

A Brief History of the Flying Angel Club: Originally the Office Building Of the Hastings Mill

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Missions to Seafarers in the Port of Vancouver is fortunate in having as its home this beautiful old heritage building in such an ideal location.

The National Harbours Board made the gift to the local branch of the Society in September, 1981 on the occasion of the 125th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Society in London, England.

In a day when historic buildings are disappearing one by one, we are indebted to the National Harbours Board for preserving 401 East Waterfront Road, originally the office building of Hastings Mill.

Now resplendent in its new look and surrounded by this small park, a tiny green belt on the waterfront, this gracious old building provides a home away from home for the seafarers of the world.

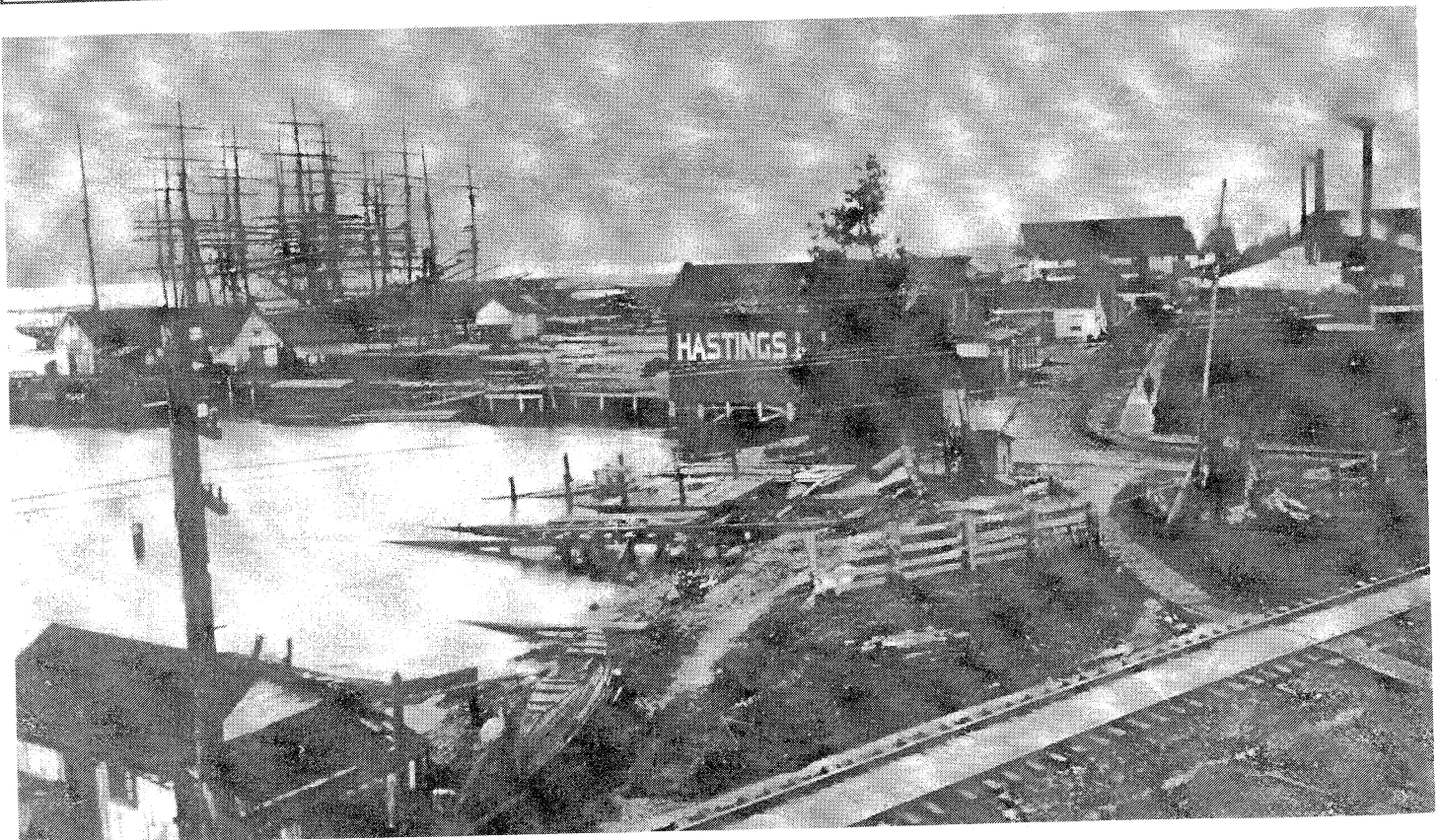
***Please donate generously to our
heritage building project.***

EARLY HISTORY

In 1864 the '50 North Dunlevy', now '401 E. Waterfront Rd.' of today was very near the water's edge of Burrard Inlet. North-East across the inlet was Moodyville with its adjacent sawmill. To the West, towards the promontory partially guarding the inlet, were the Three Greenhorns with their small clay and coal claim, whilst on the East was a small summer resort called New Brighton, used by New Westminster people.

