whose chart they produced.

On 13 June 1791 Captain Vancouver and some sailors took two boats and paddled them through the First Narrows to the eastern end of Burrad Inlet. As the boats passed through the narrows, First Nations braves from the village of Whoi-Whoi greeted them in dugout canoes and showered the strangers with great handfuls of soft white down feathers. These floated on the surface of the water and gave the first white visitors a hearty welcome. The sailors slept on the beach at the easternmost end of Burrard Inlet and left early the next morning for the mother ship.

Captain Vancouver's ship *Discovery* was a British warship adequately equipped with the finest surveying instruments.

Opposite Top
Before photography, there was painting. British Navy Captain George Vancouver is depicted on the deck of the Spanish Brig *Sutil* in conversation with Don. D. Galiano, off Point Grey. Distinguished Canadian historical artist John Innes was commissioned in the mid-twentieth century to recreate this 1792 moment.

Opposite Bottom
Another John Innes oil painting shows Captain Vancouver and some sailors in two small skiffs, accompanied by friendly local First Nations men in dugout canoes exploring Burrard Inlet. The Lions can be seen in the background.

Following Pages
Today's celebrated marine artist John Horton of Richmond depicts the same scene as Captain Vancouver and his crew entered the First Narrows to explore Burrard Inlet and are greeted by the locals.

BEFORE THE WHITE MAN CAME. Burrard Inlet and English Bay were strewn with First Nation villages and landmarks at the arrival of Captain Vancouver in 1792. The familiar places were first recorded by City Archivist James Skitt Matthews in the mid-1930s and were overlaid in 2010 on artist Jim McKenzie's oil interpretation of the ancient landscape, showing the continued use of the region's major sites.

LOOKING EAST FROM 10,000 FEET. The aerial photographer and author attempted to recreate Jim McKenzie's oil painting of 1792 to show the dramatic changes to Greater Vancouver in just over two hundred years. This photograph, taken from 10,000 feet, shows the damage from storms. On 19 December 2006 a series of storms battered Vancovuer with near-hurricane worce winds that uprooted or simply snapped 1,000 of Stanley Park's first growth Western Red Cedar and Douglas Fir trees in the vicinity of Prospect Point and Siwash Rock.

LOOKING EAST FROM 10,000 FEET. The aerial photographer and author attempted to recreate Jim McKenzie's oil painting of 1792 to show the dramatic changes to Greater Vancouver in just over two hundred years. This photograph, taken from 10,000 feet, shows the damage from storms. On 19 December 2006 a series of storms battered Vancouver with near-hurricane worce winds that uprooted or simply snapped 1,000 of Stanley Park's first growth Western Red Cedar and Douglas Fir trees in the vicinity of Prospect Point and Siwash Rock.

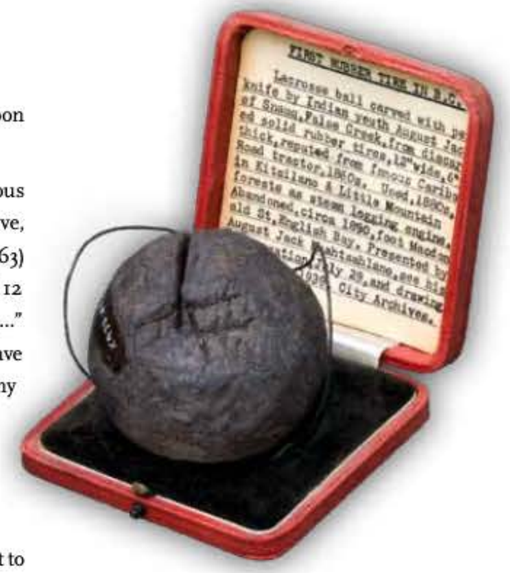
father, when Vancouver was Port Granville, a lumber- fuelled saloon village, before the coming of the railway.

Supple Jack had chosen to ignore the designation of numerous Squamish villages on the peninsula as part of a government reserve, but he did cut himself a deal with the Royal Engineers (1859-1863) for surveying work and built himself up some livestock. "We had 12 cows running around and 8 pigs, [sold meat] to the logging camp..." They had stables with two horses. "The horses always used to have a big time on Queen's Day; race in Victoria, Westminster; ...my father made lots of money winning race." Other times they just rode. "When we wanted to ride to town there was a trail right round the head of what is now Lost Lagoon, around by Second Beach... a trail through the forest from Chaythoos to Gastown."

The Khatsahlano family was the only family at Chaythoos, but just to the east, 11 families occupied the ancient village of Whoi Whoi, site of today's Lumberman's Arch. "The big house was about 600 feet long and 60 feet wide. That was the real powwow house," recalled Khatsahlano, "six families lived in it." The rest of the families lived in smaller homes strung along the waterfront, according to sketches he later drew for Major Matthews. There were also the houses of the dead, native graves all along the First Narrows, those with glass panes indicating high rank. By 1883, Supple Jack was interred in one of them.

August Jack's hard-playing, hard-working father was kicked while milking a cow and hit his head against the stall. "The grave where my father was buried had a cedar shake roof, and it was on cedar posts. It was about ten feet long and six feet wide. Lots of room for a coffin inside. And there were glass windows all around. The coffin was covered with a red blanket."

Things got hard for the Khatsahlano family. Qwywhat had to milk the cows and deliver five gallons by canoe every morning to the region's largest employer, the Hastings Sawmill. The young August Jack and his brother would rake herring at Coal Harbour, where the harvest was plentiful. But it was not easy for a young boy to manoeuvre a canoe in the currents around Brockton Point to Chaythoos, and the family talked about making a more permanent move to the sheltered waters of False Creek. It took a surveyor's axe to make that happen.



