

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 OLD COURT HOUSE ON VICTORY SQUARE.

“‘Chummy’ Green, for fifteen years or so” (see A.E. Beck’s, *Memoir of Early Vancouver*, re opening of Court House ceremony), “janitor at the old Court House on Victory Square, was so often in the cells at the old Court House that finally he, also, was put on the staff and made janitor.” (Findlay says “true.” JSM) “He was a sort of ‘authority.’ Mr. Justice McCreight and other judges were always in a hurry to catch the Victoria boat, and as they were hurrying away from the Court House to the C.P.R. Dock, would tell ‘Chummy’ when they would be back. ‘Chummy’ always knew when they were coming or going, and used to notify everyone.”

On Tuesday, 26 January 1932, Mr. Gallagher left Vancouver for an extended pleasure trip through the Mediterranean, and these conversations ended.

The above narrative had been read over three times with Mr. Gallagher, alterations and additions being made each time; the completed narrative has not, at this moment, 30 January 1932, been read by him.

J.S. Matthews

WATER. GAS.

“Of course,” remarked Mr. Gallagher on one occasion, “you know that the charters for city services were granted, in some cases, before the incorporation of the city. For instance, the Coquitlam Water Works, pretty well all Westminster people, and the Capilano Water Works, pretty well all Victoria people, and the Gas Works charter, were all granted before the incorporation of the city. The first secretary of the Capilano Water Works was J.W. McFarland, who had been manager for Hugh Keefer, and afterwards was of Mahon, McFarland and Mahon.”

JSM

31 DECEMBER 1931 - THE GREAT FIRE OF 1886, CASUALTIES.

Query: How many lost their lives?

Answers:

Mr. W.H. Gallagher (30 December 1931) – “We converted one of the buildings (on Westminster Avenue) into a morgue, and before daylight had deposited the remains of twenty-one persons there.”

Mr. W.F. Findlay (5 January 1932) – “The largest number I ever heard computed was fifteen; others said it was thirteen; some eleven. I know of nine, and then, about a week later, they found two bodies down a well where the Mercantile Building is now, at the southeast corner of Homer and Cordova streets.”

Mr. H.T. Devine (5 January 1932) – “Well, I know we had eleven in one room down at the Bridge Hotel (Westminster Avenue near False Creek); then there was more down at the Hastings Mill, and those which were fished out of wells afterwards.”

Mr. W.H. Gallagher (30 December 1931) – “There was [a] man caught driving a horse and wagon on Carrall Street between Cordova and Water streets; man and horse perished in the middle of the street. It was down near Drake Street that the fire started. Three of our men who fought the fire there were never heard of again.”

Dr. H.E. Langis (5 January 1932) – “And they took my poor old skeleton and put that in the morgue, too. Do you know what they said when they found it? ‘This poor old fellow must have been sick before he died; all his bones are wired together in the back.’” (Dr. Langis’s “Jimmy” was preserved in his office at the corner of Abbott and Water Street, and the “poor fellow” was found in its ruins after the fire.)