On November 30, 1865 the English-promoted British Columbia and Vancouver Island Spar Lumber and Sawmill Company received a land grant of 243 acres for about \$250 on which they were to build a sawmill. The mill started producing in 1867; however in 1870 it was bought by a San Francisco firm for \$20,000 and renamed the Hastings Saw Mill Co, after Rear Admiral Hon. G. F. Hastings, Commander of the Royal Navy base at Esquimalt.

continued on page 9



Hastings Sawmill at the foot of Dunlevy Avenue, 1888, before the 1906 building was erected at 401 East Waterfront Road.

The Waterfront Mission

100-year-old Historic Building Venerated

continued from page 8

In 1925 when the Vancouver Harbour Commissioners purchased the remaining land — 40 acres with 250 feet of water frontage, for \$2,450,000 — the entire area was known as the Hastings Mill. The land west of the mill was surveyed as the town site of Granville in 1870, popularly known as Gastown, the nucleus of the future city of Vancouver.

In 1873 the first public school was opened on Hastings Mill property and the Granville Post Office opened in the Hastings Mill Store. In June 1886 fire swept Vancouver, incorporated in April that year, and although the Mill was saved, many of the houses and outbuildings surrounding the plant were lost. In 1889 the mill was sold and when the new owners merged with the Royal City Planning Mills Co. the new firm was called B. C. Mills Timber and Trading Co. Ltd.

In 1900 this company decided to produce semi-prefabricated houses, schools and churches which they shipped as far as Winnipeg. As samples they built two offices, the first on Carrall Street for the office of their False Creek plant, and in 1906 the office building which is now the Flying Angel Seafarer's Club. These two buildings were 'showplaces', each individual office was paneled out in a different type of B.C. wood — fir, hemlock, red cedar, balsam, etc. — unfortunately all painted over in the nineteen twenties. After the purchase of the mill in 1925, the Vancouver Harbour Commissioners in announcing the move into their new quarters in 1930, stated in their monthly report, "The site on which the offices are located is one of historical value, for around it was built the City of Vancouver."

INTERESTING DATA

- The support beams in the basement are 47 feet (14.326 metres) long — as sound today as when first put into place
- The vault, quite a feature of the building, is shown in the 1906 plans, with an addition built on in 1954 — converted about 1960 to a 'fall out' shelter following EMO (Emergency Measures Order) requirements.
- The original brass fireplace, accessories, door, fender and coal tongs are still to be seen today in the small lounge, until 1973 the Port Manager's office.
- When originally constructed, there was a rather grand port-cochere on the North side of the building which was undoubtedly put there for the use of the senior officials

of the company. This was eventually removed, having deteriorated rather badly, to make way for the laying of a small park. The construction of this park was motivated by several considerations not the least of which was the belief that such an addition would not only provide a green space on the waterfront but would also be an additional deterrent to those who might want to raze the whole structure at a future date.

- On the front porch of the building are the letters commemorating the four different owners:

BCMTT — B. C. Mills Timber and Trading

HSM — Hastings Saw Mill

VHC — Vancouver Harbour Commissioners

NHB — National Harbours Board

- To these is now added the Neon sign of The Mission to Seafarers "Flying Angel Club", headquarters of the B. C. branches of this world-wide Society and the building which, with the warmth, friendliness and personality it has developed during its wonderful life, is now indeed the 'home' for an average of 24,000 visiting merchant seamen of more than 80 nationalities using it annually.

- The guest book at the door with its international signatures reveals that the grand old building at 401 East Waterfront Road is now doing its finest work of service — long may it continue.



401 East Waterfront Road, Vancouver, BC

Donations, fundraisers, and building construction materials and expertise are keenly sought to assist the Mission maintain this lovely historic building and to continue providing services from a hospitable and fully functional building.

Donations envelopes are enclosed with this edition of The Spring Review Magazine.