

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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31 JULY 1931 - TELEPHONE COMPANIES.

According to Mr. W.H. Gallagher, the first telephone in Vancouver was burned in the Great Fire, and the news sent to Westminster by phone from George Black's, Hastings, to which point an extension had been made.

"Dr. Lefevre reorganised the first telephone company," said Mr. H.P. McCraney. "Joe Armstrong and his crowd controlled it at first. Dr. Lefevre practically 'put a gun' to Joe's head, and told him he would organise another company if he was not given control."

Query: Was that the New Westminster and Burrard Inlet Telephone Company?

"Yes, that would be the one. The original line was built from New Westminster to Port Moody to keep in touch with the Onderdonk construction of the C.P.R."

31 JULY 1931 - CENTRAL PARK. RIFLE RANGES. RICHMOND RIFLE RANGE.

It was at the suggestion of Captain T.O. Townley, then of New Westminster (Captain, 2 July 1890) but afterwards Mayor of Vancouver (1901), that a strip of land on the west side of Central Park was set aside as a rifle range. The old rifle range which had served New Westminster was across the river at South Westminster and was hard to get at; there was no bridge then, and those of the Vancouver Rifle Association, organised 1889, used a rifle range of a sort at Moodyville, across the flats. (See Rules and Regulations, Vancouver Rifle Association, in Archives.)

By establishing a rifle range at a central location such as Central Park, one of these two ranges could be abolished; and besides, now that the electric street car, the interurban line, was running, it would be far more convenient to go by street car, take less time, and be more convenient than a long circuitous journey across water, followed by a considerable walk.

The Central Park Rifle Range was constructed about 1893 (see full details in Military Section, Vancouver City Museum, letters, etc.) and was last used in September or October 1904 when rifle shooting ceased on account of the growth of the district, and the fact that complaints were being received of flying bullets being a danger. Also, it was getting too small; there were six targets only.

The range was six hundred yards long, cut in the forest. It ran east and west, targets in the east, and paralleled a road which ran in the same direction on its southern side. To reach it, riflemen got off the Central Park interurban car, struck straight into the forest, followed a forest track a foot or so wide, and five minutes walk, came upon the 600 fire point, close by a small one-room shed. The firing points—200, 500 and 600 yards—were all elevated, mounds of earth between logs. There is a photograph of one firing point in the City Museum. It shows Captain J. Duff Stuart, now Brigadier General in command of one “firing party,” and Sergeant W.W. Foster, now Colonel, as sergeant of another “firing party,” commanded by Captain J. Reynolds Tite, both parties in artillery uniform, that of the 5th Regiment Canadian Garrison Artillery, Vancouver.

The British Columbia Rifle Association held their annual prize meeting at Central Park Rifle Range in 1896, 1898 and 1900. Riflemen came from all parts of B.C., and from H.M. warships.

The Central Park Rifle Range was last used in 1904. After shooting on it all year, the first matches on the Richmond Rifle Range, and the last for that year on any range, were held at Richmond on Thanksgiving Day, 1904. The event of the shoot was the new “Perry Trophy” presented by Lieutenant Colonel J.C. Whyte, commanding the 6th Regiment D.C.O.R., to commemorate the winning of the King’s Prize in 1904 by Private S.J. Perry, (G.M.)

One of the trials of the Central Park Range was, (1) the smoke from fires in summer, and the fact that more than once the riflemen on their way to shoot had to pass through more or less dangerous fire—it was most inconvenient to have to dash through fire on the trail—and (2) that the shadows cast by the trees which grew densely and to great height on both sides of the range precluded proper sighting of the rifle sights, cast shadows on the targets, etc. It was a most unsatisfactory range, but served a good purpose for the time being.

31 JULY 1931 - STANLEY PARK.

“Stanley Park,” said Mr. H.P. McCraney, one of the first Park Commissioners, “was opened on the 27th September. A night or so before the park was opened, the City Council appointed the first Park Commissioners; they were appointed, not elected, three of them R.G. Tatlow, A.G. Ferguson, and myself.

“The City Council asked Sir Donald A. Smith, afterwards Lord Strathcona, to name the park. Sir Donald, feeling that the matter was of more than local importance, asked the Governor-General, Lord Stanley of Preston, if he may name it ‘Stanley Park,’ to which request the Governor-General acceded. The name was announced for the first time at the opening ceremonies.

“The ceremonial procession passed through the city, and proceeded to the Stanley Park Landing of the Capilano water pipes, where a temporary platform had been erected. The Honourable John Robson, provincial secretary, Major Grant of Victoria, Mayor Oppenheimer of Vancouver, Mr. Harry Abbott, general superintendent of the C.P.R., aldermen Alexander, Couth, Dougall (of the Dougall House), Humphries, and Oppenheimer were there, and the three park commissioners.

“Mayor Oppenheimer made a speech, and at the conclusion handed Alderman Alexander, who was also a Park Commissioner, a copy of the by-law creating the park board.

“Lord Stanley was present” (This is incorrect – JSM.), “and I think his son, the present Earl of Derby.”

Note: a photo of the site where the opening took place is in the Archives.

JSM