

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

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W.L. McDonald: For Hastings St. grubbing, etc. 24¢ per lineal foot, 6 foot sidewalk. 62¢ per lineal foot grubbing.

Boyd and Clendenning: For Keefer St. 28¢ per lineal foot, 6 foot sidewalk. 59¢ per lineal foot grubbing.

(Note: by "6 foot sidewalk" is intended plank sidewalk, not concrete.)

CAMBIE STREET, GEORGIA STREET, SEVENTH AVENUE, WESTMINSTER AVENUE, PARK AVENUE, ETC. JOHNSTONE STREET.

Extract, *Daily News-Advertiser*, 19 July 1887.

Minutes of City Council.

Board of Works recommends that:

1. Park Ave. and Johnstone St. with one five foot sidewalk.
2. Cambie Street. To be grubbed, cleared, and graded with two six-foot sidewalks from Hastings Street to Georgia Street, and from there to the railroad reserve to be cleared, and close cut the full width, and eighteen feet in the centre grubbed, cleared, graded, ditched and crowned.
3. Georgia Street. To be close cut, cleared and burned from Howe St. to the junction, and twenty feet in the centre grubbed, cleared, graded, ditched and crowned.

There follows a long list of recommendations, including Westminster Avenue across False Creek Bridge, and also Campbell Avenue, too long for inclusion here.

"Park Avenue" may refer to Park Lane or Park Road. The latter is the boundary between Stanley Park and the city; the former was a short street of one block, which at one time ran parallel to Westminster Avenue from Prior Street southwards. Johnstone Street is unknown, but may be a short street running east and west, which joined it to Westminster Avenue. It was the site of the home of John Boulton, our first magistrate, whose brother-in-law, C. Gardner Johnson, lived nearby. Park Lane is now part of the Canadian National Railway station ornamental gardens.

SEVENTH AVENUE (NOT EAST OR WEST, BUT SEVENTH AVENUE), SAME DATE.

"7th Ave. To be cleared to full width and graded, ditched, crowned 18 feet in the centre."
(Understood to be the first through street to be opened up from east to west in Fairview.)

9 JULY 1931 - KITSILANO. FOURTH AVENUE WEST. TATLOW PARK.

"The photo of our old place, four acres, on the south side of Fourth Avenue and between Bayswater and Balaclava streets," said Mrs. J.Z. Hall of "Killarney." It ran back as far as Sixth Avenue West; a great square cut out of the bush.

"It was cleared out of the forest, a square hole in virgin timber, and through which ran a large creek. We camped there each summer for four years, from about 1906 onwards; afterwards, we went to live on the shore, exactly opposite the present 'Killarney.' The creek was full of trout, and was the large creek which ran across Fourth Avenue West between Balaclava and Bayswater in a deep ravine, and came out at what is now T.H. Orchardson's residence, 3005 Point Grey Road; a ravine which has now been filled in. This creek was not the same creek as the *little* one which still runs through Tatlow Park, just west of Macdonald Street. The big creek was forty feet wide where it passed through the Hall clearing; we dammed it with logs, bathed in the pool made by them, and fished in it. The Tatlow Park creek ran off in a southerly direction, the big creek went southwesterly, and must have drained a great area. It is dried up now.

“At the time, we cleared this four acres we were living at the old Nelson Street home to which we had moved when we left Greer’s Beach; driven off it. We went out there to camp each summer for four summers in succession. To get to it, we went along the Point Grey Road from the foot of Balsam Street—at that time the only road open going to the west—turned up an old skid road at Bayswater Street, and proceeded thence by a forest trail, thick with blackberries in summer. The Point Grey Road, especially along that short stretch between Balsam and Trafalgar, as you approach Mr. J.H. Calland’s early home, was a dusty trail in summer, not a wagon’s width wide, for the salmonberry and other bushes brushed both buggy wheels as we drove along. It was hard for a pedestrian meeting a rapidly driven conveyance on that narrow track to get out of the way without jumping into the matted undergrowth; there were no big trees, those had been cut away, but the second growth had, during several years, grown up again.

“In winter, the same track was so deep in mud as to be almost impassible.

“From Granville Street to Balsam Street, the route traversed was, after crossing the old Third Avenue Bridge via Third Avenue, and a more or less sinuous trail from about Cedar Street.”

The entrance to this forest clearing was like emerging from dark into daylight; the forest trail from Point Grey Road was black and gloomy. On one occasion, the writer went through it, crossed the clearing, and went on in search of a lot which he owned at the corner of Broadway and Macdonald—which the previous owner had bought for \$15, for which he paid \$215, and which he sold for \$630—but got lost in the forest, and after an afternoon’s struggle to get out, finally emerged somewhere on Alma Road.

In the photograph, Mrs. Hall is standing beneath the dam, preparing for a swim; in the background is the Chinaman’s shack, to the right is the hay barn, to the left the log crossing to the camp; it is hard to realise that the forest background is now the paved street, Fourth Avenue West.

The Halls kept two cows and a horse, grew many vegetables; there was plenty of fish in the creek. The great danger in summer was forest fire; one night, they had to move in a hurry to escape it. Theirs was a popular visiting home, for the Halls, then as now, kept open house. Then too, Point Grey Road was, in those days, one of the few trails where one could stroll. Kitsilano Hill, that part now so known, was then a barren waste of stumps without a single house; a wide swamp spread from the Henry Hudson School to the Beach, and was full of skunk cabbage, and the home of muskrats.

Traces of the old Bayswater ravine still remain, though most have now, 1931, been obliterated by filling in with rubbish and earth.

VANCOUVER GAS COMPANY LIMITED.

Extract, *Daily News-Advertiser*, 9 July 1887 (U.B.C. Library).

The VANCOUVER GAS COMPANY LIMITED

Tenders will be received up to June 9th for construction of brick building on company’s grounds.

Signed
C.D. Rand,
Secretary,
Victoria, B.C.

10 JULY 1931 - SQUATTERS. HASTINGS STREET. PENDER STREET.

“When the first talk was that the C.P.R. was coming to Granville,” said Mr. H.P. McCraney, “it was known that the Provincial Government was going to give the Canadian Pacific Railway all the lots in Granville which had not been sold. Several people then squatted on lots and got them for