When August Jack was a young man rambling along a traditional trail from Kitsilano Beach to Jericho on what is now the natural foreshore of Point Grey Road, he came across the remains of the old Cariboo Tractor. The tractor had seen its day, paid its dues building the Cariboo Road through the Interior in the 1860s, and then later served in the logging camp at Jericho as Jerry Rogers's steam tractor. Khatsahlano's words to Major Matthews upon donating to the City Archives this lacrosse ball that he hand-carved from its rubber tire, "I took the rubber from the old junk as was lying on the beach at the foot of MacDonald Street. They put the engine on a scow and took it away; they were through logging. After that, oxen were used, mules and skid road—it was cheaper. They took the engine to the Hastings Mill." On display at the Old Hastings Mill Store Museum.

DRESSING UP. Chief August Jack Khatsahlano looking regal in buckskin and feathered headdress of the Prairies. Circa 1930.

Above

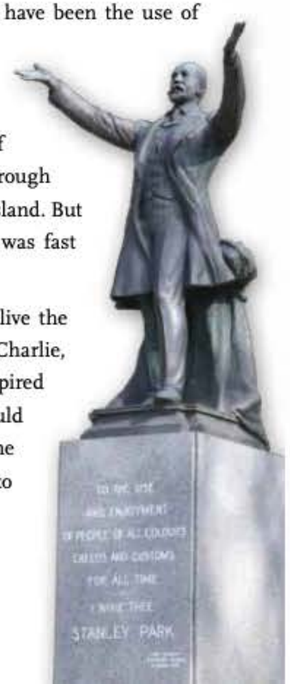
Lord Stanley of Preston, the sixth Governor General of Canada, is perhaps best known for having donated the Stanley Cup that was later handed down to the National Hockey League.

"When they make Stanley Park Road we [were] eating breakfast in our house. Someone make noise outside. Chop our house! ...chop the corner of our house. We all get up, go out see what was the matter. The man says, 'We're surveying the road.' My sister asks... 'Whose road? Is it Whiteman's?' Of course, Whiteman did not say park ... The man said 'When the road goes by here, you're going to have lots of money'... But, they have not paid yet!"

The roadway cut right through the house, and to add insult to injury, at an official ceremony in 1889 when Lord Stanley, the Governor General of Canada, formally dedicated the Park named in his honour, it was on a site described as "an old Indian clearing." It was actually the gravesite of Supple Jack, whose remains the family had had the foresight to remove as they retreated to Snauq.

"It was from [Snauq] that I saw Vancouver burn in June 1886," remembered August Jack. "Afterwards, as a boy, I used to go over and search the ruins for nails. When we went to Gastown we went by canoe ...to the south end of Carrall Street and across over to the Burrard Inlet on a sort of wagon trail. What would have been the use of struggling through the bush when it was so easy to paddle?" At high tide, in the 1800s, another spirited canoe circumnavigation could be made of Stanley Park, via a creek at Second Beach through Lost Lagoon, which made the peninsula an island. But the wilderness August Jack knew as a boy was fast disappearing. So was the memory of it.

It was his new extended family that kept alive the old stories, especially his stepfather Jericho Charlie, whom he described as "a good man" who inspired him in his youth. "He had a big canoe, would carry a ton or more ... He used to go from the Old Hastings Mill Store on the Burrard Inlet to



Right

The statue of Lord Stanley welcoming everyone to the park that bears his name. The first Governor General to visit British Columbia, the statue captures the moment in 1889 that he is said to have thrown his arms in the air and dedicated the park "to the use and enjoyment of people of all colours, creeds, and customs for all time."

The Great Name and Land Grab

The family name of Khatsahlano was appropriated by the Canadian Pacific Railway to enhance real estate development in the early 1900s. Pioneer Vancouver postmaster Jonathan Miller had already proposed it as a sub-post office for Greer's Beach, but it took streetcar signage as a promotion of the "new suburb" on Dominion Day in 1905 to get the momentum going. Local archaeologist Professor Charles Hill-Tout claims to have modified the spelling from the original name and indeed to have chosen the name himself. "Mr. Miller referred the request to me and I chose the hereditary name of one of the chiefs of the Squamish." Whoever chose the name, it had the right historic ring to it that sells real estate. At the turn of the century, the village of Snauq was surrounded by CPR landowners and developers like David Oppenheimer and Robert G. Tatlow. The Province had already granted CP land in 1886 and 1902 for the railway. Subsequently the land north of the CPR right-of-way was placed on sale and the first lot sold in 1909. But a bigger land deal was about to come. By 1913, when the BC government pushed through an arrangement to buy the 72 acres known as Kitsilano Reserve No. 6, without federal authority, for $218,750, it came as no surprise. Khatsahlano and his people were loaded on to scows and moved to the North Shore and Squamish Valley. Their homes at Snauq were burned, wiping out any trace of the village save a few hops and apple trees.

In no time, the federal government protested the deal for the Vanier Park area, and Ottawa bought out the province's acquisition. But it wasn't until June 2000 that the Squamish Band reached a $92.5-million out-of-court settlement with the feds to settle claims to former reserves in Kitsilano, North Vancouver, Squamish and more than a dozen other parcels of land. A few years later the BC Court of Appeal would uphold a decision restoring about 10 acres of Kitsilano land to the Squamish Band, 116 years after it was expropriated for use by the CPR. That land, part of the ancestral home of the Squamish people (and the birthplace of August Jack) can be found under the shadow of the Burrard Street Bridge and adjacent to the Molson Brewery. In May 2010, the Band, composed of 3,600 members, declared plans to build an "eight-acre commercial and residential development" on what remains of the original site, bordered by blackberry bushes and swampy woodland to the west, condos to the east, and the bridge above.

