



Street Stories

Horne Street

GPS: [49.1360845,-122.3022972](#)



James Welton Horne built the town of Mission after buying 120 hectares of the area's land in the late 1890s.
Mission Community Archives 1978-078-008-James-Welton-Horne

Not a lot of people have three streets named after them. Yet, here in Mission, James Welton Horne does: one for each of his names. This is hardly surprising, as Horne was a self-made man whose entrepreneurial genius spanned the country.

Born in Toronto in 1853, his father died when Horne was nine, which forced him to quit school and begin work on a farm. Yet Horne kept studying his books after work and completed his schooling. In time, after some more schooling and a lot of self-teaching, he became an expert in mechanical draftsmanship.

Saving up his money, Horne then turned to business and, in the spring of 1881, snapped up the rights to some land lying on the proposed path of the CPR. With the railway laid, the town of Brandon, Manitoba came into being.

Horne was now both rich and restless, and he began to look to the West for his next venture. He eventually moved to Vancouver in 1886. In 1888 and '89 he was elected a member of the city council. From 1889 to 1894, Horne was chairman of the Stanley Park Board, donating at his own expense the beginning of the Stanley Park Zoo. In 1890 he became an MLA.

Meanwhile, in 1889, Horne heard that the CPR's first railway junction linking B.C. with the U.S. railway system would be located

in a spot near St. Mary's Mission. He bought the 120 hectares of bushland at this junction.

Horne had the land cleared and laid out an ambitious gridwork of almost 50 streets and more than 5,000 lots. He called this new town Mission City. That done, Horne then had a downtown core built. Some warehouses, a bank, a newspaper office, a medical building, two restaurants, and several other buildings were put up. By the spring of 1891, 1,200 workers were on the job. In May of that year, after much hype, Horne had the 'city' auctioned off.

"There is no doubt," Horne said on the day of the auction, "that Mission City will, in but a few years, attain to being one of the premier cities among the urban centres of this province!" Many seemed to have agreed, for Horne did quite well from the sale of 'Mission City.' As it turned out, however, he never lived in the town. Instead, he made his home in Vancouver, where he died in 1925.

Street Stories is provided by the Mission Community Archives, which is operated by the Mission Historical Society. If you have any questions or further information on Horne, please call us at 604-820-2621.

David Buss