

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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locating of the C.P.R. through the mts., and after construction days became Dom. Gov. Engineer for B.C. stationed at New Westminster.

[LETTER FROM GEO. H. KEEFER.]

756 Cloverdale Avenue
Victoria, B.C.
Dec. 2nd, 1933.

Dear Mr. Matthews:

STEAMER MAUD. CAPILANO WATERWORKS. HASTINGS SAWMILL WHARF.

I have just got time to fill in the document you sent me some time ago. I don't know if I have done so in the manner you wished or no? However, if not you can send me over another one. It was the winter of 85 & 86 that I first set foot on the shore of the present Vancouver, then about changing its name from Granville to Vancouver. I went over from there on the old Stmr. Maud with Geo. A. Keefer and his party of surveyors, to commence the first survey of the Capilano Waterworks. We were all afternoon and night making the trip and landed at Hastings Sawmill wharf the next morning, rather cold and dull weather Jan. 15 or 20th, 1886.

The party consisted of Geo. A. Keefer, chief, H.B. Smith, Assistant, Fred Bodwell, Chairman, Fred G. Little, topographer, and Geo. H. Keefer (myself) Picketman.

SUNNYSIDE HOTEL. ALDERMAN HARRY HEMLOW. JOE FORTES.

We stayed at the Sunnyside Hotel then ran by Harry Hemlow, Prop., Thos. Jackman, Barkeeper, and Joe Fortes, colored porter. We would row over across the inlet in two boats in the morning and take lunch with us. Work all day and row home at nights. Some days it would rain all day and was most disagreeable climbing the mountain through the thick brush, interspersed plentifully with devil-clubs, etc. Vancouver was a veritable mud-hole on the main streets at that time, plenty of men looking for work and the bars doing a roaring business. Later in the same spring we started work on the section of the C.P.R. from Port Moody and to English Bay to the consternation of the Port Moodites.

[signed] Keefer.

[LETTER FROM GEO. H. KEEFER, RECEIVED 4 JUNE 1935.]

Mr. Matthews,
Vancouver City Archivist.

Dear Sir:

OVERSEAS SERVICE.

Some time during our late correspondence you asked if I had a photo to spare to go with my correspondence, etc. etc. I might say that the only one I can give you at the moment is one in uniform, taken in Paris at the close of the late unpleasantness. Should you like to have one I will be most pleased to comply with your request.

C.P.R. RIGHT OF WAY, PORT MOODY TO VANCOUVER, 1886. INDIAN LABOURERS.

Well, sir, as time passes, and as a consequence, we grow older; and see at intervals, the death notices of old timers, and the demolition of old things; it makes one wonder if he or she is not about the only one left. This feeling often comes to me, makes one feel a sort of Wandering Jew. I see an ad. of the death of a dear old time chum of mine a short time ago "Mr. Alf Banham." We were great friends in early days, and went prospecting up the west coast together. I am keeping fit and feel as good as the days when I cleared the right of way for the C.P.R. into Vancouver 1896. [?] I had about eighty five Stickene Indians on the job, and some of them were quite smart and intelligent, all of them good workers, good with axe and handspike.