William Cornelius Van Horne, the unstoppable president of the Canadian Pacific Railway, oversaw the building of the transcontinental railway, assuring his company benefitted all along the track to the terminus, with major real estate acquisition in Vancouver. Also credited with launching CPR's sea transport division, Empress luxury liners and the company's luxury hotel business.

CHILDHOOD MEMORIES. Squamish village of Whoi-Whoi as it appeared in 1886, just prior to the creation of Stanley Park. Vancouver City Archivist Major Matthews commissioned the oil painting by August Jack Khatsahlano in 1936. The name of the ancient village, updated as Xwayxway, (pronounced "kwhy-kway") was put forward by the Squamish Nation, in 2010, as a possible new name for the park.

Jericho, loaded with hay and oats for the horses and oxen working at Jerry Rogers logging camp." August's mother also regaled him with tales of the old days, like when the first white man came up the Squamish on the "floating island with the three dead trees." Even his wife, Swanamia, seemed of another time, known as the only remaining Squamish woman in Vancouver who continued to wear the traditional shawl.

Over the years Khatsahlano often reminded people that he could not read or write, yet as he grew older his memory seemed to grow more acute. In his life, he went from logging contractor, hunter and trapper to prospector, guide and medicine man, adding dance performer and carver along the way, but he is best known for his storytelling and preserving the original Squamish language and place names of Vancouver. One of his last projects, "Squamish Legends...The First People" (1966), was a collaborative work with his half-brother, Domanic Charlie. Yet, in spite of all his recognition, he was never without struggle. In 1913, again he was forced to move, along with all his people, this time from Snauq, when "the government of the day made an unsavoury deal for an industrial venture." He finally retired to Squamish but not without being forced to move at least one more time to make room for the Pacific Great Eastern Railway.

August Jack Khatsahlano would eventually have the last word. Among many of the Squamish in the logging camps of his youth, he became recognized as a man of good judgement and knowledge, and so, with time, he was made Chief of the Tribal Council. Also, during his youth August had been initiated into the Society of Power Dancers of the Squamish, after finding his "power" after long hours of solitude in the wilderness. In his elder years, he sought more solitude in the mountains and his image grew larger than life. He became the iconic "last great Squamish medicine man," who knew the curative power of local plants and "whose sensitive fingers were said to hold the ancient power of healing," and was also said to have healed his own blindness. Even his grandfather's name, Khatsahlano, for which he had to work to own in his youth, was elevated to baronial-style status with its translation into a fanciful English meaning, "Lord of the Lakes," in reference to the long-gone muskrat ponds by his home village of Snauq. The village is long gone, as is the old graveyard, the apple orchard, the sand bars of False Creek, the fish traps, the multitudes of duck and the swish-swish of a sea thick with smelt. But in a tree near the shore, a stone's throw from the original site near the Burrard Street Bridge, a pair of eagles returns to nest, year after year. August Jack would have liked that.

Pioneer Victoria photographer Frederick Dally captured this picture on his way up to the Cariboo Gold Fields in 1868. On the photo he wrote: "When I was taking this photograph the boy [in front of the small cabin] imitated all my movements with an empty beer bottle and a coat over his head as if he was doing the same thing." The photo shows a Hudson's Bay Company blanket drying out in the afternoon sun at what Dally termed an "Indian rancherie" on Lost Lagoon. It was located not far from where miners camped at Second Beach near the First Nations village of Staitwouk on the peninsula that became Stanley Park. The lodges were made of thick cedar slabs, split with deer's horn wedges, and built with stone hammers and chisels. According to early Squamish belief, the Great Spirit bestowed upon the first man three things that he could not do without: a wife, a salmon trap and a chisel.

EARLIEST KNOWN PHOTOGRAPH OF HASTINGS MILL SETTLEMENT AND GRANVILLE POST OFFICE, CIRCA 1872. The barque on its side is the Dutch barque *Cornelis* of Amsterdam. It was towed back to the mill and beached after being stranded in August 1871 at the entrance to the Howe Sound, as it was laden with lumber and bound for Valparaiso, Chile. Right behind the barque (next to the cookhouse with the copula) is the mill store and post office. It can be found today on Point Grey at the foot of Alma, as the Old Hastings Mill Store Museum. To the far right, on top of the hill, with the white roof, is mill manager Captain James A. Raymur's cottage. The building to its left is Vancouver's first school, the Hastings Sawmill School.

Vancouver's Hastings Mill

As I went down by Hastings Mill I lingered in my going
To smell the smell of piled-up planks and feel the salt wind blowing,
To hear the cables fret and creak and the riggings stir and sigh
Shipmate, oh my shipmate! in those days gone by...

As I went down by Hastings Mill I saw a ship there lying,
About her masts and yards, the little clouds of sunset flying;
And half I took her for the ghost of one I used to know...
"Shipmate, oh, my shipmate!" many years ago, So many years ago.

—By the time Cicely Fox Smith, a Vancouver Island typist, nautical poet and late Victorian adventurer, began to reminisce about Hastings Mill in her book of poems *Sailor Town*, published in New York in 1914, the romance of the tall ship days were numbered. Although tall ships would continue to load lumber for at least another two decades in the port of Vancouver, the glory days had long since waned.

When the world was young

by Jacqui Underwood

The clamour and steam of Hastings Mill, its roaring burner and tall-masted ships at the pier, dominated Vancouver's harbour for more than half a century, from the late 1860s to the mid-1920s. Only a few years before it shut down, the Hastings Sawmill was still the largest exporter of lumber in Western Canada. But waterfront real estate had proved to be too valuable. The operation was slated for dismantling to make way for port development. All but forgotten in the "march to progress" was the pivotal role the mill had played as the city's founding industry. It had turned a colonial backwater of primeval forest and native villages into a centre of commerce and magnet for immigration. Because of the mill, Vancouver was born and a door on the Burrard Inlet was opened to the world.

