

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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[LETTER FROM W.H. GALLAGHER.]

Established 1886
W.H. Gallagher & Co.
Real Estate and Financial Agents
corner Pender and Richards Streets

Vancouver, B.C. April 21, 1938.

Major J.S. Matthews,
City Archivist,
City Hall,
Vancouver, B.C.

Re: Published Report of St. James Church in Saturday's Province.

Dear Sir:

As Archivist I think you should correct or advise the St. James Church of today that it would be well for them to correct their early history.

According to the paper St. James Church was built on Powell Street in 1881. I think the date is quite correct but the Church itself was on Alexander Street [*formerly Hastings Road*], butting back on to the Inlet. It was situated about where the underground passage to the North Vancouver Ferry is located or it might have been a few feet further East. There was no Powell Street at that date. The timber had been fallen in June 1886 but it was not cleared. [*Sic. June, 1885.*] Alexander Street was in good condition. There was a sidewalk to the Hastings Mill. The late Rev. Father Clinton arrived at the Church just as the fire reached the buildings and he rang the bell continuously to arise the public till the building or the church was about to collapse. The late George Barnes and I had difficulty in persuading him to give up and to leave the entrance to the church before it collapsed on him. There was a pathway, I would think, about eight feet wide at the west side of the church to the water and hundreds and hundreds of people who came from Carrall, Water and Cordova Streets left Alexander Street at that point and made for the Inlet. The tide was about half out. Finally Father Clinton done likewise and like many others when he was standing out in the water he had a young child in his arms and a boy (I would think) about six years on his back. There was hundreds of people standing in the water up pretty well to their waist at that point. We had a high wind at that time from the South West by West and it drove the fire along Alexander Street, in fact the fire ran down the wooden sidewalk faster than I could run and about the time that the fire reached what is now Railroad Street and Dunlevy Ave. the wind changed to the North East and drove the fire back and south to about the corner of Prior and Main Streets before it died out. The buildings on the Old Westminster Road which ran west of Main Street or near False Creek was not burnt from there to the Bridge nor was the Bridge destroyed. When the wind changed it swept the fire along the Dunlevy Avenue & Gore Ave. and burnt over the ground where the present St. James Church is built. On the South-East corner of Cordova & Gore Ave. a party had almost completed a small dwelling and shortly after the fire they were missed. Before night the husband, wife and little daughter was found suffocated in a well which had been partly dug at that point. There was four or five inches of water in it.

However, I must give up relating those trying experiences.

However, reverting again to St. James Church I think it would be well for you to take the matter up with the present representatives and have them correct their records.

Yours truly,

W.H. Gallagher