

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

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CITY ARCHIVIST'S OFFICE

City Hall,
Vancouver, B.C.
3rd May, 1937.

ARRIVAL, FIRST TRAIN IN VANCOUVER, 23RD MAY 1887.

BLUE RIBBON ACROSS THE TRACK.

(Please add to list of comments made by survivors living in 1937, sent you recently.)

EXCERPT:

Letter W.E. Boddington, 22 Riverview Mansions, Balmoral Place, Winnipeg, Man., 24th April 1937 (Boddington file) to City Archivist.

“A BLUE RIBBON WAS STRAINED ACROSS THE TRACK, AND AS SOON AS IT WAS BROKEN BY THE IMPACT OF THE ENGINE: A LOUD HURRAH WAS RAISED BY THOSE PRESENT.”

Note: this comment is interesting as the first mention I have ever seen anywhere of a blue ribbon being stretched across the track at the foot of Granville Street as the first transcontinental passenger train entered “Vancouver.”

J.S. Matthews.
City Archivist.

BELCARRA AND “BOLE’S RANCH.”

Excerpt: Letter, 6 May 1937, Mrs. P. Hampton Bole, P.O. Box 1193, Vernon, B.C. to Major Matthews, City Archivist. (Mrs. Bole is daughter-in-law to Judge Bole.)

The whole site, that is Belcarra proper, was an Indian camping ground years ago; then came Steve Decker, and a man named John Hall, who married a squaw. This Hall used to go off on periodical drunks, and one day came home in this condition, and threatened to beat up his wife. The mother of this woman stood up to him, which infuriated him and he reached for his gun. The two women ran to a canoe, nicely got into the water when a shot rang out, and the wife was hit. She died later, and the mother, who continued on her way, laid a charge of murder against her son-in-law.

Judge Bole was commissioned to defend Hall, who paid the Judge part of his fee in a deed to this property.

Sometime after this the Judge named it “Belcarra,” being Irish for “The Fair Land on which the sun shines.”

100 and some odd acres were in the tract, I believe.

Hall was sentenced to go many years—manslaughter charge—but was let out before serving his full sentence.

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH MISS FRANCIS ANNE (“FANNY”) BOULTBEE, JERVIS STREET (DOUG. 1707L), 16 DECEMBER 1937.

Who very kindly called for a visit to the City Archives this afternoon, and was accompanied by Mrs. (Colonel) F.W. Boulton, and Mr. J.G. Boulton, of 555 Howe Street; all remained until the closing hours.

JOHN BOULTBEE.

Miss Boulton said, “John Boulton came from Portage La Prairie, where he had been from 1882 to 1885; then he went to live in Tacoma, Washington, for six months or so, and then came on to Vancouver with his brother-in-law, Charles Gardner Johnson.