

## CHAPTER ONE

# B.C.'s Pioneer Brewers

British Columbia's brewing history can trace its origin back to 1858 and the time of Governor James Douglas, when thousands of gold hungry people rushed into the wilds of New Caledonia to claim their Eldorado.

This influx meant New Caledonia had a law and order problem never before experienced in Canada. James Douglas, recently Crown-appointed governor of the new Colony of Vancouver Island, quickly decreed all miners and prospectors had to pay twenty-one shillings (one guinea) a month (approximately \$5-\$6 back then) for a mining license and file a monthly report of the gold they found with the gold commissioner he swiftly appointed.

While difficult to apply, this licensing held promise of some success, even if just to pay the wages of those appointed to enforce it. But Prime Minister Gladstone and the British House of Commons questioned just whose interest this Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) governor was really serving. They ordered Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, Secretary for the Colonies, to send a magistrate there to administer the Queen's law and to carry to Douglas a proclamation decreeing the mainland territory be self-administered as the Colony of British Columbia, with Douglas appointed to carry out the duties of its first governor. Thus, effectively severing him from the HBC and their interests.

The man Lytton selected to carry these dispatches and maintain law and order in this vast wilderness of rushing rivers and towering mountains was Matthew Baillie Begbie. Judge Begbie quickly earned the title of "The Hanging Judge" among those tempted to find an easier way to the rivers' gold than through the labor of sluice and rocker. His most famous quote thundered at a mob of angry wild miners still echoes through the halls of Canadian justice to this day: "In this land the Queen's law shall rule, and British Justice shall prevail."

Both Begbie and Governor Douglas viewed public drinking as a destroyer of man's vitality and integrity, and the success of the mining license requirement, caused them to propose a similar licensing system for the manufacturing and sale of spirits. Governor Douglas had effectively dried up the Hudson's Bay Company through strict rules for consumption of spirits, and by appointing only those who would follow them. He hoped the requirements of this new law would ensure a like condition throughout his vast domain west of the Rockies and south of the fifty-ninth parallel. Essentially, his law required that "Spirits would only be licensed for public consumption where food and bed was also offered," and that, "brewers of spirits could not sell their product to other than licensed premises."

While it has remained basically thus ever since, this unique policy was soon followed by other provinces as the temperance movement became more vocal, and a lucrative source of revenue was realized by appearing to have the temperance interest at heart. When the attorney general later took licensing and policing out of the sheriff's office, and created a Liquor Control Board (LCB), he effectively placed the government in the role of wholesaler and not only collected all the liquor taxes due, but pocketed the middleman's fat mark-up in the bargain.

Roughly 37¢ of every dollar spent on the sales of spirits goes through LCB to government coffers, another 28¢ goes to the provincial taxman to be split with the federal government, and approximately 35¢ goes back to the brewer to pay wages, transportation, supplies and realize a return on the investor's capital. Plus, every dollar spent at LCB's cash registers today costs the buyer a sales tax which goes in the province's coffers, and a goods and service tax that the federal governments pockets.

With 35¢ worth of spirits costing the consumer a staggering \$1.14, Sir James Douglas had unknowingly tapped a source of wealth far greater than all the beaver and mink pelts his company had taken out of this country for the previous 200 years, plus all the gold taken out by the Argonauts! Who ever said booze was the road to poverty and ruin?

While a report from San Francisco in early 1858 states that brewing equipment was being shipped aboard the schooner *Pago* for Victoria, it was later that same year that a William Steinborger, recently arriving from California, relocated this brewing interest from the



The Victoria Brewery, circa 1898.

*Photo: British Columbia Archives C-76185*

Swan Lake area outside the township limits to Government Street within the quickly growing gold port. The Phoenix Brewery thus became the first licensed brewer in the Colony of Vancouver Island, though two years later it was sold to F. W. Laumeister and R. Gowen, who renamed it the Victoria Brewing Company.

Bill Steinborger started another brewery in 1861, out on Head Street near the Esquimalt army barracks, again naming it Phoenix Brewing, which has caused certain historians some confusion. Victoria Brewing was sold to Goertz and Heinman in 1864, and resold again in 1868 to Joseph Loewen and Louis Erb. Erb's son Emil, during this same period, was brew master at Steinborger's Phoenix Brewery, so it surprised no one when in 1892 Victoria Brewing took over the assets of Phoenix Brewing.

Building a new brewery at Discovery and Government Streets, Loewen and Erb incorporated it as the Victoria-Phoenix Brewery and sold their previous holdings. Albion Iron Works (formerly Captain William Spratt's ship and machinery repair yard) built the iron gates that guarded this pioneer brewery main entrance.

In 1895 John Tait (or Tate) built a brewery out on Esquimalt Road, where his son Fred brewed Silver Spring Old English Ale and a fine stout. In 1907 this business was sold to a former employee of the Victoria-Phoenix Brewery, Harry Mayard, and his associates John Day and Philip Crombie who renamed it Silver Spring Brewery. Their brew master was Adolph Brachat, who had been brewer with



The Westminster Brewery in 1899. The owner Nels Nelson and his son Lawrie are in the center; the house to the right of the brewery is the owner's home.

*Photo: Vic Brachat Collection*

Anheuser Busch in St. Louis, and whose father was a master brewer in Switzerland.

Silver Spring Brewery acquired the old Fairall Brewery site in 1908 and built a modern new brewery in west Victoria, donating their former site for a playground to students of Victoria West Public School. In 1910, the year Adolph Brachat's son Victor was born (Vic would become longtime brew master at New Westminster's Lucky Lager-Labatt's Brewery in later years, and assist with this story), Silver Spring offered its first lager beer. By 1928, Silver Spring Brewery was amalgamated with the Victoria-Phoenix Brewery under the Coast Brewery's corporate flag; this giant step will be documented further in this story.

