

Early Vancouver

Volume One

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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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"I am of the opinion that if the order as outlined in General Orders, September 1920 for the amalgamation of the two units, [had] been carried out as Ottawa intended it to be, instead of by some secret subterfuge which put in a commanding officer selected by, presumably, General Odlum and some of his cronies, the subsequent lamentable injustices suffered by faithful officers of the old regiment would never have occurred. The old 6th D.C.O.R. was one of the most splendid regiments in all Canada, but the manner in which its services were rewarded in post-war years do not commend themselves to me. Its esprit de corps was smashed to atoms to no purpose, and no one can point with much pride to the career of its successor during the period 1920 to 1930.

"Whatever General Odlum's judgments in war may have been, his judgments in peace time militia matters have always been mediocre, but in 1920 he had just returned, was at the zenith of popular acclaim, and he expected—and others expected too—he would achieve power and position in political life. His name was even mentioned for provincial cabinet rank, and for the ministry of militia and defence in Dominion politics; he was much sought after, and his wishes pandered to. But whatever it was, I am quite positive the meeting of all officers of both units to select a new officer commanding was never held; surely I should have heard of it if it had been. I was O.C."

16 JANUARY 1932 - "NORTH AMERICAN CHINAMEN." HASTINGS MILL STORE, NOW FOOT OF ALMA ROAD. NATIVE DAUGHTERS OF B.C., POST NO. 1. HONOURABLE S.F. TOLMIE, PRIME MINISTER OF B.C.

At the official ceremony of opening the museum of the Native Daughters of B.C., Post No. 1 at the old Hastings Mill store today, Premier Tolmie said as follows, in part, in reference to the expression, "North American Chinamen." He was speaking of the early days, and had mentioned that his family had occupied the same farm for 72 years.

"Canada was very remote in those days. To reach British Columbia meant a long trip via Chicago and San Francisco, and then an 800 mile voyage up the coast to Victoria. Canadians who came by this long and expensive route frequently had exhausted their resources on the way."

(Re above paragraph, comment by Mr. Gallagher: "All imagination.")

"It was the unwritten law then that no man should buy himself a drink" (at a bar.) "He either bought for 'the house,' for his friend, or if none other were present, then for the barkeeper and himself. Canadians acquired a reputation for 'horning in,' and simultaneously the epithet, 'North American Chinamen.'"

A large assemblage of distinguished pioneers and civic officials, including several ministers of the cabinet, the Mayor of Vancouver, and others were present. Dr. Tolmie's remarks were made in that inimitable style of pleasantry for which he is noted, gave no offence, merely added amusement, for there never was, nor ever will be, a more loyal son of British Columbia and of Canada than he is.

In the days of the (hotel) bar, the treating system was rampant; a man who bought a drink, paid for it and drunk alone was regarded askance as a queer 'guy,' or he was ill and needed it medicinally. New arrivals in the country were not always familiar with the almost unbroken and unwritten law, and sometimes violated it, to the astonishment of the onlookers. In my day, 1900-1917, they came mostly from the United Kingdom.