

## **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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but I was within fifty feet of the front of it when they started. The column was singing as they marched along in the semi-darkness.

“When the Chinamen saw all these men coming, they were terrified. The crowd came up to the camp singing ‘John Brown’s Body,’ and such songs; the Chinamen poked their noses out from beneath their tents; the ‘rioters’ grabbed the tents by the bottom and upset them, the ‘war cry,’ ‘John Brown’s Body,’ still continuing. The Chinamen did not stop to see; they just ran. Some went dressed, some not; some with shoes, some with bare feet; the snow was on the ground and it was cold. Perhaps, in the darkness, they did not know that the cliff, and a drop of twenty feet [was there]; perhaps some had forgotten; some may have lost direction. The tide was in; they had no choice; and you could hear them going plump, plump, plump, as they jumped into the salt water. Scores of them went over the cliff—McDougall was supposed to have two hundred of them up there.

“Those who stopped at McDougall’s camp after we returned to the Sunnyside Hotel told me that those Chinamen who jumped into the sea were afterwards pulled out of the water and herded onto the C.P.R. wharf, where there was a steamer, and that they all went off to Victoria early next morning; perhaps it was the C.P.R. wharf upon which they were herded, but I rather thought it was Spratt’s Ark upon which they collected.

“To my mind, it was the singing, the songs in a strange tongue, and our different races, which terrified the Chinamen. When the Chinamen came to Vancouver from Victoria they knew they were not wanted; they came in the face of opposition—some Victoria Chinamen refused to come, and perhaps that knowledge helped to terrify them.

“My friends and I went along to prevent violence. After the trouble was over for the night, we all went back to the Sunnyside Hotel. There, the ringleaders proposed that we raid Chinatown. It was then three or four in the morning, and we prevailed upon them to wait until daylight; if they would wait until daylight, then we would join them. Finally the arrangement was made that we were all to meet at the Sunnyside at 8 a.m., which we afterwards did. Those who were trying to save the situation agreed to furnish drays at that hour. The crowd decided that the ‘Chinks’ had got to be moved out of town.”

#### **EXEUNT THE CHINAMEN.**

“The following morning—I was there—at 8 a.m. the crowd again assembled at the Sunnyside. Several of the draymen owned their own dray or wagon; others were hired. The former gave their services free; where it was necessary to pay, my party paid; there were probably twenty-five drays and wagons used altogether. The crowd moved over to Dupont Street, to Chinatown, between Carrall and Columbia Street, now known as Pender Street East.

Some of the more responsible Chinese merchants suggested to some of our business men that the Chinamen would leave peaceably if they were permitted to leave one man in charge of their goods, and after a hurried conference with the leaders of the opposition to the Chinamen, the Chinese request was granted, and the elderly Chinese merchants assembled their fellow countrymen to a man, and we had no more trouble; none tried to escape.

“The Chinamen in each building were permitted to select their own custodian to be left behind; no goods were damaged, there was no pilfering; one Chinaman was left in each store. The remainder, probably one hundred, assembled quietly, were loaded onto old fashioned horse drawn drays. They all stood up crowded together on the drays, and one by one the drays and wagons moved off to New Westminster—a pretty rough ride in a springless dray over a rough road—and put on a steamer for Victoria.

“I have heard it said that four Chinamen were tied together by their pigtailed and thrown in the creek at McDougall’s camp. If so, I know nothing of it. I do know that some of them were tied together by their pigtailed to prevent them escaping in Chinatown the following morning.

“There were no buildings up at McDougall’s camp on Burrard Street, at least none other than a cook house and a place for meals, both built out of one-inch and twelve-inch boards, and both of

which were knocked down that night. The Chinamen were living in tents. You see, there was quite a space of vacant land, unoccupied, between Gastown and Burrard Street, in those days; many people did not know that the Chinamen had landed there; they had been there a mere two or three days when the riot occurred. McDougall had hired all the Chinamen in Victoria, sent them over, and presumably kept out of the way, fearful that something might happen. McDougall was very unpopular, and he would have had rough handling if he had been there that night.

“A day or so following, the Provincial Government suspended the city charter, sent over a number of special constables, and took charge of the city. An effort was made by these officials to convict those who had taken part in the Chinese Riots; they made two arrests of supposed ringleaders. A special magistrate was sent over from Victoria, but they had no success in getting evidence against the men arrested. It was stated in court that the two ringleaders had gone to bed comparatively early in the evening, and had not left each other during the night, which was true. They had gone to bed comparatively early, got up again and gone to the riot, and then returned to the Sunnyside, and gone to bed a second time.”

“One of the prominent ringleaders was a smooth-tongued agitator, Locksley Lucas, who stopped at my uncle’s hotel, the Carter House. He was elected treasurer of an organisation to keep the Chinamen out of Vancouver for all time. Membership was \$2.00 to raise a fund to get legislation passed. A lot of money was collected that way. It was out of the question.” W.F. Findlay, 12 April 1932

#### **THE FIRST POST OFFICE, “GRANVILLE.”**

“Before the fire, the post office was in a little store on the east side of Carrall Street, next to the Ferguson Block on the corner of Carrall and Powell streets. Up to the incorporation of the city as ‘Vancouver,’ it had been known as ‘Granville’ for some years; after incorporation, of course, it became ‘Vancouver.’

“After the fire, the temporary post office was established in a cheap little shack at the extreme south end of Carrall Street, which Mr. John Hendry, manager of the Royal City Planing Mills Company of New Westminster, had erected to keep his books in. John Hendry had some small sawmills up the Fraser River, and afterwards bought out the Hastings Sawmill. The post office remained in that shack for a short time only, and was then moved to the north side of Hastings Street between Homer and Hamilton streets, near where the Kent Piano Company is now, and located in a small frame building afterwards used as a store by Bailey Brothers, early photographers. Its location there brought bitter complaints from the citizens that it had been moved ‘so far out,’ and the City Council was petitioned to use its influence to have it brought nearer in, and closer to the business section of the city. It remained there a year or so, and was then moved into the next block west, opposite the present C.P.R. Telegraph, later to the southwest corner of Pender Street and Granville Street, and finally to its present location at Hastings and Granville streets.”