

## **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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“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 9<sup>th</sup> 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