

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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**EXCERPT FROM LETTER, 1 JULY 1935, FROM GEO. H. KEEFER, COWICHAN BAY, WHO
CLEARED THE RIGHT OF WAY FOR THE C.P.R. FROM PORT MOODY TO VANCOUVER, AND
CLEARED THE FOREST OFF A PART OF THE “WEST END” WITH “CHINESE” MCDUGALL.
BRIDGES. FALSE CREEK BRIDGE. KITSILANO TRESTLE. CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY.**

“I finished the clearing of the right of way on June 12th 1886, loaded up my camp outfit on a scow, and moved to Vancouver, tying up at Andy Linton’s wharf, etc. etc.

“On Sunday morning, 13th, McDougall and I and a brother of mine, walked down the grade from Abbott street to False Creek Bridge at English Bay; we went to look for a suitable camping ground to put the Indians on as I was going to put them on slashing of the Brighthouse estate.”

Note: the 85 Stikine Indians had been working on the right of way.

**17 JUNE 1935 – BUILDING THE CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY FROM PORT MOODY TO
VANCOUVER, B.C.**

Excerpt from letter Geo. H. Keefer (not Geo. A. Keefer), 4 June 1935, Cowichan Station.

“I am keeping fit, and feel as well as in the days when I cleared the right-of-way for the C.P.R. into Vancouver. I had about eighty five Stickine Indians on the job, and some of them were quite smart and intelligent; all of them good workers; good with axe and handspike.”

[LETTER FROM GEO. H. KEEFER.]

Cowichan Bay, B.C.,
June 20th 1935.

Mr. J.S. Matthews,
Archivist,
Vancouver, B.C.

Dear Sir:

JOHN “CHINESE” MCDUGALL.

Yours of 17th inst. to hand and many thanks for news of old timers etc. I was very sorry to hear of John McDougall death, you will know later on why.

HUGH F. KEEFER. ONDERDONK CONTRACT.

In 1885 on July 5th, I landed in Victoria, B.C. hailing from Dufferin Co. Ontario. My uncle Hugh F. Keefer having sent for me to assist him in his extensive R.R. construction on the C.P.R. and E. & N. On arrival in Victoria I met H.F.K., who had just completed a thirty six mile contract at Savanos Ferry, B.C., and other contracts on Onderdonk’s mountain section of C.P.R. My uncle had just secured a three mile contract on the E. & N. on Vancouver Island. I formed a partnership with John McDougall (later known as Chinese McDougall) and we took a subcontract of clearing the three miles along Shawnigan Lake, completing the job in October. During the winter of 85 & 86 I joined George A. Keefer’s survey party, and some time in Jan. or Feb. we went over to Vancouver on the old steamer “Maud” and commenced the survey of the Capilano Waterworks.

**CAPILANO WATERWORKS, PORT MOODY TO VANCOUVER, 1885. C.P.R. RIGHT OF WAY. GEO.
BLACK’S. HASTINGS.**

During the winter H.F. Keefer went east and secured the “Vancouver extension contract” from the C.P.R. McDougall and I taking the right of way contract, “from Port Moody to English Bay,” also “one mile of the grading about Hastings Park and running back to near Hastings Saw-mills.” McDougall looked after the grading while I took chg. of the Right-of-way. Men were plentiful at the time, but, the grading took a lot of men, and I had an opportunity to get a bunch of Indians through their Chief “Stickeen” John a very fine intelligent Indian and a good christian. John and I became great friends, and he proposed putting his tillicums to work clearing, I fell in with the idea