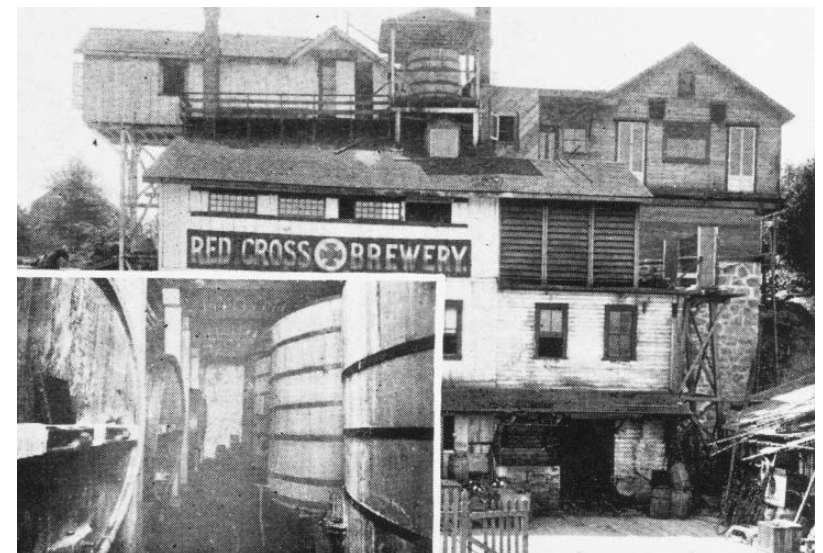
While two of these breweries already mentioned could boast of having the first and second brewing license issued in the colony of British Columbia, license number three (1862) was issued to a brewing venture on the Fraser River at what was then the capital city of this gold colony. This was the City Brewing Company owned by Picht and Hay at Carnarvan and Eighth Streets in New Westminster. Over the next twenty years it had several owners until purchased by Mr. A. Gibson, who changed its name to Westminster Brewery Ltd. The brewery was later bought by Nels Nelson and renamed Nelson's Westminster Brewery.

Nels Nelson, born in Denmark in 1863, left school at fourteen to follow the sea. By 1881 he was sailing as able seaman on a German full-rigged ship that rounded the Horn and arrived later in that year at the bustling seaport of Victoria. British Columbia appeared to offer more opportunity to him than a seaman's lot, so Nels skipped ashore and went to work for Louis Erbe at the Victoria Brewing Company for the next four years. Becoming accomplished in the art of brewing, he moved up island to John Mahrer's Nanaimo Bottling Company, where he became knowledgeable of this new packaging medium.

While fired clay jugs, tuns and bottles have a long history as containers for wines, oils and other still fluids, beer, a slightly pressurized effervescent refreshment, had traditionally been offered in wooden kegs or barrels. During this period, the West Coast brewers began to offer beers in bottles, both pint- and quart-sized, in either glazed clay or glass, cast in chip molds (stone bottles with wire latched stopper, such as ginger beer was offered in, might also have had their origin at this time). Most bottles were sealed with a cork, some had a glass stopper, and others had a glass ball built into the neck of the bottle that acted like a check valve, allowing beer to enter but not exit until the carbon dioxide pressure was vented. The metal type, crimped-edge

The Red Cross Brewery in 1898.

*Photo: Larry Rintoul Collection*



crown, so familiar today to seal a bottle of beer, was still many years in the future.

Nels Nelson may have acquainted the Red Cross Brewery in Vancouver with John Mahrer's new packaging media. For soon after his visit there, J. A. Rekab began to offer beer in bottles. In late fall of 1886 Nels arrived at the river port of New Westminster to become brew master for Andy Gibson at the old City Brewery, and here again bottle beer made its debut shortly after his arrival. Ten years later he bought out Andy Gibson's interest and renamed the business Nelson's Westminster Brewery.

In 1898, Nels Nelson purchased property out on Brunette Street and after relocating the equipment there from the Carnarvan Street brewery, the old City Brewing Company buildings were torn down and the property sold. While this new location gave more room for future expansion and a good supply of water from the Brunette River, it was a fire of prodigious proportions that caused Nels Nelson to up stakes and move. Few people today are aware that most of the pioneer city of New Westminster, that extending west from Mary Street to Eighth Street and south of Royal Avenue to Front Street and the river docks, were destroyed or damaged by this fire. The exceptions were a couple of stone buildings slightly singed, and the wooden buildings of Nel's brewery badly charred, but still intact.

Unlike Vancouver's disastrous fire, which sprung up on a peaceful Sunday morn, New Westminster's fire ballooned into a fierce conflagration on a late Saturday afternoon while the city bustled with people and horse-drawn wagons.

September 10, 1898, was a hot day that drew many into the cool bar rooms along Front Street, by early afternoon a fresh breeze sprang up on the river giving relief to others who had sought shade under the trees. How the fire actually started is not known. Perhaps a careless smoker or a spark from a steamboat's funnel or a locomotive's belching stack, but quite suddenly the 200-ton pile of baled hay on Brackman Kerr's dock was a roaring inferno, which ignited the top works of the small river steamer *Edgar* tied up alongside, driving away her watchman crew.

When her mooring lines burnt away, the river's current nudged the vessel downstream where she collided with the larger sternwheeler *Gladys*; pausing there a moment, she set that unfortunate vessel and

her dock afire. Then held against the river's north shore by the fresh afternoon breeze, the *Edgar*, turning end for end under the influence of the river current, proceeded down the line of docks like a flaming fire torch, setting all she bumped against on fire till she became wedged in between the massive bulk of the large side-wheeler *Bon Accord* and the shore, just west of the Eighth Street jetty.

