

## Early Vancouver

### Volume Four

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

2011 Edition (Originally Published 1944)

*Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1935-1939.*

*Supplemental to Volumes One, Two and Three collected in 1931-1934.*

### 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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I, Peter Smith, of Brockton Point, Vancouver, B.C., make oath and I say:

1. I have lived at Brockton Point aforesaid 44 years.
2. I am well acquainted with Timothy Cummings, and have known him from the time of his birth.
3. To my knowledge he was born at Brockton Point aforesaid, January 1<sup>st</sup> 1881, and has lived there ever since.

Sworn by me at  
Vancouver, B.C. this seventh  
day of October 1818

Arthur J.B. Mellish                      "Peter                      Smith"  
J.P. for B.C.

Dominion of Canada *[printed]*    In the matter of  
Province of British Columbia T    imothy Cummings.

I, Lucy Cummings, of the City of Vancouver, in the province of British Columbia, solemnly declare that:

1. I am the widow of James Cummings, and the mother of Timothy Cummings, of Brockton Point, longshoreman.
2. My son Timothy Cummings was born at Brockton Point on the first day of January 1881, and has lived there with me ever since.
3. And I make this solemn declaration. *[etc. as per printed form]*

Declared before me at Vancouver  
this seventh day of October 1918

J.B. Mellish,                      "LUCY                      her  
J.P. for B.C.                      mark                      X CUMMINGS"

Read and approved by  
Mr. Cummings  
7<sup>th</sup> March 1939

J.S. Matthews.

### **"ARCHIVISTS WORTH THEIR WEIGHT IN GOLD."**

#### **SIR ARTHUR CURRIE.**

About April 1932, Gen. Sir Arthur Currie passed through Vancouver on his way from the Orient to eastern Canada, and was, one afternoon about four, informally entertained by a large assemblage of ex-overseas officers who had gathered together to shake hands, chat, and drink a cocktail in the "Oval Room" of the Hotel Vancouver.

Prior to 1899, a large wooden shed served as the first drill hall in Vancouver, and General Currie, as former Corporal Currie of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 5<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Canadian Garrison Artillery, Victoria, had once entered it on a holiday event when the Victoria battalion had paid a visit to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion in Vancouver. In 1931, the many regiments of Vancouver subscribed together to erect a memorial to mark the site of the old drill shed, and General Currie was invited to unveil the bronze tablet, but being indisposed in health, he declined, so the memorial was taken to the Oval Room for him to see. The shining new bronze tablet, bearing in part the words, "HERE STOOD THE DRILL SHED," was suitably placed upon an easel, and conducted by a group of senior officers. General Currie was escorted across the spacious room to view it; Major Matthews, City Archivist, Vancouver, long known to General Currie as a collector of military relics and records of British Columbia, as well as an old friend of many years, was among them, and had been responsible for the proposal, creation and design of the tablet.

The general stood in front of the tablet for a moment or so, gazing and reading, and then, placing his hand on Major Matthews' shoulder, said with much feeling, "Gentlemen. Men like Matthews here are worth their weight in gold."

He then continued with some reminiscences, etc., etc.

"Men like" an archivist must naturally include all archivists.

Just why Gen. Currie expressed himself thus must forever remain unknown, but it *might* have had something to do with his then recent unfortunate experience when he had to defend himself in the courts against unjust and libellous statements that "he sacrificed his men," and that the records fortunately kept—as all military units have to keep—served in some especially useful way to vindicate his actions in the Great War.

### **MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH JUDGE J.A. FORIN, AT BANQUET, "OLD GARRISON ARTILLERY ASSOCIATION," HOTEL GEORGIA, 15 FEBRUARY 1936.**

#### **GENERAL SIR ARTHUR W. CURRIE. HIS HONOUR JUDGE J.A. FORIN, VANCOUVER AND NELSON.**

The "O.G.A.A." comprise the surviving members of the first militia units in British Columbia; membership is limited to those who served before 1898. Judge Forin has not had a uniform on for forty or more years. General Currie joined the old regiment in Victoria as a gunner.

Judge Forin to City Archivist, Major J.S. Matthews: "That reminds me. The time that Sir Arthur came through to Nelson" (B.C.) "with the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, we gave them a banquet. I came in late. When Sir Arthur saw me come through the door, he rose and stood to attention, and saluted. It put me in a most embarrassing position; a crowd of gentlemen looking at me the minute I appeared in the doorway. I walked over towards him, and he came to meet me, and shook hands, and, smiling, said, 'I always salute my old officers.'"

City Archivist.

### **MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH J.N. DAWZY, 2361 TRINITY STREET, VANCOUVER, B.C., 27 FEBRUARY 1935.**

#### **THE GREAT FIRE: NUMBER OF BUILDINGS LEFT.**

"I arrived in Vancouver on June 14<sup>th</sup>, 1886, about noon the day after the fire, and of course was struck by what I saw, and was impressed; the recollection of it has remained in my mind very clearly.

"There was just five houses standing. There was the old Bridge Hotel on Main Street, or Westminster Avenue, False Creek; a frame building next to it; a little house on the southeast corner of Prior Street occupied by Harry Chase; the Regina Hotel on Water Street near Cambie; and the C.P.R. building opposite David Spencer's store, about where the C.P.R. Depot is now."

(Note: he missed one, a small shack on the edge of False Creek, in the low, wet land—on Pender Street—just at the end of Abbott Street, below the corner of Beatty and Pender streets.)

#### **MRS. ONDERDONK. ANDREW ONDERDONK. PORT HAMMOND. ENGINES, C.P.R. ENGINE NO. 4 "THE LYTTON."**

"I went to work on the building of bridges for the C.P.R. in August 1882, and then from March 1883 worked for him" (Onderdonk) "for three years at Yale, building cars in the car shops, making car repairs; also foreman wrecking car.

"A fine man was Onderdonk; I'll say so" (with emphasis.) "My wife came up in March 1883 to Yale. Mr. Onderdonk and my wife were the only two passengers on the boat from Westminster to Yale. When I went to the Yale shops in March 1883, the superintendent and master mechanic were at Port Hammond unloading engine No. 4, the 'Lytton,' which had come on a big scow from Tacoma, and the foreman of the shop would not put me to work, but sent me to see Mr. Onderdonk at the general office, Yale, a building about sixty feet long. When I gave Mr. Onderdonk my letter from the bridge superintendent, he looked at