

Early Vancouver

Volume Four

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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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FIRST STREET CARS.

"I rode on the first street car. Rode from the corner of Powell and Westminster Avenue to Drake Street and back again; five cent fare; Carmichael conductor; he kept the first five cent fare, and had it on his watch chain."

DOMINION DAY, 1887.

"The celebration on Dominion Day, 1887, was on Water Street; Water Street; Abbott Street, and about there, and Carrall. Water Street was built on piles, and a planked over roadway; at least in front of Tom Cyrs' Granville Hotel, and Von Valkenburg's butcher shop was planked and on piles, and Marshall's barn alongside of it on piles. We had a parade, and a tug of war, right on Water and Abbott and Cordova and Carrall; it was the only place you could go. George Black led the parade."

WATER WELLS.

"We lived in a house on Westminster Avenue, on the west side, just north of Powell; the back of our house almost touched the city gaol. That was where my daughter, Mrs. Blair, was born; she is our eldest. I don't know exactly where we got our water from; it might have been from a well, but my recollection is that we caught the rainwater." (See photo P. Trans. 13, laying street car tracks; house on left with verandah.)

SMALL POX RIOT. POLICE. JACKSON T. ABRAY.

"At the time of the small pox, Jackson T. Abray, the policeman, was the best policeman I ever saw. The people wanted to get off the Victoria boat, but he stood right in the gangway and stopped the whole five hundred of them; just one man, Abray.

"They took pot shots at him with chunks of coal. The man with the mail who tried to get by, Abray bowled him over with a blow of his fist."

DESTRUCTION OF THE H.M.S. *EGERIA*, OFF OLD MOODYVILLE, BURRARD INLET.

The *Egeria*, sold by the British Admiralty, later used as a training ship for the cadets of the Navy League, a financial failure, and finally sold to the wreckers. She lay at anchor off Moodyville flats, North Vancouver.

A telephone message was received from a hardware firm in North Vancouver asking that four steel barrels of something be sent down to a dock along Alexander Street. An order clerk, a Mr. Chandler, of the Imperial Oil Limited, wrote the order on an order pad, and sent the order sheet out into the warehouse; the order was filled with four steel barrels of *gasoline*; the writing was *gasoline*, and gasoline was shipped. It will never be known whether the hardware firm ordered gasoline, but whatever they ordered, whatever the clerk wrote down, they actually required *kerosene* (coal oil); who made the mistake will never be known; it may even have been the wreckers themselves; the hardware firm may have concealed the fact. Gasoline, according to law, is shipping in barrels painted red; coal oil in barrels painted blue. Gasoline is stenciled "GASOLINE." All four barrels were properly painted and named in stencil; the invoices read "Gasoline."

The barrels were taken by small boat to the *Egeria*, partly dismantled; all valuable material had been removed; it was proposed to burn her for the metal in her wooden hull, etc. The four barrels were emptied by pouring their contents in the now empty hold; then a match was thrown in. A terrific explosion followed.

The clerk was subsequently tried for manslaughter. It was proven that the labourers on the *Egeria* were foreigners, and could not read English words. An extraordinary verdict was rendered: "*NOT GUILTY, but be more careful in future.*" The writer was an official of the Imperial at the time; it was before September 1920.

J.S. Matthews.