This line of fire, more than eight blocks long and stoked by the freshening wind, began to roar and crackle as it found fresh fuel to feast on inland of the waterfront structures. Over street after street, the furious tongues of flames jumped, until sixty-four blocks of prime downtown businesses were going up in smoke and flames. Fire fighting was in its infancy during those days, and though the city boasted a modern Ronald steam pumper, it was barely saved when the fire station itself went up in flames.

But Nels Nelson, with every penny he owned in the brewery, had his small weekend crew lay out fire hoses and couple them up to the beer pumps and flood the exteriors of his buildings with brewery water. It was this quick action and sheer good fortune that kept his brewery from burning to the ground.

Deciding to move farther away from the commercial center of the city, he relocated his equipment eastward of the cemetery on the west bank of the Brunette River. Two years after establishing this brewery he was able to buy up the defunct Jameson Brewery next door, and he built a new cellar block there while reorganizing his business as the Westminster Brewery Ltd.

The new brewery Nels Nelson built was a three-story wooden structure housing an ice plant, steam plant and the first carbon dioxide collection and counter pressure system installed in the province. This modern brewery even boasted a telephone, number seventy-five, in those long ago pioneer days of the magic wire. After 1928, when Nels Nelson sold out his control of this brewery to the Coast Breweries holding company headed by Robert Fiddes, he built a lovely home up on the corner of 2nd Street and Queens Avenue, in which to enjoy a well-earned retirement.

In 1941 this brewery was renamed Lucky Lager Breweries, and in 1958 it became John Labatt's westernmost brewery. Thus, Labatt's Lucky Lager Brewing Co., had its origin in brewing license number three issued in 1862, when this British Columbian river capital was a scattering of tents, shacks and log cabins strung out



Outside the New Westminster Brewery in 1901. The man in the black shirt is J. Munday the chief engineer and the boy on the wagon is Lawrie Nelson; others are not identified.

Photo: Vic Bracht Collection

along the river bank where the sternwheelers unloaded their passengers and freight. This brewery provided the chance for Molson's to expand from its staid eastern dominion, out into the Wild West beyond the Lake Country.

Today, Vancouver's one and only brewery serving British Columbia and the western United States, can also trace its origin back to Nanaimo's coal town origin. While we'll look briefly at some of the other breweries built throughout the province over the years, the Nanaimo story will now be told because it not only predates by a couple years that of New Westminster's, but also events there have a direct relationship on those that took place in Vancouver, through the intervening years.

While the *Beaver* back in 1851 had carried Joseph MacKay and a few HBC men to sample the coal at "Naymo" on Winthuysen Inlet, which Chief Che-wech-i-kan (Coal Tyee) had brought to Governor Douglas' notice, it was more than two years later before the *Princess Royal* landed twenty-seven coal miners and their families to make it a real coal mining town. Yet, it wasn't until 1858 that the Colony of Vancouver Island issued a retail license to the HBC, as operators of the Nanaimo Coal Company, to dispense spirituous liquors. This cost the HBC \$72 each quarter year, and any infractions of the new liquor laws could bring penalties of three months in jail or fines up to \$250.

In 1863, the Vancouver Coal Company having bought out the HBC's mining interests transferred this number four license to A. G. Horn and T. E. Peck.

These gentlemen, together with Messrs. Stone, Jerome, Webb and Sabiston who respectively owned the Old Flagg Inn, the French Hotel and the Nanaimo Hotel, built the Millstream Brewery in 1864. This enterprise went under the name of Nightingale & Butler and prospered poorly. Nanaimo was still officially known as Colvilletown (after HBC Governor Colville) until 1874 when it was duly incorporated as the village of Nanaimo. However, by this time the Millstream Brewery had vanished into history, so a new venture was launched and Dick Nightingale was hired to build the Salt Spring Brewery.

Though of stone and brick construction with a supply of water from the Nanaimo Sawmill's flume, and capable of producing 600 gallons of beer a week, it too suffered a quick demise—so quick, that no name was ever registered for their brew. You could say; it was the first "no-name" brew in B.C. John Mahrer, returning from four years in the Cariboo gold fields started a bakery in the newly incorporated town. Then in 1877, he built the Nanaimo Soda Water Factory and large bottling works, down on Mill Street at the site of the old Salt Spring Brewery Works.

In 1890, the Nanaimo Brewing Company was launched there, earning a net profit of 20 percent during its first three years of operation. John Mahrer was its first brew master, and with his share of the profits John bought the Nanaimo Opera House and the Newcastle Hotel and then ventured into the wholesale liquor business. His Nanaimo Brewery also bought out the Red Lion Brewery, before merging with the Union Brewing Company, and this is the company we will follow to Vancouver.

The Union Brewing Company was established in January of 1891, and a contract led Harold McAdie to build a brick building on Dunsmuir Street (named after James Dunsmuir of Nanaimo's coal fame). The brewery had a 900-gallon copper kettle that weighed just over a ton and a refrigeration system that could cool more than 2,000 gallons of wort/beer a day. It went into production in October of that year and in 1892 it merged, as noted above, with John Mahrer's Nanaimo Brewery. A news release of May 1, 1893, declared the directors were John Perry, J. Hough and C. Martin. The B.C. directory listed John Pawson as president, Marshall E. Bray as

treasurer, Fred S. Whiteside as secretary and Henry E. Reifel as managing brewer.

