

## **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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“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.”

The speaker was Captain Pittendrigh's son, Mr. C.E. Pittendrigh, recently retired after twenty-one years on the New Westminster Police Force. His father, Captain Pittendrigh, was stipendiary magistrate in the early days at New Westminster, and also a commander of the British Columbia Brigade of Garrison Artillery there.

"'Little Lake' was the old name for 'Deer Lake,' near Oakalla prison. We used to go out on the stage going to Hastings, get off, shoot the deer, and have them on the roadside by the time the stage came back. It was cheap; they charged us 'two bits' only for taking the deer in to New Westminster.

"The grouse were very thick. I used to hunt with a dog. Some dogs were very good at locating a grouse. On one occasion I could not get my dog to stop barking, but search my best I could not find that grouse. Finally I gave up, but a chance glance showed me where he was; on the very topmost pinnacle of a big fir, almost too far for the gun to reach, and I had the best gun I could buy. But the dog knew he was there all the time."

### **MOODYVILLE. POST OFFICE.**

"The mail used to go to Moodyville once a week by an Indian on horseback from Westminster. The Indian got five dollars for taking it from Westminster to Hastings, from whence it went by boat. The Indian used to deliver the mail all right, then he got his money, and for the next two or three days he was drunk."

### **KINGSWAY.**

"The 'new' road to Vancouver from Westminster was very little used. Even after it was 'built' no one used it very much; they seemed to prefer the old Hastings Road, now Douglas Road."

### **RIFLE RANGES. PEELE BUTTS.**

"If there ever was one, I do not recall any rifle range on the Brunette Road. I distinctly remember the old Peele Butts; they were not in a ravine, but on the level, at the back of the Provincial Asylum for the Insane."

### **INDIANS.**

From Pittendrigh's remarks it was gathered that the deer, grouse, etc. were very plentiful, and more or less easily secured in the district around "Little Lake." His remarks on this point were illuminating as to the effort necessary, on the part of Indians, to secure food before the white men came.

### **ELK.**

In reply to a query as to what he thought was the significance of the elk dung which Mr. William Hunt of Kitsilano found beneath an uprooted tree on Kitsilano Beach (Greer's Beach) in 1898, he replied, "There were, in the early days, many dried, weather-whitened antlers of elk lying on the ground around Little Lake; evidently they had been there for many years. I have done a great deal of hunting in the northern country, have never seen any elk in these parts, but I have found their horns, around Little Lake, near Oakalla, before 1887."

Mr. Pittendrigh was in the provincial police in the early days, then went to the "Upper Country," retired on 1 June 1931 after twenty-one years service, and was presented then with a very handsome travelling bag by his fellow policemen in the presence of a large number of friends and His Worship the Mayor of the city of New Westminster.