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Staffordshire miners, few of whom had ever before seen the ocean. The bark "Princess Royal," on which they sailed, left London on June 1, 1854, and reached Victoria on November 27 of the same year, making a voyage of over five months.

Arrived at Colvilletown the new settlers found a few log dwellings which had been prepared for them by the axes of Labine and Fortier. These, along with a slight clearing in the woods by the water's edge, constituted the entire preparation for the accommodation of the future population.

The houses were made of logs or poles, the spaces between this material being plastered with clay and stuffed with moss to exclude the chill winter winds. The furniture consisted of benches, boards and bunk-like bedsteads, while on the floor were mats made by the Indians from dogs' hair.

The first settlers were compelled to turn their hands to all kinds of work and soon succeeded in constructing a hamlet of about forty-five buildings, including the bastion, a sawmill, store and warehouse, two carpenters' shops, a smithy, stables, etc. The first stone house on Vancouver Island was built by one William Isbister, who made his mortar with lime manufactured from clam shells. One of the miners

happened also to be a coke burner, and with coke made by him was turned out the first iron casting made in the colony.

Life at Nanaimo in the fifties and sixties seems to have presented many dreary aspects. The settlers were for weeks without news from home, and in those days of scarce money the cost of a half-ounce letter "home" was equal to a day's wages. The old "Beaver," the first vessel to paddle the Pacific, visited Nanaimo every six months; the "Otter" more frequently. The "Princess Royal," which had brought the first settlers, continued to return every two years with fresh loads of immigrants.

In the early sixties the colony was enlivened by the arrival of gold-seekers going to or returning from the Cariboo district. The excitement brought many ocean steamships, and steamers and sailing vessels visited Nanaimo three or four times a week, thronged with pioneers from California and Australia, as well as with "cheechacos" from the east and from the old land. There was a brisk trade with the Indians in canoes to be used by the miners in exploring the creeks tributary to the Fraser.

Near by the mining hamlet was the Indian village, a long range of smoky huts