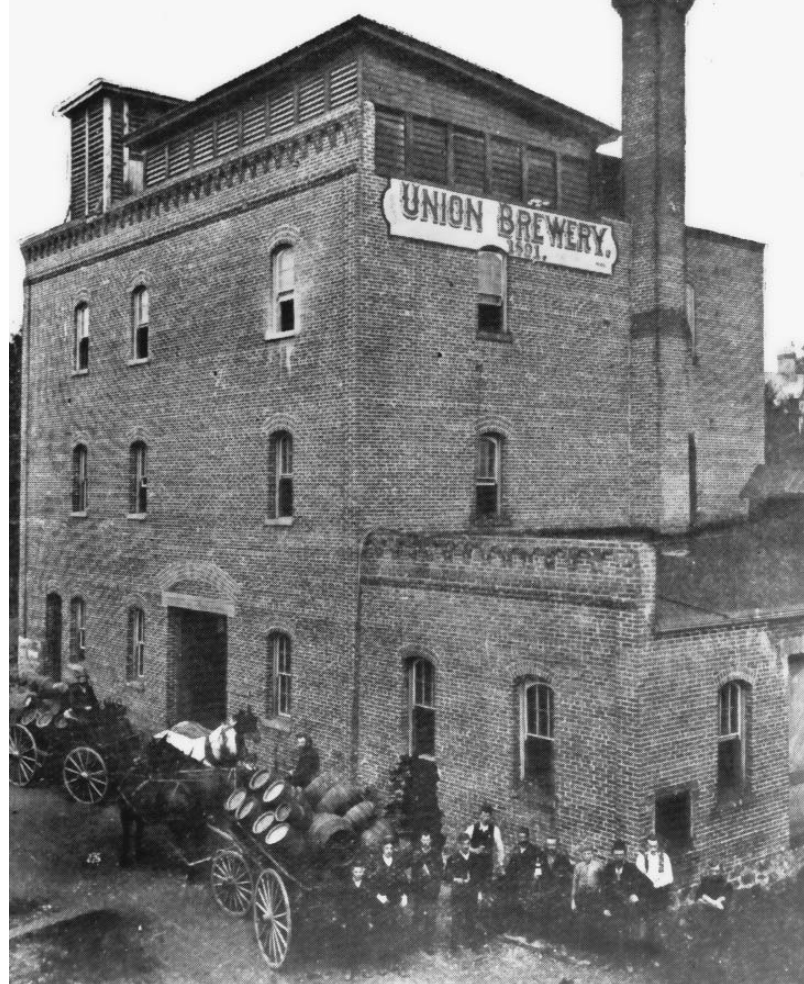
The Reifel story, like the Sick story we'll hear about in a later chapter, proved difficult to follow. Both were German emigrants arriving here through the United States, neither wrote many notes of their adventures in getting here or their business dealings through those tumultuous years. However, there is an interesting parallel between their stories, and it may explain the strained relationship between these two brewers when they met in later life, after each had carved out a respected niche in our economy.

Henry E. Reifel arrived in Nanaimo in 1888 after fleeing war torn Alsace Lorraine a few years earlier. Mrs. Norma Reifel, wife of George H. Reifel, Henry's grandson, possesses the family crest, which probably was in fact their family seal or frank. The family had for many generations been the legal keepers of official deeds, sort of the local Notary Public, in the town of Zeiskam where such historic things as water rights and property deeds were zealously guarded.

It would appear, Henry like many young European sons immigrating to the new world, was enticed west by the lure of the siren's promise, for he soon arrived in San Francisco. He began his career learning to brew German lager beer at the Chicago Brewing Company, but the noisy large seaport was not to his liking, and soon after completing his training moved north to the river town of Portland, where he was employed as a brewer for a short time. But as he recalled to his family years later, it too was not to his liking so he sought opportunity farther north.

The Northern Pacific railway had built a line into Tacoma, the former Hudson's Bay's Fort Nisqually, and this lumber town was booming. There is some suggestion that Henry worked in the brewery business for a short time in the Puget Sound area. As this was about the time Fritz Sick arrived in Tacoma, there is some likelihood they may have crossed trails there, for early brewing people with their supply problems got to know each other quickly, and German brewers who have difficulty with the English language, more so.

But Henry did not tarry there long, and what caused his next step remains a family mystery. Like a bird flying home to its nest, Henry arrived in Nanaimo and entered John Mahrer's bottling works where he was treated like a long-lost son. The speed with which events now transcribe almost defies description. Within a year of his arrival in



The Union Brewery.

*Photo: British Columbia Archives C-76185*

Canada, the Nanaimo Brewery was ready to offer a lager beer to their customers, and was the first to offer it in both pint and quart glass bottles.

Two years of profitable sales later, this successful brewery was bought up by a cartel of local investors, with John Mahrer and Henry Reifel retained to operate it. Then after buying out the idle Red Lion Brewery at Mill Creek, it amalgamated with the newly built Union Brewing Company. John Mahrer retired to donate his time to community affairs after this. And Henry Reifel, now a modest shareholder, became the brewing manager.

This brewery triad resolved itself into the Union Brewing

Company of Nanaimo, and soon after it acquired the large property holdings of the Franklyn estate, which included a lovely home. Henry now felt well enough established to seek a wife, and to invite his younger brother Conrad to come to Canada and join him at the brewery. The lady to whom Henry got engaged was herself a rather remarkable person.

Daughter of William Brown, she was the first white female to be born in the roaring gold town of Barkerville. They proved a fine match. In 1893 Anne Elizabeth Brown and Henry E. Reifel were wed, and soon after moved into the old Franklyn house to raise a family. George C. was first to arrive, followed by his sister Florence Anne, then a younger brother, Harry E., in 1896.

