

## **Early Vancouver**

### **Volume One**

**By: Major J.S. Matthews, V.D.**

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

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Item # EarlyVan\_v1\_0058

## **5 AUGUST 1931 - CONSTRUCTION OF STREET RAILWAY IN VANCOUVER.**

Two very early photographs of street railway construction were today given me by Mr. H.P. McCraney, who built the first street railway. Construction was started, in the spring of 1889, about half way between Pacific Street and Drake Street on Granville. (See Mr. McCraney's long narrative elsewhere.)

The first photograph is the "Y" at the junction of Westminster Avenue and Powell Street, and shows a group of thirteen men and a boy at the "Y," three telephone posts with single cross arm on left of street, and one man with his foot on a barrel. The scene beyond is the site now occupied by the Canadian National Dock, now being erected after being destroyed by fire some months ago within a few days after being first completed.

The second photograph is the switch, or passing track, on Powell Street, somewhere near Jackson Avenue. The terminus in the distance, trees beyond, is presumed to be where Campbell Avenue crosses Powell Street. The bridge is presumed to be a counterpart of the present day Hastings Street viaduct, but on Powell Street. This photo shows, on the right, two houses of one storey with verandahs, followed by a white house of two storeys without a verandah, a small dark house further on, and others until the trees are reached. On the left, a two-storey house with bay window, and in the centre, a group of approximately ten men laying down the tracks, a switch, and a small barrel in centre foreground.

It is assumed that, as construction was started at the Pacific Street terminus, that this photograph was taken in the fall of 1889, and it establishes the fact that at this time, the forest was growing east of Campbell Avenue.

The ties, said McCraney, were six by eight inches, laid crosswise, and on these stringers four by twelve inches were laid lengthwise on which the rails were laid, leaving a clearance of eight inches, four on each side of the rail, and on the innermost, planks were nailed to permit wagons to cross tracks with ease. See photo of single track, Granville Street from Hotel Vancouver, No. X355.

## **5 AUGUST 1931 - THE FAMOUS MAPLE TREE. CARRALL STREET.**

"What became of the Maple Tree? Why, the fire destroyed it," was the answer Mr. H.P. McCraney gave to that query. "It was standing right in the path of the fire." (13 June 1886.)

The famous Maple Tree on the west side of Carrall Street, near the corner of Water Street and within a few feet of where now stands the monument to mark its place. It must have been standing in 1863 at the time Corporal Turner and his party of Royal Engineers surveyed the townsite, and also in 1870, the year the townsite of Granville was surveyed, according to the Trutch map of that year, and which shows a large building in the centre of Carrall Street, to the east of the old tree. In 1870 there were nine buildings in Granville, arranged along the edge of the crescent-shaped shore, now Water Street, between Abbott and Carrall streets. The most easterly was this large building, then came the customs house and jail; between the former and the two latter stood the Maple Tree, and no doubt was, at a very early date, much esteemed for its shade and beauty, possibly the cattle of the pioneers—perhaps it was there that the milch cows chewed their cud in the cool of the summer's evening.

The name of Vancouver, it is said, was chosen beneath this tree, yet it should be pointed out that the post office was "Granville" until the city was incorporated; that a publication, published in Olympia, Washington in 1884 mentions "Vancouver on Coal Harbour," and that L.A. Hamilton's map of 1885 is of the townsite of "Vancouver."

The subject requires more minute investigation.