AN AMBITIOUS DREAMER. Captain Edward Stamp built the first sawmill on the south shore of Burrard Inlet in 1865. Commonly called Stamp's Mill, it was owned by the British Columbia and Vancouver Island Spar, Lumber and Sawmill Company, of which Stamp was the manager. In the late 1860s, Stamp's mill and Moody's mill on the North Shore put Burrard Inlet and British Columbia lumber on the world map. Five years later Stamp's Mill would be renamed Hastings Saw Mill, under new ownership, with an embittered Stamp moving on to other enterprises.

Captain Stamp's Mill

It began with trees. Big trees. The tallest, straightest timbers in the world stood on what is now Point Grey, waiting to be harvested. In 1858, thousands of rough and unruly Americans invaded the Hudson's Bay precinct of British Columbia in a mad scramble for gold on the Fraser. A British colony was quickly proclaimed to keep order. Caught up in the heady dreams of making a fortune in the new world was Captain Edward Stamp of England's merchant navy. His "El Dorado" was lumber and his first enterprise in the region had taken place the year before: gathering spars in the Puget Sound. He returned to run a store in Victoria, then built a sawmill at Port Alberni, but its mountainous location caused its demise. Still, he couldn't keep his mind off those spars. By 1865, his ambition of being a lumber king, had gelled on the Burrard Inlet, on the west coast of the new colony of British Columbia—"The last great frontier."

It wasn't total wilderness. Vast tracts of land had been registered for the Crown, and the Royal Engineers had blazed trails from the mainland's capital of New Westminster, mapping out reserves and lots. Oblate missionaries visited the First Nations settlements around the Inlet, while the discovery of coal briefly attracted the first white settlers to a bay on the south shore, the newly named Coal Harbour. On the north shore, in 1862 the first lumbermen had built a water-powered mill, but it was foundering. Stamp made his move. His venture on the inlet included plans for the construction of a sawmill near the Squamish village of Whoi-Whoi on what later became Stanley Park, with Beaver Lake as the intended water supply for the mill's steam-run equipment. There were complications. The property overlapped an adjacent naval reserve, the rip tides of the Narrows could only spell disaster, and all the while the resident natives watched askance. Vancouver's unlikely "founding father" moved up inlet.

For the new mill site, Stamp chose a prominent point on the south shore of the Burrard Inlet, halfway between the two narrows, just east of a maple-lined sandy cove that was "perfect for canoes." The cove was next to Coal Harbour, part of the town reserve allotted by the Royal Engineers. But the adjacent land chosen for the mill site was "old government reserve," and it would be freed up for Stamp's taking.

His British Columbia and Vancouver Island Spar, Lumber and Sawmill Company had been injected with 100, 000 pounds British capital. Among the company directors were the notorious meddling Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works, Colonel Richard Clement Moody, and his former private secretary Robert Burnaby. Stamp acquired 243 acres of government reserve land for a $1.00 an acre. The former merchant seaman began to clear land and build.

Although Stamp was just the front man backed by Moody and his British investors, the mill operations were soon dubbed Stamp's Mill.

The new mill property extended along Burrard Inlet from today's Carrall Street to Heatley Avenue, south to the northern shore of False Creek, which in those days went all the way to today's Clark Drive. The camp itself was set close to the edge of the ancient forest on the inlet. To the east, in KumKumlay, there were a First Nations longhouse and cedar homes along the shore, a ready workforce for the mill. Water would be carried by flume from the streams that flowed from Trout Lake, for the mill's steam-powered machinery. Construction also began in Victoria, on the steamer *Isabel*, a 146-foot-long side-wheeler, the first tug to be owned by any sawmill on the mainland. Its engine and the state-of-the-art mill equipment were due to arrive from Scotland by the end of the year.

The First Nations traditional hunting grounds became Stamp's kingdom. Logs would be gleaned from 15,000 acres of virgin wilderness, between Burrard Inlet and the mighty Fraser, from the tip of Point Grey to modern-day Cambie Street. Unlike the hills of the Alberni operation, the land was low-lying, making the plentiful logs easy to cut and skid to the sea or directly to the mill. Stamp's company received a 21-year timber lease.

That summer he enlisted the skills of the legendary Jeremiah Rogers, known in British Columbia as the "greatest woodsman of them all." Originally from New Brunswick, the big popular man had worked with Stamp since his Alberni days and took on the job of harvesting those giant spars from the forests of Point Grey, from his base at his self-named Jerry's Cove (Jericho) on English Bay. The first load of 251 magnificent spars were shipped aboard the *Aquila* to Cork, Ireland. The reputation of BC lumber was established and Stamp's Mill was on the map.

THE GREATEST WOODSMAN OF THEM ALL. Jeremiah Rogers was a respected and innovative logger who is credited as the first to use a steam-driven tractor to haul logs out of the bush. His finely selected spars at Point Grey brought Stamp world attention. Later, after a falling out, Rogers became a free timber agent, competing with the Captain. The district of Jericho is named for his logging camp at Jerry's Cove, modern-day Jericho Beach.

Edward Davis Heatley took a hands-off approach to his ownership of the Hastings Sawmill Company, while his partner, George Campbell, was closer to the action, operating out of Victoria. Heatley, who maintained an address in San Francisco where their partnership, Dickson, De Wolf and Company was based, speculated in Vancouver real estate leading up to the first city election, in which he was represented as an 1886 Vancouver city voter. As the affluent owners of Hastings Mill from 1870-1889, Heatley and Campbell are both remembered in street names near the old mill site.