Conrad Reifel arrived from Europe in 1898, and took employment at the brewery as a cellar man, gradually working his way up to brew master over the next dozen or so years. While not possessing Henry's keen business ambitions, Conrad soon followed his brother's example and married a good local gal. The redoubtable Bessie Barnes bore him two sons, Edward in 1910 and Henry in 1920, and reigned as dowager caretaker of Franklyn House until it was torn down in 1950.

Union Brewing had acquired the old Franklyn homestead, an architectural landmark out on Dunsmuir Street, when it purchased the five-acre estate from Mayor Bate, for brewery expansion. This beautiful home, built by Captain W. H. Franklyn, became the residence of the brewing manager.

After the Temperance Act shut down the brewing business and Union Brewery's equipment was dismantled, the empty building was later used as a beer delivery center for Vancouver Island. Conrad managed this up to the time of his death in 1933, and then his son, Edward Reifel, took over managership of the Pacific Brewing Agency. Franklyn House, still his mother's home, was purchased by the City of Nanaimo in 1941, though Bessie Reifel lived there for another ten years before moving to Machleary Street. The city then, much to the consternation of those who valued the historic artifacts of Nanaimo's past, tore it down to make way for commercial expansion. However, some of its bricks were saved to make the Pioneer Rock Cairn below the Bastion, that now commemorates the landing there of Nanaimo's mining pioneers in 1854, so in fact a bit of this heritage building has been preserved.

Henry Reifel, sensing opportunity to expand in the beer business, began laying the groundwork that would realize this goal. He sent his eldest son George to Milwaukee in 1907 to train as a brew master, and after his arrival back in Nanaimo, events began to move quickly. Amalgamating with Peter Dilman's Cumberland Brewery and brewing Union Brewing Company (UBC) beers there to satisfy his ever-growing number of customers on the island, Henry made several visits to Vancouver to discuss with Doering and Williams a possible merger or amalgamation to realize brewing his UBC beers on the mainland.

This would cause some misunderstanding within the beer-drinking student fraternity of the newly created University of British Columbia on Point Grey a few years later, which blithely believed this beer had been named for them and became Henry's most faithful supporters.

Henry's success had not gone unnoticed, and investors wanted in, but the shareholders of Union Breweries resisted such inroads, even turning down a \$2 million takeover offer from Anheuser Busch. But they did finally accept a \$3 million deal from an English syndicate, which ensured them amalgamation with the Vancouver Brewery and the Canadian Malting and Brewing Company. This successful piece of business was marred by the loss of Henry's friend and mentor, John Mahrer. On the last day of September that year, this native of Prague, Austria (pre- World War I ), died at the age of 65, after serving many years on the city council and as president of the Nanaimo Hospital Board.

Buoyed up by the brewing merger, Henry arranged for Conrad to manage the Union Brewery, while he moved his family to a lovely home across the street from the new brewery. Joined by his son George C. Reifel, Vancouver Breweries Ltd. offered numerous brews to satisfy the palate of the most critical connoisseur, listing the lager and ales of both Union Brewery and Cumberland's Pilsner Brewery, as well as Red Cross and the D&M's famous labels.

It was here that the Temperance Act would find them when Canada went dry during World War I and the brewery business came tumbling down. The success with which the Reifels survived this calamity and even managed to increase their family worth, will be discussed further along in our story, after we have looked at the pioneer brewers of Vancouver.

In Vancouver before the turn of the century the brewery story becomes a little more muddled, for with both the terminus of rail and shipping and a huge waterfront covered in sprawling sawmills, there were many thirsty men who could afford a drink. And many brewers endeavored to accommodate their needs. From the beginning, Sewell Moody's water-powered sawmill (1866) on the north shore of Burrard Inlet, and Captain Edward Stamp's steam-powered sawmill (1872) at Hastings on the south shore, cut down the huge trees which grew right down to the water's edges, leaving a legacy of equally huge stumps and tangled piles of slash for the settlers who followed them to clear away and cultivate the soils. A trail of sorts meandered westward from Stamp's mill, where squatter shacks and a few log floats occupied the high water line, to peter out at the outfall of Howe Creek (east of the Marine Building today). Deadman's Island harbored a small whale-processing slip and Coal Harbour, still frowned over by giant cedar trees, boasted an Indian village on the Stanley Park shore (opposite the present site of the Bayshore Hotel). Farther west this waterway shoaled and narrowed into a boat passage (Lost Lagoon) separating what is now Stanley Park into an island before finally terminating a couple hundred sandy feet from Second Beach on English Bay.

Moody and Stamp, providing food and accommodation as well as employment at their mill sites, could enforce a religiously stern teetotaling proviso under these wilderness conditions. The accepted alternative for a man with a thirst was a short boat ride to New Brighton and a long wagon ride or a hike over the Douglas Road to New Westminster to partake of the bright lights and foaming suds of this river city's more liberal amenities.

Captain Jack Deighton, deciding it was more profitable to carry beer to the thirsty than to carry the thirsty to the beer, shipped over several barrels of beer from the New Westminster Brewery and landed them on the beach west of Hastings Mill. Placing a fresh-sawn plank across the barrels he opened shop on Water Street, at what is now the north foot of Carrall Street.

When many of Moody's employees returning aboard Pioneer's fifty-seven-foot steam tugboat/ferry *Leonora* were found to be too drunk to carry out their job, and Captain Stamp's men fell off the jury-rigged bridge thrown across the waterway that bordered the western boundary of his mill, the irate mill owners lodged a con-

centrated protest to the government about this law-breaking squatter. Located outside the mill's timber lease jurisdiction, they had to await the colony's duly appointed sheriff from Victoria (New Westminster had lost its role of capital city in 1868) to have the captain charged and evicted.

