

New Brighton

IN 1862 COLONEL RICHARD CLEMENT MOODY and George Turner, his surveyor, both of the Royal Engineers, cruised along the south shoreline of Burrard Inlet and getting ashore blazed a tree to mark the end of a proposed trail from New Westminster that would be called the Douglas Road. When the road was completed three years later, Oliver Hocking and Frederick Alfred Houston built a hotel and called the place New Brighton.

Hocking was also there on official business. He had been assigned the job of establishing a customs house, after Captain Edward Stamp had complained to the Governor of B.C. that ships visiting his mill on Burrard Inlet wasted time and money clearing customs in New Westminster. He got his wish and Hocking arrived to help expedite mill business on the inlet and make a little business of his own.

The *Columbian* newspaper of the day wrote, "Brighton will soon be a favourite place for pleasure seekers. Pleasure boats are being provided, additions to the hotel are going up, beautiful grounds and picturesque walks are being laid out and it's rapidly assuming the appearance of a fashionable watering place. Governor Frederick Seymour rode over this week [from New Westminster] and honoured the Brighton House with a call." In 1866 a stage started running between New Westminster and Burrard Inlet on the newly completed Douglas Road.

In 1869 Maximilian Michaud, a bartender and cook at the Grelly Brothers' Colonial Hotel in New Westminster, purchased the Brighton Hotel for \$1500 from Hocking and Houston, and the

place came to be known as "End of the Road." Michaud, a young man of 29, had crossed the Rockies during or after 1861 by travelling on foot much of the way. The Michaud clan had come to Canada from Poitou, France, in 1667 and had settled on the south bank of the St. Lawrence River near St. Philippe de Kamouraska, Quebec.

Apparently the government surveyed the little place, named it Hastings to honour Admiral George Fowler Hastings, the recently appointed Royal Navy commander at Esquimalt and began to sell lots. Apparently Captain Raymur of the

Hastings sawmill had something to do with inducing the government into naming the place Hastings. That same year the government appointed Michaud the first postmaster on Burrard Inlet at Hastings, so he renamed his place the Hastings Hotel.

The Hastings Hotel was well situated at the north end of the Douglas Road, linking the wharf at Hastings with the busy City of New Westminster. It was an important transshipment point for stagecoach passengers and freight going from the Royal City to Moodyville and to Victoria.

Hastings was a popular summer beach resort for the wealthy citizens of New Westminster. "Maxi" bought lots 2, 3 and 4 for \$150. Maxi's Hastings Hotel had a fine reputation for its good food and service largely due to the hospitality of his lovely Kanaka companion and housekeeper Frisadie.

By 1877 he owned acreages in Abbotsford, Hope and Langley Prairie, a home in New Westminster as well as the hotel at Hastings. He was a very wealthy man. In 1878 Maxi returned to Quebec and married Marie Euphrosine Célénie Dandurand at St-Roch de Québec. His brother Joseph came out with his wife and family in 1878 to run the Langley Prairie farm, growing beef cattle to sell in Vancouver and to provide meat for his hotel clientele. Maxi returned to Hastings with his new wife but shortly afterwards took an early retirement due to heart problems and moved to New Westminster. He died in 1882.

The Hastings Hotel was sold to Benjamin Wilson in 1882 and subsequently became the CPR offices when the railroad was being extended from Port Moody to Vancouver. Wilson sold to Scotsman George Black, dubbed "The Laird of Hastings." Black had bought the first lot in Gastown for \$25. Black also bought the first lot in Gastown, where he had a home and a butcher shop.

The *Sudden Jerk* was one of the earliest ferries used to transport passengers to Moodyville. The boat's boiler blew up at the Hastings wharf while the engineer was up at George Black's Hastings Hotel bar having a drink in the bar. When the CPR was built the line circled around his hotel.



Above

Maximilian Michaud arrived on the west coast having walked through the Rocky Mountains to reach New Westminster. He purchased the Hastings Hotel in 1869 and ran it until his death in 1882.

Below

An 1890 bird's eye view of Hastings or East Park (today known as New Brighton Park) showing a steamer on Burrard Inlet, the Brighton or George Black's Hotel, the race track, and to the south Hastings Street.



Admiral George Fowler Hastings oversaw Pacific Coast operations for the British Royal Navy. His service has been commemorated by the naming of several geographic locations in his honour.

