

Early Vancouver

Volume Two

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

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Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1932.

Supplemental to volume one collected in 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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Contact Information

City of Vancouver Archives
1150 Chestnut Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 3J9
604.736.8561
archives@vancouver.ca
vancouver.ca/archives



“Oh, yes! It would have made a great difference to Mr. MacLean if he had not lost his property in the Great Fire of 1886; it might have been very much different for all of us. He had been to San Francisco to buy a lot of beautiful furnishings for our home; all were destroyed. Then he had two buildings, two store buildings, both were burned, and nothing was insured. The insurance papers were to have come by the boat the next morning.

“I have had Mr. W.H. Gallagher’s story which you have written” (*Early Vancouver*, Matthews, 1931) “read to me, and enjoyed it. I think his story of the Great Fire is the best I have ever read, and as to the rest, I am not familiar with all of it; what I do know is correctly told. He was, as you say, without salary or expenses during both years of his term of office.”

Did he not receive anything? we asked.

“Nothing,” was Mrs. MacLean’s positive answer.

“You have heard of the Hobson-Taylor Missionary Party; they were the first which went this way to China. Well, they wrote asking if there was any sleeping room in Vancouver, and when they arrived the whole twelve of them came to our house, our small house; such a crowding. And the next morning I asked them what they would like to eat; I thought perhaps fish. They said they had not had any fish, and would like fish very much, so I gave them fish, fish, fish,” and Mrs. MacLean laughed as heartily as her years permit.

“The Rev. Mr. Thompson was our Presbyterian minister.

“I was through the North West Rebellion of 1885; I saw it all,” and by her countenance and intonation, it must have been a trying experience. “I was in the house by myself a good deal of the time. There was a looking glass in my bedroom, and as I lay in bed I saw lights in the looking glass. I thought I must be losing my senses. Each night I could see moving lights in the looking glass. Some gentlemen came for a meal, and I told them I had a pretty good meal for them this time, but that it might be the last if things kept on the way they were; I might not be in my right senses to make another. Then they explained to me about the lights that I had seen in the glass. They were the reflections, through the window into the looking glass, of the Indian signal fires; different shapes to communicate from one Indian band to another how matters were progressing during the day; semaphoring, as it were, to each other, and, their fires were all around.”

His Worship Mayor MacLean was born at Tiree, Scotland, went to live in several places in Ontario, then, with his wife, lived in Winnipeg, afterwards had a farm either at Qu’Appelle or near Wolseley, Manitoba (see *Early Vancouver*, Matthews, 1931), participated in the North West Rebellion, and came on to Vancouver, put all his money into real estate and property, then came the fire which “cleaned him out”; one of his store buildings was so new when it was burned that it was without occupants. His house was built out of funds sent from distant points for the relief of Vancouver after the devastating fire six weeks after his election as mayor (June 1886). He died in Vancouver in 1895, being survived by his widow, Mrs. Margaret A. MacLean, an only son Cluny, now of MacLean’s Ltd., Tea Importers of 150 Alexander Street, and two daughters, Miss Isabella at home and Miss Ethelwyne, now employed in the Dead Letter Office. Mother and daughters have resided for many years at 883 Broughton Street. Mrs. MacLean’s grandmother was a granddaughter of the celebrated Scottish heroine Flora Macdonald.

On Easter morning (Sunday, 27 March 1932) being Mrs. MacLean’s 84th birthday, a basket of beautiful Easter lilies was sent to her by His Worship Mayor Taylor with the compliments of the citizens of Vancouver.

W.H. Gallagher: (see elsewhere) “MacLean, before he went to Winnipeg, had been a merchant in Oshawa, Ontario.”

DEATH OF HIS WORSHIP EX-MAYOR MALCOLM ALEXANDER MACLEAN.

Conversation with his daughter, Miss MacLean, 10 February 1932.

“It was Joe Fortes, the bartender at the Sunnyside Hotel, who helped to save Mrs. A.W. Ross, and her son Don, escape the fire on 13 June 1886.”

Note: merely another instance of that wonderful dorky, "Old Joe," for whom all Vancouver held so deep an affection that they erected a monument to him at English Bay, where he spent over thirty years as, first unofficial, then official, beach master and life guard.

"Father," (Mayor MacLean) "died in our home in the 600 block, Hornby Street, in 1895. Our house can be seen in the photograph of Vancouver taken from the Hotel Vancouver, back of the white house, and on Hornby Street."

FIRST CHIEF OF POLICE.

"His full name was John Malcolm Stewart."

A.W. ROSS, M.P. W.E. GRAVELEY. C.P.R. TERMINUS.

Memo of conversation with W.E. Graveley, 11 April 1932.

"A.W. Ross was member of parliament for Lisgard, and a 'C.P.R.' member of parliament, and Van Horne tipped him off that Port Moody would not be the terminus of the C.P.R. I sold hundreds of lots in Port Moody, but never once did I buy one myself. He" (A.W. Ross) "formed a syndicate to buy up all the land east of Carrall Street; Dr. Powell, Major Dupont, 1460 acres right in the centre of the city, from Burrard Inlet to away up in Cedar Cottage. A.W. Ross had no money, and when it came to making the first payment he had to apply to others.

"Innes was my partner in Winnipeg as well as here. He" (A.W. Ross) "sold Innes—Innes, Richards and Ackroyd, an early firm, they were incorporated before the fire—he sold half of his one-fifth interest to Innes and myself. Then he again got into financial difficulties, so we had an assignment drawn up—I have it yet—and gave us one twentieth of the interest. We got up a pamphlet, the *West Shore*—we had an advertisement in that—drawing attention to the place; that was in 1884."

(Note: see *The Name of Vancouver* and its appearance in the *West Shore*, published in Portland, Oregon, September 1884.)

EARLY REAL ESTATE. C.P.R. SELLS FIRST LOT.

"I built a little real estate office on the northeast corner of Alexander and Carrall streets. Tom Dunn, the hardware man, and Hart, furniture, were down Hastings Road. When the C.P.R. came along they ordered the stores away. I was staying at the Sunnyside Hotel, and was friendly with all the C.P.R. officials. They asked me why I did not move too. L.A. Hamilton and others were staying at the Sunnyside, Hamilton was C.P.R. surveyor. I told them that I did not want to move and that I wanted to buy a lot. They wired Van Horne, and he replied, 'All right,' so I bought the southeast corner of Carrall and Cordova Street, where the Oyster Bay Café is, and own it yet.

"We moved my little shack up Carrall Street with seven teams of horses. The horses came down the street too fast, and bang went the telephone and telegraph wires; came tumbling down, and the horses brought up in a cut down tree or something. I got into all sorts of trouble. Joe Armstrong started 'after' me, so I saw J.J. Blake, and he asked how high the gable of my building was. I said, 'Fifteen feet.' 'Oh, well,' he replied, 'do nothing,' which I did. See Judge Howay's history book published twenty years ago, you will see there the first real estate advertisements; we pointed out the distances from London to Vancouver, from Vancouver to Yokohama, and the distances to other places." (See *West Shore*.)

EARLY TELEPHONE.

"Oh, yes, there must have been a telephone before the fire, or how could Joe Armstrong have got after me; besides my little shack was burned in the fire."

FIRST LOT SOLD. FIRST MAP OF VANCOUVER.

"I bought the first lot the C.P.R. sold in Vancouver. You see, the first map of Vancouver was made in 1885; it was all called Coal Harbour then. I have travelled the world over, and have yet to find a city which appeals to me so much, or a place of such hope and prospects."