But, by the time the law did arrive, Jack Deighton alerted by friends privy to the pending action, hastily constructed a rough building of sorts to provide bed and food for those who dared partake. Applying for a settler's lease he thus complied fully with Douglas' law and was duly granted a dispensing license as well. Before this speedily built structure had grown into the more respectable Globe Saloon, a shanty town of shacks, cabins and tents had sprouted up around it. Thus, this area became laconically known as Gassy Jack's Town (later shortened to Gastown) because the lessee's owner Captain Gassy Jack Deighton, was such a talkative old mariner.

While the Colony of Vancouver Island had amalgamated with the Colony of British Columbia in 1866, and as noted above the seat of government was moved to the recently incorporated city of Victoria, it wasn't until 1874 and the promise of a railway sea to sea, that British Columbia joined John A. Macdonald's Confederation of Canada to become the westernmost province of the dominion. The construction of a Royal Navy dockyard at Esquimalt, the acquiring of right-of-way for the island's E&N railway and surveys for the mainland's Canadian Pacific Railway promised to stimulate both industry and growth within the province.

In 1879, Jack Deighton gathered a group of responsible Burrard Inlet residents together to draw up and register a plan for the Township of Granville. Laying out Water Street parallel to and facing the inlet's foreshore, with Cordova and Hasting Streets parallel to it and southward of his Globe Hotel, the citizens agreed to provide three roads running north and south to divide the town site into manageable portions. Carrall Street starting at Gassy Jack's emporium became the eastern boundary, Abbott Street divided the plot down the middle and Cambie Streets became its western boundary.

A short time after this, and well outside the western edge of the township where the influential and wealthy had begun to build more substantial homes, Jan A. Rekab built a brewery, believed to be the first steam-powered brewery in this area, and one of his share holders was none other than our infamous Gassy Jack. This brewery was sit-



uated on the west bank of a stream of brownish water (the Three Greenhorns had a cabin nearby), which proved none harmful to either Rekab's boiler, which evaporated hundreds of pounds of it an hour, or to his patrons who consumed many barrels of beer brewed from it.

This stream drained a gloomy, marshy lake surrounded by massive cedar trees (now Robson's Square), which were towered over by tall (150–300-foot) fir trees through which now Granville, Seymour and Richards Streets run. The gorge cut by this stream ran northward toward Burrard Street (Christ Church Cathedral was later located on its west bank) to empty into Burrard Inlet just east of where the Marine Building stands today. It was the stone outcrop that stretched westward (now the site of the LRT [former CPR] tunnel), that became the brewery's cooling cellars when John Williams cut caves into them a few years later.

The incorporation of the city of Vancouver, the great fire that almost immediately burnt it down and the final arrival of the railway's first transcontinental train the following year had all faded into history by the time Williams and Barker bought this brewery in 1888. Renaming it the Red Cross Brewery, they built it into a very modern installation which soon boasted electric power and motors, employed a couple dozen men and produced in excess of fifty barrels of beer a day. Originally located on Seaton Street (name since abandoned) it was relocated slightly eastward into the small present-day triangle west of Burrard Street and flanked north and south by Pender and Hastings Streets.

They offered Red Cross Lager Beer in a dark green quart-sized bottle embossed with the legend "RED CROSS BREWERY—not to be resold," and fitted with a porcelain stopper. Later, merging with Doering and Marstrand at the Vancouver Brewery up at 263 East 7th Street, they continued to brew and bottle their line of beers.

While there was a slight lag in the economy on completion of the railway's massive construction, the building of the CPR's Hotel Vancouver way out in the woods (now the corner of Georgia and Granville St.), and an extension of the city's limits east of Main Street and south of False Creek into the Mount Pleasant/Fairview district, opened up a surge of home building that caused a bridge to be built across False Creek, joining Main Street up with the newly constructed Westminster Road (now Kingsway).

Realizing such plans were afoot, Charles Doering had built a

small brewery (7th Ave. and Scotia St. today) upon what would become known as Brewery Creek. This was a waterwheel-powered brewery with the source of the tumbling creek's water, a large marshy lake in the Mount Pleasant area south of Twelfth Avenue and east of Main Street. There is purported another brewery built on this stream, in the area of Twelfth and Main Street, called the San Francisco Brewery, but no records were found to substantiate this.

Charles Doering hailed from Saxony, and after immigrating to the United States as a young man, arrived up in Canada in the late 1870s to work as brewer at both Victoria breweries under Louis and Emil Erb. In 1882 after visiting the City Brewery (Red Cross) in Granville, he bought the property in Mount Pleasant and began building the Vancouver Brewery. In 1892, Otto Marstrand, who had learned his brewing trade in Copenhagen, joined him.

Renamed the Doering & Marstrand Brewing Co., the brewery was rebuilt into a four-story structure housing the most modern machinery of its day, and its staff of twenty-five husky young men produced more than 1,000 barrels of Alexandra lager and English ales a month. At the turn of the century, they amalgamated with the Red Cross Brewery, after which Otto Marstrand returned to Denmark.

This business was then renamed Vancouver Brewery and bottled Red Cross and the old D&M lagers, porter and ales with John Williams and Charles Doering as partners. Ten years later, as noted previously, Henry E. Reifel took over this brewery when Chas Doering sold out his interest to the British consortium and retired.

During that quarter century, numerous small breweries had emerged to offer beer to the thirsty in this busy port. In addition to the Red Cross and D&M Breweries, there was the Cedar Cottage Brewery owned by John Benson out toward Westminster Road and Knight Street. The Royal Brewery was situated on Powell Street (near to where Fritz Sick later opened his Capilano Brewery), and the Columbia Brewing Company was down in Cedar Cove where the Princeton Hotel is now located at the north foot of Victoria Drive. Over near Chilco Street in the West End, on the shores of what is now called Lost Lagoon, was Frederick Fohert's Stanley Park Brewery.

