

## **Early Vancouver**

### **Volume One**

**By: Major J.S. Matthews, V.D.**

**2011 Edition (Originally Published 1932)**

*Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1931-1932.*

*A Collection of Historical Data, Maps, and Plans Made with the Assistance of  
Pioneers of Vancouver Between March and December 1931.*

### **About the 2011 Edition**

The 2011 edition is a transcription of the original work collected and published by Major Matthews. Handwritten marginalia and corrections Matthews made to his text over the years have been incorporated and some typographical errors have been corrected, but no other editorial work has been undertaken. The edition and its online presentation was produced by the City of Vancouver Archives to celebrate the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the City's founding. The project was made possible by funding from the Vancouver Historical Society.

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(Mrs. Bole's statement is not as incorrect as on the surface it would appear. Hastings Street was not a main street of Vancouver until after 1899, perhaps 1900, and there were probably stumps on lots much later.)



Item # EarlyVan\_v1\_0021

### 10 JUNE 1931 - BIG TREES. GRANVILLE STREET. GEORGIA STREET.

There is a photograph commonly known in Vancouver; it appears almost everywhere; of a butt of a great burned tree in which is established a "REAL ESTATE - LOTS FOR SALE" office. Of this photo, Mr. H.P. McCraney, a very early pioneer, now vice-president of F.L. Cummings and Company, 1300 block Howe Street, painting contractors, says:

"The big tree lay partly on Georgia Street, partly on the lane, and partly on the site of the present Strand Theatre, that is, on Georgia Street between Seymour Street and Granville Street, and immediately behind the present Birks Building. My firm had the contract for clearing the land around there, and I passed the tree many times a day. My firm was Stephenson and McCraney. It was a fir.

"The photograph was taken immediately after the fire. It was not actually a real estate office; the photograph was taken more for advertising purposes, for a joke.

“Those in the photo include J.W. Horne, H.A. Jones, Mr. Stiles, a real estate man, Dr. Hendricks, the U.S. Consul, and some others. I will pick them out for you someday when we have the photo by us.

“It was a tremendous tree, and on the highest spot of ground. It must have towered far above the present Birks Building or Vancouver Block.

“There was another big tree at the corner of Pender and Richards streets, just outside W.H. Gallagher’s present real estate office. It was a cedar. The cedars were bigger trees than the firs. There is one about 100 yards from the Brockton Point recreation grounds—it’s still there—which was sixty-eight feet around.”

Query: I am told there was a tremendous stump at the corner of Cordova and Carrall streets, and that for years the wagons used to pass around it, through dust or mud?

“Doubt it; might have been. My firm had the contract, and I graded and planked Cordova Street, but I don’t remember it.” (See elsewhere re Big Trees.)

### **JUNE 1931 - PORT MOODY. CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY. FIRST EASTBOUND FREIGHT. TEA FROM ORIENT TO ENGLAND.**

“Much was made of the advantages of the new route around the world,” said Mr. W.F. Findlay (see elsewhere), “when the C.P.R. line was opened to salt water at Port Moody; for instance, by a coincidence a tea ship arrived right at the proper moment. She was a sailing ship. She was towed up to Port Moody. It arrived in England three weeks earlier than if it had gone by the regular route—Suez Canal presumed—much was made of the pace of speed of arrival.”

#### *NOTE ADDED LATER:*

“It was not a coincidence, but carefully planned; the ship was two days late, and did not reach there until three days after the first train arrived.” – W.F. Findlay, April 12, 1932.

### **11 JUNE 1931 - PORT MOODY. CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY.**

“I put \$10,000 into land at Port Moody—and lost it,” mourned Captain E.S. Scoullar, formerly of New Westminster, now of Kerrisdale, and passed three score and ten years, “on the assumption that the C.P.R. terminus would be there. I was vice-president of the first Board of Trade in New Westminster, a director of the Vancouver and New Westminster Electric tram line at the time it was built, and took an interest in public and political affairs. The City of New Westminster paid the C.P.R. \$75,000 to bring their line into New Westminster.

“Sir Charles Tupper made a speech to a crowded house in New Westminster. He said that the C.P.R. would never go past Port Moody; that was why I bought. Then a telegram came from Homer (Homer, member of Parliament, and after whom Homer Street is named) saying that the roundhouse was to be built at Port Moody. Most people did not know what a roundhouse was; they assumed it was some place of consequence, and many purchased land on that telegram.” (See Sir Charles Tupper’s reference to this in his book, *Sixty Years, etc.*, and his refutation of the criticism levelled at him for stopping the line at Port Moody.)

Captain Scoullar had a notable career in the activities of the lower mainland in the 1880s and early 1890s. He was one of the two officers who commanded troops, on 1 July 1887, for our first Dominion Day celebration; he was commander of the New Westminster Rifles, built the Central School, etc.

### **11 JUNE 1931 - WILD ANIMALS IN VANCOUVER.**

“I was always a great hunter. In the old days we used to hunt deer around Little Lake, and get lots of them.”