

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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The Reverend Canon Sovereign came down the gang plank. Colonel Malkin hurried forward with extended hand, and, many people being within hearing, greeting him with an effusive welcome, more than ordinarily loud for Colonel Malkin, "How do you do, Canon Sovereign?"

Canon Sovereign, who has a rather high-pitched voice which carries well, responded in kind with "and how are you, *Colonel* Malkin?" (Emphasis on "Colonel.")

Mr. Stirling, who was a friendly spectator to the performance, ejaculated, "Listen to the big guns roar."

"And pray what do you mean by that, Mr. Stirling?" ask Colonel Malkin enquiringly.

"Smooth bores," replied Mr. Stirling without hesitation and with a smile.

At the time Brigadier General Victor W. Odlum, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., was "running" for parliament for Vancouver South (approximately 1925), large advertising placards were appearing in street car advertising giving his full military title and the *initials* of his honours. It is reported that a stenographer, on reading the placards, exclaimed that they meant, "Come Boys, Don't Say Odlum, Call Me General." General Odlum was, so it is said, at one time the youngest general in the British Army (38) and upon his return from the war was, at first, much acclaimed, which afterwards led, unjustly, to a common assumption that he was domineering, self-opinionated, and self-important. As he grew older, he relaxed this stiffness.

14 OCTOBER 1931 - EARLY PUBLIC LIBRARY. CORDOVA STREET AND HASTINGS MILL.

Attention was drawn to an article which appeared in the *Vancouver Star*, 19 August 1931, in reference to the demise of Mr. H. Beeman in which it is stated that "Mr. and Mrs. Machin were the founders and first librarians of the city, which originated in a little store on Cordova Street."

Mr. H.P. McCraney says that this is an inaccuracy, and relates as follows:

"After the city" (Vancouver) "got started, the boarding house at the Hastings Sawmill was discontinued. Other boarding houses were springing up and there was no need to keep it on, so Mr. Alexander decided to close it. With the closing of the boarding house, there was no further use for the library there, and the books were collected in a pile and lay unused. Mr. Alexander mentioned the matter to the Reverend H.G. Fiennes-Clinton of St. James Church" (Father Clinton), "and asked Father Clinton if he could make use of them as they were no longer wanted. Mr. Clinton spoke to Mr. Carter-Cotton" (of the *News-Advertiser* afterwards.) "Mr. Carter-Cotton and I lived in the same house on Carrall Street. Mr. Carter-Cotton spoke to me. The three of us, Father Clinton, Mr. Carter-Cotton and myself got together and appointed ourselves a library committee and took over the books. Some of them are in the Vancouver Public Library yet" (1931).

"We took the books, went around town, gathered up all the old books and magazines we could collect, also collected some money whenever and wherever we could get it. We hired a room over McLennan and McFeely's store, the old store on Cordova Street on the south side about half way between Abbott and Cambie streets, and put George Pollay and his wife in charge. I think Mrs. Pollay is living yet; Mr. Pollay was afterwards killed in a mining accident, and George Pollay was librarian there for several years" (?) "before the Machins came. We kept minute books; I wonder what has become of them." (Continued.)

15 OCTOBER 1931 - THE ELLESMERE ROOMS. PENDER STREET WEST.

The Ellesmere Rooms is a tall wooden building still standing, in 1931, at the corner of Pender Street West and Homer Street (northwest corner), and lower portion of which is now used for cheap stores and offices. It was the first large "boarding house."

Mr. Beck, K.C., told me today that at the time it was erected, it was “up on the hill.” People wondered why “they built it up there.” He said that much the same thing was said of the Cambie Street grounds when first used. People said, “Why did they go so far out?”

Mr. W.F. Findlay, nephew of Lewis Carter (Welsh spelling of Lewis) of the Carter House, once told me that when the McDonough Hall was built at the corner (southeast corner) of Hastings and Columbia Street (where the top floor was used for a ballroom), people said, “why did they build it away out in the woods?” Away was a commonly used word to express “far off” or “remote.”

J.S. Matthews

15 OCTOBER 1931 - PENDER STREET WEST.

In conversation with Mr. H.P. McCraney today, he pointed out that “all the logging roads of the early days were located close to a spring of water or a creek. There was a logging road came out of the woods between Thurlow Street and Bute Street; that was how the logs from the West End were dragged out from points convenient, but the reason the road was there was largely on account of water, for horses and men.

JSM

THE BIG TREES. GEORGIA STREET WEST.

I told Mr. McCraney that there was some dispute as to where the big tree shown in “Vancouver Lots for Sale” (with nine men in the picture) photograph stood. “Yes,” he replied, “I know there is, but I surely ought to know—I cleared it away. It stood partly on the lot which is the southwest corner of Georgia Street and Seymour Street—on the back of the lot—and partly on the lane between Granville and Seymour, and partly on Georgia Street. When it fell, it fell almost parallel with Georgia Street, and in a westerly direction.

“The man with folded arms in that picture is A.W. Ross, M.P. for some point in Ontario. His wife, and Mrs. M.A. McLean, wife of the first mayor of Vancouver, were sisters. Mrs. MacLean is still living, though an invalid. A.W. Ross claimed that he was the man who persuaded Sir William Van Horne to adopt Vancouver as the terminal of the C.P.R.; perhaps he did, I don’t know.”

J.S. Matthews

Mr. H.T. Devine says that “at thirty feet from the butt it was nine feet diameter.”

JSM

15 OCTOBER 1931 - EARLY PUBLIC LIBRARY.

There is in the custody of Mr. E.S. Robinson, Librarian, Vancouver Public Library, corner Main and Hastings Street, now a book, title A Memoir of the Rev. Sydney Smith,” on the flyleaf of which is written,

PRESENT TO THE LIBRARY OF THE
BRITISH COLUMBIA MILL COMPANY

AT BURRARD INLET

BY

THOMAS SAUEVILLE, M.A.

Jan. 7th 1869

J.S. Matthews