Across the water on the North Shore, altered, improved and under new ownership, the Burrard Inlet Mills re-opened. American Sewell Moody would create in Moodyville the perfect template for a mill town, keeping his men dry and working sober, complete with religious services on site. Unlike Moody, Stamp made no effort to improve the living conditions of his workers, or for that matter, interfere with them at all. The first south shore mill settlement grew up hodge-podge, with deserters from sailing ships and busted refugees from the gold mines left to their own devices. Also a large part of the workforce were the Burrard Inlet Squamish and Kanakas (Hawaiins who had worked with the Hudson's Bay Company), all settling where they would, creating little gardens with chickens and pigs, in a completely original West Coast lifestyle that was not at all temperate. It was soon to be complemented by a rowdy Gastown, once Stamp's Mill operations got underway.

Stamp had bigger fish to fry. After his aborted effort at Stanley Park he was eager to get the mill going at the new site, especially now that the North Shore was back in business. One can imagine his dismay when the barque *Kent*, direct from Glasgow, unloaded the new mill machinery at Stamp's wharf in December of 1865, and it was discovered in the New Year that an essential piece of equipment was lacking. It happened again with the next shipment. Although he sued and won damages from the shipper (the inlet's first lawsuit), valuable time had been lost. The mill did not begin operation until June 1867.

Nevertheless, Stamp's first year of mill business was the biggest Burrard Inlet had ever seen—4,101,000 feet of lumber, 100,000 shingles and 2000 spars on 14 vessels, far outstripping his rival Moody. 1867 saw a record four deep-water vessels in Burrard Inlet at the same time, and the *Isabel* proved her worth in quick dispatching of pioneer cargo. Another shipment of spars brought more praise. "Jeremiah Rogers, the cutter" and "Stamp, the shipper," became known for the fine quality of their spars, "probably the best ever shipped from any part of the world." By 1868, the inlet was a very busy place, with Moody building a second mill to keep up with demand. Burrard Inlet lumber had won its place on the global market.

In the woods, three new towns were being born: Moodyville on the North Shore, New Brighton (the "resort spot" at "the end of the road" from New Westminster) and Stamp's Mill, known colloquially as "Gastown," for the neighbouring bars that had sprung up next to mill property. With six logging camps taking out spars and logs and some smaller establishments specializing in shingles and ship's knees, there was employment for 300 men. Everybody was making money.

But not Stamp. By 1869, the company was broke, so Stamp returned to England to plead his case, to buy some time. But it was too late. He had a falling out with his investors, and the vast assets of the mill went on the auction block in Victoria. Much to Stamp's chagrin they were sold, for "a mere fraction of the value," to George Campbell of London, England, and Edward Davis Heatley of San Francisco under the name Dickson, De Wolf and Company. Even the *Isabel* was practically given away in Stamp's eyes. Ever the builder, Stamp, would die a few years and lawsuits later, still in the game, expanding another BC industry, salmon canning.

Although he would not live to see it, the visionary sawmill on Burrard Inlet that Stamp started would reign as Vancouver's first and longest lasting industry into the 20th century, paralleling the history of the developing world of the day. It began its life producing enormous amounts of spars supplying the globe's mercantile ships with the tallest, straightest masts the world had ever seen. From the 1860s on its timbers would build whole towns in South America, baronial homes in Britain, Australia, and New Zealand and the imperial palaces of China. And in the Pacific: California, Hawaii and Japan. Eventually production would culminate with the world's first high-end semi-prefabricated homes.