Several events heralded in the prosperity of these early brewers, such as the Union Steamship Line to the Antipodes, which transhipped lamb and mutton via the CPR for the eastern markets and Europe through Vancouver. The advent of the ignoble tin can provided the stim-



The Stanley Park Brewery in 1897. In the foreground is the bridge across Coal Harbour to Stanley Park.  
*Photo: Vancouver Archives P.115, N.41*

ulus to drive the salmon industry into a multimillion-dollar export item. And the invention of the steam logging donkey engine allowed hitherto untouched, inaccessible stands of giant timber to be dragged down to the salt chuck and towed to the city's sawmills. But no event stimulated the economy and caused such great demand on the city's services as that heralded by the arrival of the Alaskan steamer *Portland* at the Puget Sound port of Seattle in the early summer of 1897.

With the Argonauts arriving from the distant tributaries of the Yukon River, after a winter frozen in the white stillness of the far north, came stories of alluvial gold so plentiful you could scoop it up with a saucepan, and nuggets so large you could bite them with your teeth. These wild stories became gospel truth when the Seattle Times newspaper used two-inch type to bugle to the world, "Ton of gold unloaded today by first ship out of Alaska."

The Klondike gold rush was born at that moment. Within hours, hastily outfitted gold seekers were demanding transportation to Alaska. Through the winter of 1897-98, steamships of every description pushed northward against fog, snow and Willie Waws (local, sudden storms of snow and wind that exceed 100 miles per hour), to provide them service, while unscrupulously increasing the charges for doing so as desperation for transportation overcame prudence for safety. Never was the world to become so crazed for gold, as during those last two years of the nineteenth century.

For the tens of thousands who sailed to Skagway or Nome, almost an equal number clawed their way through the brush and muskeg of northern British Columbia and Alberta to reach the fabled riches of the Yukon. How many perished in the frozen wilderness will never be known, but Inspector Daniel Steele (for whom Fort Steele was named) of the Northwest (name changed a few years later to Royal Canadian) Mounted Police quickly provided patrols over the Canadian part of their journey to ensure they were properly outfitted and duly accounted for.

The courageous feats of his policemen, in traveling hundreds of miles on snowshoes or dogsled to succor the needy and quell the unlawful, has been immortalized in such adventurous stories as *King of the Royal Mounted*. Stories of the Klondike's gold and the men who sought it, are well documented in the literary works of Pierre Berton's *Klondike*, Jack London's *Call of the North* and Robert Service's *Ballads of the Sourdough*. Berton was born there, London sailed there and Service arrived there as a bank clerk when Dawson City had twelve saloons, a dozen outfitters and gold merchants, eight houses of ill repute and no church.

The gold rush brought wealth into the southern B.C. ports, encouraging brewers to build breweries here. Before this event, actually in early 1897, Doering and Marstrand had advertised their beers at \$1.50 per dozen quart bottles, 75¢ per dozen pints delivered. Just over a year later beer sold in Vancouver for 15¢ a pint or two-bits a quart, and far north in the Yukon where an egg or fist-sized potato fetched a dollar, beer in pints demanded a similar price, while a lovely big quart if procurable at all, commanded two bucks on the barrel head.

Short supply created higher prices, and the upsurge in both the mercantile trade and industry provided the funds to bid it ever higher. Foreshore, where sawmills were not busily cutting up lumber for the Yukon, were pre-empted by boat builders who laid down ways upon which to build ships to carry it north. Even the foreshore around False Creek was a bustling hive of activity, and east of Westminster Road where False Creek shoaled into a slough that stretched almost to Clark Drive, several schooners and a steamer were built near the outfall of Brewery Creek.

The waterfront and the merchandising area along Hastings, Powell and Water Streets were a madhouse of gold-hungry men seek-

ing supplies and transportation. Captain Irving's Canadian Pacific Navigation Company not only put every ship on this run, but also built several sternwheeler river steamers to go into the Yukon River trade. Their grand two-funneled passenger steamer *Islander* came to her demise in this trade, just as CP Rail was buying out the company. Southbound from Skagway on a dark night in late 1901, she struck an iceberg and sank within sixteen minutes. Although fully loaded, most got off into her boats. But her captain, Hamilton R. Foote, sixteen crewmen and twenty-six passengers did not. Supposedly carrying a large cargo of gold, the salvage of her hulk in 1934 revealed little, if any, remained.

Two years after the loss of the *Islander*, Jim Hill financed a bridge across the Fraser River and pushed his Great Northern Railroad toward Vancouver. Re-routing his rail line north from Blaine along the more placid shoreline of Georgia Straits, it passed through present-day summer retreats like White Rock and Crescent Beach, before springing over the shallows of Boundary Bay on a trestle, to skirt the western slope of Scott Hill before doubling back up the Fraser River.

The bridge over the fast-flowing Fraser River was highly welcomed by the people of New Westminster, for it carried both vehicles and pedestrians traffic across on its upper deck, providing them with a road link to the states. From New Westminster the rail line climbed up the east bank of the Brunette River before skirting the north shore of Burnaby Lake to enter a deep cut that brought it out on False Creek at Clark Drive.

Here, pilings were driven into the shallow waters of False Creek to carry a temporary spur. And as the steam shovels dug the deep cut that today passes under Commercial Drive and Broadway, the gondola cars they loaded were shunted out on this trestle and dumped, slowly filling in the upper end of False Creek. According to my father-in-law Captain Greenhalgh, sweepings from the city's streets of sawdust and horse manure were also dumped into this basin from the Main Street end, where the Ivanhoe Hotel built on pilings offered moorage to small boats.

