

Early Vancouver

Volume One

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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 125th anniversary of the City's founding. The project was made possible by funding from the Vancouver Historical Society.

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12 DECEMBER 1931 – SALMON.

Discussing salmon today with Mr. Paul Marmette, bridge draughtsman for Onderdonk at Yale from 1880 to 1885 (see elsewhere), he said, "All you had to do at one time, on the Fraser River, was to put a hook and lump of lead on a line, throw it in the river and haul it back. The hook would catch in a salmon.

"On one occasion," he said, "Mr. William Downie" (an early C.P.R. official) "was taking some officials east, when one exclaimed, 'Oh, look at the salmon.' Mr. Downie jokingly replied, 'That's nothing. You ought to have been here last year. We had to open the Savona's Bridge to let them through.'"

DEADMAN'S ISLAND. THE GREAT FIRE OF 1886.

Mr. Marmette, see above, relates that after the Great Fire and whilst they were searching the ruins, they came upon a skeleton, and were astonished to find that all the bones were wired together—a puzzling occurrence in a new town of shacks. It turns out that it was the skeleton of an Indian which Dr. Langis had secured from Deadman's Island—presumably out of the trees, the Indian method of burial. (*NOTE ADDED LATER*: No, a Swede who committed suicide at Moodyville. See "Dr. Langis.") Dr. Langis still lives, 1931, at Parksville.

CHINAMEN. ONDERDONK.

Mr. Marmette says it was 10,000 Chinamen that Onderdonk brought over to build the C.P.R. He recalls many of them going back, most of them, but many stayed.

Why did he get Chinamen? was queried.

"Well, he had to get help; there were no men to be got here."

JSM