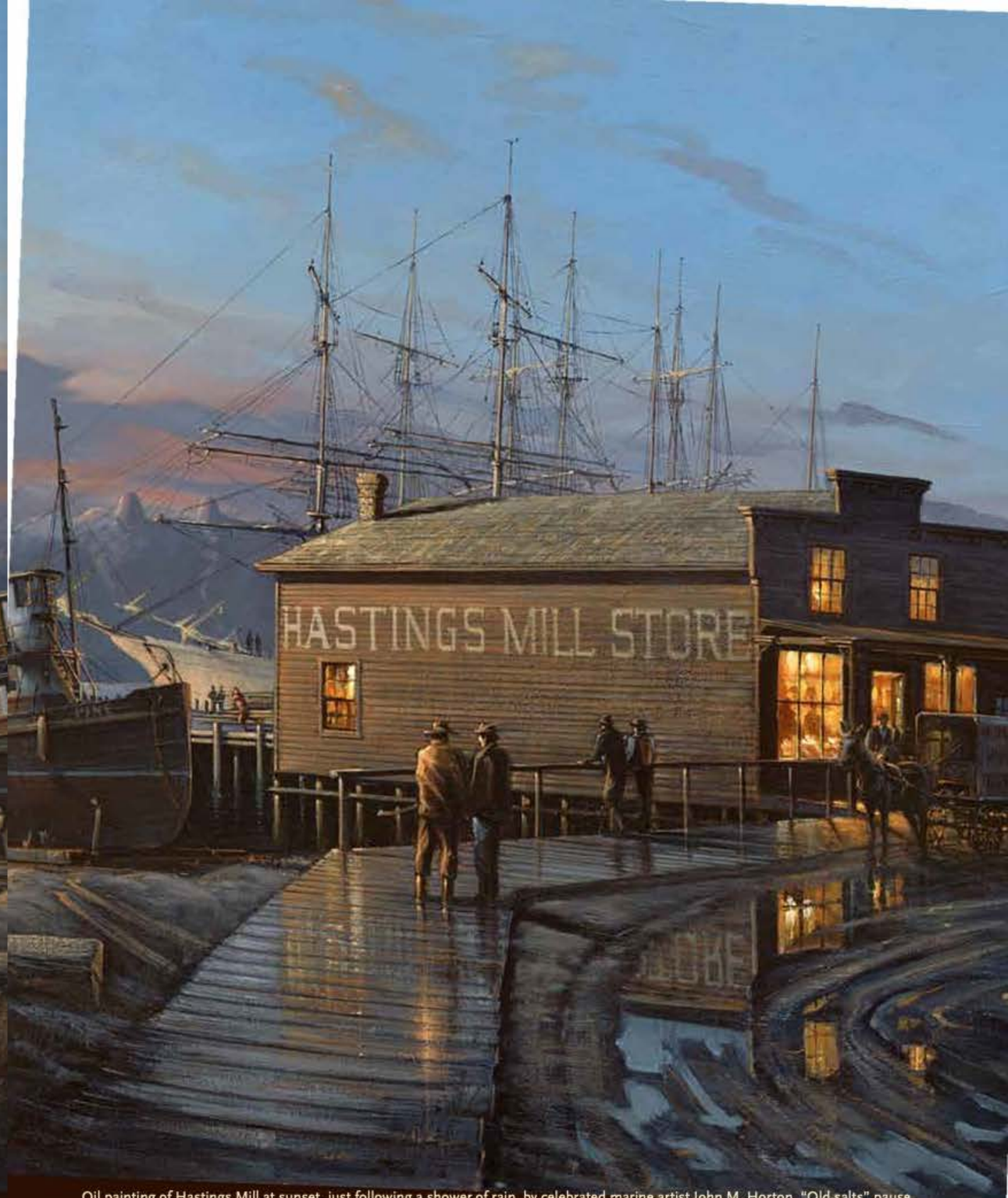
But even more than the industry Stamp founded, his legacy would be the settlement that grew up around it. It began the day of that first cut on June 17, 1867, with the ship *Siam* waiting at Stamp's Wharf to be loaded for shipment to Australia. That was the day an entrepreneur of a different ilk, another unlikely city founding father, the talkative John "Gassy Jack" Deighton showed up at the western edge of mill property "with a whiskey keg , two chairs, and a yellow dog" and began to service thirsty mill workers. It is said he actually enlisted their help to build the Globe Saloon "in 24 hours" in the maple grove that skirted the sandy cove known by the local Squamish as Luck Lucky. It was the beginning of Vancouver's story – a city that began as a bar on the edge of Stamp's Mill.

TOOLS OF THE WOODS. Great heavy wooden oxen yoke and iron oxen shoes used in early logging in Vancouver, on display at the Old Hastings Mill Store Museum, circa late 1800s.

LOGGING DOWNTOWN VANCOUVER, 1882.
A team of 14 oxen hauls a "turn" of three, maybe more, of five-feet in diameter by 60-foot-long logs, down a skid road near the north foot of Thurlow Street, to not far from where the Marine Building now stands. The huge logs, most of which were cedar, some Douglas fir, would be hauled to the water's edge on Burrard inlet and after the tide came up towed by boat to Hastings Mill.

THE DIRTY WORK OF LOGGING, CIRCA 1890.

This photo of ten oxen hauling a turn of seven sixty-foot logs (five feet in diameter) over a skid road appears in two archival collections with two different captions. One description suggests it is a crew on Point Grey. The other places the scene at Charleson's camp near what is today Oak Street and Broadway. Donald Brims, a contractor hired by the CPR, had taken a contract in 1889 to log the forest covering the north slope of False Creek's Fairview District from the water's edge to what would later become Broadway. Whatever the locale, it was dirty work. A bull puncher with his nail-studded, four-foot-long stick called a goad, stands in the rear. The seated man on the left was the skid greaser, often called the "pig man" because he stunk like rancid dogfish. He was paid the lowest wages for keeping ahead of the oxen and placing fish oil on the skids so that the logs would pass over them more easily. The tin bucket with handles placed in front of him contained fish oil. He used the maul to pound iron spikes or "dogs" into the end of each log for hauling. The man in the white shirt sits beside a Boker screw jack that was used for lifting the heavy and cumbersome logs. Notice the front of the huge logs have been sniped so that the butt ends would not catch on the cross skids that were placed wide enough apart for horse or oxen to step in between and over. The highest paid workers in logging were teamsters, the men who whose expertise it was to coax the oxen to act in unison dragging the huge logs across the greased skids to the tidewater. Ordinary mill hands were the lowest paid, earning half the wages or less than that of fellers and teamsters.



Oil painting of Hastings Mill at sunset, just following a shower of rain, by celebrated marine artist John M. Horton. "Old salts" pause on the wet boardwalk to swap stories, while various lumber ships lie at the dock or anchor in the stream. Vancouver's largest and oldest mill was located in the area now covered by the Centerm Container Terminal. The original mill office can still be found at the site at the foot of Dunlevy (named after Peter C. Dunlevey) and is run by the Anglican Church as a refuge for visiting sailors.

A Town is Born

by Jacqui Underwood

Captain James A. Raymur took over the mill in 1869, when Stamp was ousted. Raymur was a paternalistic manager, creating a model settlement, with a library and meeting room, and proper housing for mill employees. Resident magistrate of Granville, which encompassed both the mill and Gastown, he was astounded by Gastown's filth, and set about cleaning up not just the physical but moral environment of the community. Raymur vowed to eliminate alcoholism and prostitution, building a new church on mill property the year before his death in 1882.