Skirting along the south shore of False Creek, the Great Northern Railway crossed Westminster Road (Main Street) one block south of Terminal Ave. Swinging northward over trestles carried on concrete piers west of Westminster Road, they landed their passengers and freight at the south end of Columbia Street. (Even today, a sign on the



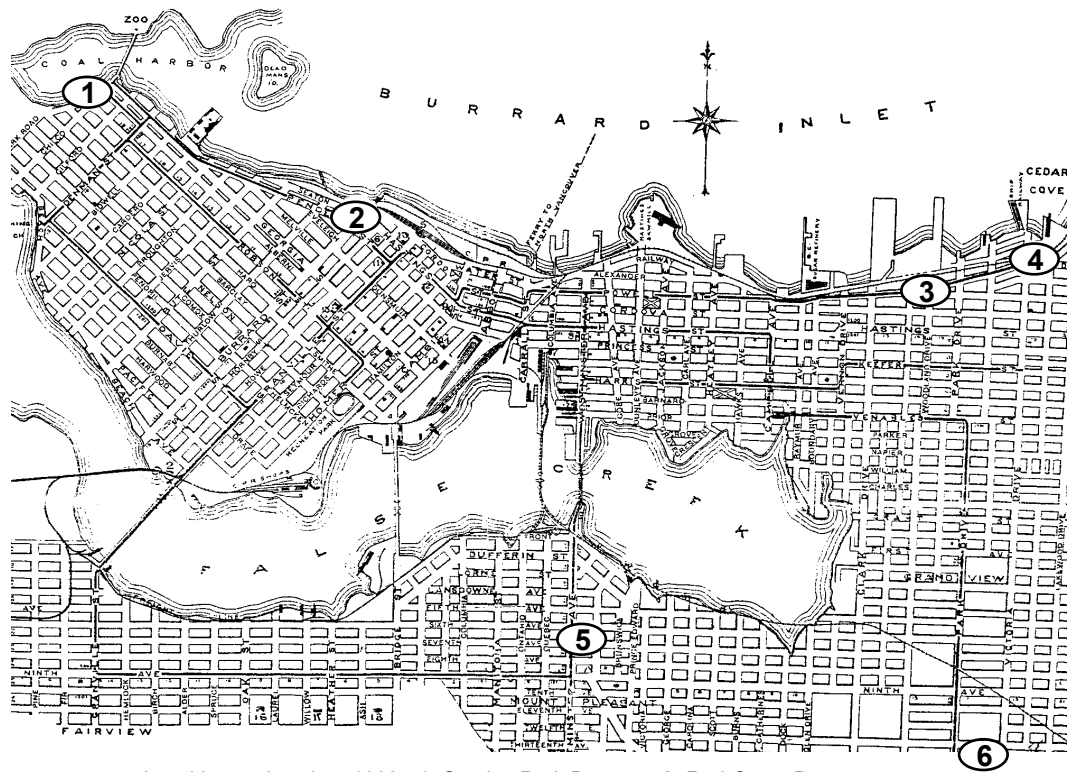
The Columbia Brewery at Cedar Cove in 1892. Photo: Vancouver Archives P.115, N.41

side of the old Mandarin Gardens building on Pender Street is still visible, bearing the legend "To G.N. Trains" with an arrow pointing southward along Columbia Street.)

Sir Richard McBride was undoubtedly one of British Columbia's outstanding politicians. As Minister of Mines and Railways, he encouraged both Jim Hill's Great Northern Railway and William Mackenzie and Donald Mann's westward-creeping Canadian Northern Railway to supply the province with needed rail services. Later when premier, he supported the Grand Trunk Pacific's thrust west to the newly surveyed port of Prince Rupert, and McCulloch's dream of a terrifying rail link through the Coquihalla River canyons, requiring eighteen tunnels and seventeen bridges to realize.

Before his government tumbled to defeat in 1915 he had sponsored thirteen new railways in this province, the Kettle Valley Line supplying them coal from Merritt and Coalmount areas and the Pacific Great Eastern Railway destined to connect North Vancouver with the wheat, oil and gas of the Prince George Peace River area. He had girthed the West Coast for war by mounting guns on its seaward promenades and had purchased two Seattle-built submarines for the infant Canadian Navy before stepping down.

With more than 10,000 steamships (1907 *Pilot's Guide*) on the coast and most of those using this port, Vancouver was growing into a very prosperous city that shipped out lumber, ore and canned salmon in ever-increasing amounts and imported such highly prized



Local breweries circa 1900: 1. Stanley Park Brewery 2. Red Cross Brewery  
 3. Royal Brewery 4. Columbia Brewery 5. Doering & Marstrand (Vancouver)  
 Brewery. 6. Cedar Cottage Brewery.

commodities as spice, tea and silk from the Orient, bananas and pineapples from Hawaii, mutton and lamb from New Zealand, and sugar from Australia and the Fiji Islands. By this time, according to the city directory of those years, the breweries had resolved themselves into a more compact number, even though several new companies had been formed.

John Williams, as noted earlier, closed up his brewery near the future Marine Building to brew his Red Cross beer at the Mount Pleasant brewery. The Royal Brewery joined forces with the Stanley Park Brewery and moved their equipment to 725 Chilco Street, while Mister Benson converted his other brewery at Cedar Cottage into his residence. This left just the Columbia Brewery, where the Princeton Hotel now stands, and a newcomer Seattle Brewing and Malting, agents for Pacific Bottling Works at the foot of Gore, who bottled Rainier Beer. By 1911, the Stanley Park Brewery, Columbia Brewery and the City Brewery had all closed their doors.