Stamp's Mill was about to become civilized. Two men entered the life of the sawmill community that would shape its future for decades to come. The first was the new mill manager, veteran master mariner, the upright, Halifax-born Captain James Raymur. Brought in from Victoria in the new year of 1869 as a replacement for Stamp, he would rule with a strict and pious hand, enforcing his vision of a model town until his death in 1882. Arriving in 1870, to work at his side as accountant and storekeeper, then later following in his footsteps, was the young Richard H. Alexander. An 1862 "Overlander" to the Cariboo goldfields, the 26-year-old Ontario-educated Scot also had been living Victoria, working as a clerk and a longshoreman for the Hudson's Bay Company. For him, the mill would not only become a lifelong career, but a place to raise a family.

Luck-Lucky, may have meant "beautiful grove of maples" to the Squamish but not to Captain Raymur. He toured the mill and was satisfied with its operation, in particular the ultra-modern, steam-powered equipment. It was when he decided to inspect the community that his "scorn of the excesses and haphazard ways of the pioneers" reared its head. There were not only squatters on mill property, there was a substantial beach squat that had grown up next to Deighton's bar on the west side of the settlement. "What is the meaning of this aggregation of filth?" was his oft-quoted rant, "I will not permit a running sore to fasten itself upon an industry entrusted in my care!"

His first act was to drive off all the squatters and their families and family animals from mill land. The squatting Kanakas soon created a new camp on the inner reaches of Coal Harbour, and the historic Kanaka Ranch with its springtime cherry blossoms was born at the foot of Denman Street. "Old Captain Raymur did not like the pigs and chickens running all over the sawdust," recalled one descendent whose grandfather worked at the mill. The Kanakas, who were known to be some of the best employees, took it in their stride and continued to work for the mill. Meantime, back on the property, a company bunkhouse was built for single men and row cottages with proper little gardens began to be established. There were two manager's homes, but Raymur's wife preferred to stay in Victoria. To compete with the bars in rowdy Gastown, Raymur built a meeting room with Vancouver's first library for more cerebral entertainment.

Labour Day Parade in 1898. Hastings Mill was the nucleus around which Vancouver grew up and was always a part of every civic celebration. In this image, men and women in their finery watch as horse-drawn wagons exit the mill and head south on Dunlevy. The lead wagon, just past the Alexander intersection, carries two 4' by 20' knot-free timbers to be assembled into dining tables.

However it was the company store that was the heart of the sawmill settlement. You could pick up your mail, stock up on quality merchandise and warm your hands around the stove while listening to the latest news from visitors from exotic ports of call. There were no drunks at Raymur's mill.

Thus began the cleanup of Stamp's Mill and Gastown. One of the first official acts was the name change. The mill was "christened" the more fashionable Hastings Sawmill Company, after Admiral George Fowler Hastings, Commander of the North Pacific naval station at Esquimalt. It was a popular, if not confusing choice at the time, with Brighton, three miles to the east, already renamed Hastings Townsite. But Raymur stuck to his choice. The meeting room and library he had instituted as part of his social reform became the new Hastings Literary Institute. And the road connecting the mill to Gastown became Hastings Road (today's Alexander).

It was another official name change that would solidify the identity of Hastings Mill and the power of the mill

HASTINGS SAWMILL SETTLEMENT 1890. Shipping lumber to the far corners of the world, the mill town still maintained its village atmosphere. This springtime photo was taken by the pioneer photographers the Bailey Brothers, looking across Burrard Inlet to a heavily wooded North Shore and the Squamish Sacred Heart Mission Reserve with its notable church spire. In the foreground on the left, there are two women with baby carriages heading up Hastings Road (Alexander) to Gastown. Just behind them are R. H. Alexander's original cottage and the new addition to the Hastings Mill Store. Wharf-side, a barque awaits lumber for export.

manager in the early years of the formation of Vancouver. In March 1870, Gastown with its trestle road and wharfs along Water Street became known as Granville, named for Earl Granville, colonial secretary at the time, and Hastings Mill was included as part of its jurisdiction. Lot 196 had been granted to Stamp's company back in 1865, but the remainder, which was still townsite reserve, had now become a government approved townsite. When threats to eject the "trespassers" didn't work, the colonial government determined to survey and offer lots for sale in Granville townsite. The sale, on April 11, 1870, garnered three buyers, including "Gassy Jack" Deighton for Lot 1, Block 2. The courthouse and gaol stood on Lot 2, Block 2. The gaol consisted of two cells, built of logs. Captain Raymur was the resident magistrate. Within a few months, the dozen or so lots on which sat a hodge-podge of white-wash buildings and make-shift bars began to get snapped up.

In December 1871, Captain Raymur took another huge step toward civilizing Gastown. Meeting in the loft of the Hastings Literary Institute, the residents of Hastings Mill and Granville laid plans for the establishment of a school. And so it came to be. Early in the year of 1872 the company built a little frame schoolhouse in the middle of the stumps and slashing of the mill clearing. The Granville School District included the children of Hastings Mill, Gastown and Kanaka Ranch. Sixteen pupils attended the first class at the Hastings Mill School, sitting on benches with slate pencils and copybooks, listening to Vancouver's first teacher, Miss Georgia Sweney. Daughter of the master mechanic at the mill, she was a young, dark-haired, doe-eyed beauty. An accomplished musician and skilled artist, she could also milk a cow. With no shortage of suitors, she lasted one term.

Georgia wasn't the only pretty woman in the settlement. Mrs. Richard Henry Alexander was a classic pioneer wife, skilled in the refinements of Victorian society. Miss Emma Helen Tammadge came to the colony from

London, England, on one of the famous "bride ships" and met her husband in Victoria through the proper Anglican channels. They had two children before the adventuring Scot brought his young family with him to run the store at Hastings Mill. Emma became the social queen of the Inlet, creating a cultural atmosphere in her south shore home. The school even had an organ, one of the first in Vancouver. She and her husband, along with Captain Raymur attended the balls organized by ships' captains for "the ladies and gentleman of the Inlet and New Westminster" and took picnic excursions up the Indian Arm to Granite Falls. Emma was the best civilizing effect that the lonely Raymur could have hoped for on his little company town.

R.H. was an attribute too. Alexander made history for Hastings Mill when he established the Granville Post Office in 1872. The first Canadian postage stamps in Vancouver were used in the store that year. Up until then, mail was sent via American ships, bearing American stamps. The post office was created after British Columbia joined Confederation the previous year. Both Alexander and Raymur were supporters of the Dominion and ardent imperialists.

Celebrating July 1st was a favourite way for the mill to rev up community spirit, and Dominion Day celebrations at Hastings Mill became somewhat of "a specialty." A matter of public pride, they easily beat out the July 4th party at American-owned Moody's Mill. To quote one observer, "the sports and prizes were ahead of anything else in British Columbia... Crowds of up to 750 people gathered on the sawdust spit in front of the mill. Flags atop the mill and wharf greeted as many as 400 excursionists from Nanaimo and Victoria. Activities included: running, jumping, sailing and canoe races, rifle shooting, climbing greasy poles and catching greased pigs." Captain Raymur also paid for a band to play for the entire day and provided a "splendid dinner" free of charge.

If Captain Raymur footed the bill, Mrs. Alexander came through with added entertainment. On Dominion Day, she could be found singing "with much taste" before a multitude of admirers.

Then there was what came after the official, mill-directed program. According to one Methodist missionary in the 1870s, "People danced and drank whisky until a sober person became scarce." Reverend Tate confided to his diary, "the sight that I beheld that night I think I will ever remember—white people and Indians drunk on every hand... What is the country coming to...?"

RUSTED TOOLS OF A BYGONE ERA
–a two-bitted axe and toe-plate.

Three bolts attached toe-plates to planks, called spring boards, to elevate tree fallers above the large swelled butt of a tree. A notch was chopped into the side of the tree and the spring board's toe, especially designed with a raised edge, was inserted into the opening. Agile fallers, wearing hobnailed boots, did a balancing act to cut away a wedge of the tree in preparation for a 10- to 12-foot saw. Well-used boards, like the one in this photo, bore the scars of the boots. Mill owners often gave young men seeking employment three bolts, a drill and a toe-plate and told them to make a spring board. Those that could were hired; those that could not were told to hit the road.

The Alexanders' activities were followed with avid interest. R.H. was known to have participated in First Nations rituals. Indeed, he spoke "Chinook", a frontier language that combined First Nations dialects, English and French, and was said to have been honoured with the title of chief by the Squamish. On one occasion Alexander is reported to have personally invited "a young unmarried lady, from a genteel settler family in Victoria," to observe an important "ritual war dance." It was held "deep in the woods on the waterfront near Hastings." Captain Raymur would have considered this behavior scandalous. Word must have gotten out in Victoria. Raymur was beside himself with what happened next.

It was on the 1876 visit of Lord and Lady Dufferin. The royal couple arrived on the HMS *Amethyst* to be officially greeted by an enthusiastic crowd of 200 gathered on Hasting Mill wharf, and a 21-shotgun salute. Captain Raymur presented the address of welcome, then proceeded to have a huge log sawed at the mill for the party to watch. But Lady Dufferin had something else in mind and insisted on an unscheduled visit to the "Indian rancherie" east of the mill. There were no rituals going on, but she did meet with one of the female elders and patted children on the head. Raymur was visibly nervous, but after lunch it was back to the regular program. There was an authentic logging show, with two big loggers felling a 200-foot giant, six feet in diameter, while the Lady remarked how "they were very brave men." Raymur beamed. It was good day for Granville!

But of all the events that would have been considered most propitious for those early pioneer days, it was the birth of a child in 1873. The Alexanders' third child, Harry O. Alexander, born at Hastings Mill, was Granville's first white native. He would rise to prominence as a Vancouver judge, honoured and loved by many in the new city.

These were the simple times in Vancouver. In the 1870s and early '80s, the Hastings Sawmill settlement's only real connection to the outside world was by water. Interaction with the fledgling village of Granville was an integral part of its day-to-day society, especially since the Hastings Mill Store was the single most important merchant house on the south shore. The first census of Burrard Inlet villages took place in 1881 and included people living in Granville (Hastings Mill), Moodyville, and Hastings (Brighton) but not First Nations villages. It did however take into consideration the lumber camps and ships, giving a strong insight into the new European lumber society.

Richard Henry Alexander was a lifelong Hastings Mill man. Lured by stories of the Cariboo gold-rush, the young Scot crossed the Rockies with the Overlanders in 1862. After shooting the rapids of the Fraser he ended up in Victoria for several years before taking the job of storekeeper at the Hastings Sawmill settlement in 1870. He soon became accountant, and then eventually took over as manager when Captain Raymur died in 1882. Alexander was a social leader, attained the rank of Royal Arch Mason, and established the Vancouver Board of Trade. When John Hendry acquired the mill and expanded operations in 1889, Alexander stayed on as local manager until just before his death in 1915.

BRITISH COLUMBIA TOOTH PICKS. Neatly attired mill men employed by the Hastings Sawmill Branch of John Hendry's British Columbia Mills Timber & Trading Company pose proudly with a trainload of 36-inch by 36-inch by 60-foot "tooth picks," bound for destinations worldwide. There was always a thirsty market for Hastings Sawmill's famous lumber in North and South America, as well as Australia, China and the Pacific. It is reported the huge timbers were used to help rebuild the imperial palaces of China, after eight countries, known as the Eight-Nation Alliance, looted Beijing in 1900.