

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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Contact Information

City of Vancouver Archives
1150 Chestnut Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 3J9
604.736.8561
archives@vancouver.ca
vancouver.ca/archives



more than they expected. Then, when they opened the church, they were short of money, and aunt" (Mrs. Ruth Morton) "gave them \$3,000 out of her bank account.

"I know Mr. Morton helped with the North Vancouver Baptist Church, and he build the Summerland Baptist College; they lost it; could not keep it. He has willed the Baptists \$100,000 for churches at Mrs. Morton's death. Then he kept some children—orphans or something—in India, and at his death, Mrs. Morton took care of them. A queer thing at that, after placing Ruth Morton Church free of debt, the church people mortgaged it to build some small Baptist church somewhere else, and then appealed to Mrs. Morton to pay off the mortgage, and—she did—she gave it to them. Mr. Morton's hand was always in his pocket."

THE FIRST COAT OF ARMS, CITY OF VANCOUVER.

The first coat of arms, used from about 1888 to 1903, was designed by Lachlan A. Hamilton, an alderman of the first City Council; C.P.R. Commissioner, and in 1936, the sole surviving member of the first City Council. He surveyed the site of the city into streets; Hamilton Street is named in his honour.

J.S. Matthews.

THE FIRST CITY COAT OF ARMS.

The first city coat of arms, showing a fir tree, a vessel, and a locomotive, was designed by Alderman L.A. Hamilton, C.P.R. Land Commissioner. (Hamilton Street.)

J.S. Matthews.

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH MR. C.V. COLDWELL OF UNION STEAMSHIPS LTD., SON OF ALDERMAN CHAS. COLDWELL, ALDERMAN, FIRST CITY COUNCIL.

ARRIVAL OF FIRST TRAIN, 23 MAY 1887.

Mr. Coldwell: "Most certainly I saw it. I was a boy of seven, playing on the beach a few feet north of the present Alexander Street, just east of Carrall Street, and I remember looking up as the engine and train came down the track on piles above us where we were playing, the engine all decked out in roses and flowers.

"But there was a train into Vancouver before that, a construction train; it came some weeks previously; the train on the 23rd May was the second train I had ever seen."

Note by J.S. Matthews: There is mention in some conversation I have had; it is recorded in *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 2 or 3 I think, that the first train came in as far as the Hastings Sawmill about March 27th. The narrator said he was working on the track, building the small bridges, and the engine and cars ran over them as soon as they had fixed them; makeshift bridges, and, perhaps to get freight, groceries, supplies, from the Hastings Sawmill wharf, then the only wharf on the south side of the inlet.

Mrs. Joseph W. Cameron, 1903 Bayswater Street, says first construction locomotive arrived foot of Westminster Avenue, 23 February 1887.

FIRST CITY COUNCIL, 1886. ALDERMAN COLDWELL. A "LOST STORY."

Alderman Coldwell's son, for many, many years the esteemed employee and trusted official of the Union Steamship office staff, once told me that someone, I forget who, had long promised him that someday he would tell him an interesting story about his father, Alderman Coldwell. "But," said Mr. Coldwell, "he" (his friend) "died," and then added with mournful lamentation, "that just shows you how necessary it is to record things while we have a chance. I don't know what he was going to tell me, but he promised many times, but never did."

And poor Coldwell of the "Union Steam" went on lamenting, and is yet; and the City Archivist, a close friend, but a "cruel beast," lets him go on.

W.H. Gallagher, ex-alderman, explains with joyful glee, "I know; I know what it was; he" (Alderman Coldwell) "dyed his hair, dyed it black; look at his photographs." (See John Innes' painting of first City Council; also "City Hall in Tent," photo.)

Alderman Coldwell built, before the Fire, a fine wooden building on the north side of Water Street between Abbott and Carrall, but at the Abbott Street end, and it was nearly finished when the Great Fire of June 1886 came along and destroyed it. It shows in the Devine panorama photo of Vancouver "Before the Fire," a three-section panorama extending from beyond the Hastings Mill burner to about Abbott Street. It is a two-storey structure.

The Coldwells are related to the famous Mrs. McGregor of Fort Rupert; see photo C.V.P. Port. 160, No. Port. 63, showing four generations of them, and in which I think Mr. Coldwell, of the Union Steamship Co., appears as the great-grandchild.

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH EX-ALDERMAN EDWARD COOK, 5937 SPERLING STREET.

Alderman 1901-2-3-4-5; arrived in Vancouver per S.S. *Maud*, 5 March 1886; voted at first civic election, May 1886, and, 30 September 1901, as an alderman of Vancouver, received the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York, on the dais in front of the old Court House on Victory Square.

S.S. ABYSSINIA. "SPRATT'S ARK."

Mr. Cook said: "I saw the *Abyssinia* dock here on her first trip. In those days everybody went down to 'meet the boat'; it was more customary than going to church; she was afterwards coaled by 'Spratt's Ark'; I think the coal the 'Ark' carried was enough for one trip of the *Abyssinia*." (See narrative in "Over the Foreyard, *Province*, Saturday 25 April 1936, page 6.)

"As for her docking at Port Moody. That was one of the things we were never quite sure of; steamers passed up the Inlet to Port Moody, and then came back to Vancouver—even the Victoria boats—and that was the first we would know about it. The old Canadian Pacific Navigation Co. were not a bit strong on Vancouver, and preferred running from Victoria to New Westminster. That made Port Moody an important place because the passengers got on or off at Port Moody and proceeded to or from Westminster. I have crossed over that way lots of times."

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH EX-ALDERMAN EDWARD COOK, WHO WAS VISITED IN THE MAYOR'S OFFICE THIS MORNING, 12 MAY 1939.

CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL. ALDERMAN EDWARD COOK.

Mr. Cook said: "Did you see that Christ Church Cathedral has got out a little history book of the 'First Fifty Years'?"

Major Matthews: I see it mentions you built the "root house" (basement.)

Mr. Cook: "I laid the stones of that foundation with my own hands."

THE "MAD COUNCIL" OF 1935.

Street car conductor (to passenger with whom he was acquainted, getting off at temporary City Hall): "Going to the madhouse?"

A term applied to the City Council of 1935 and 1936. The expression went, "The Mad Council with a madder mayor at the madhouse" (City Hall.) The mayor was variously termed "paranoiac," "megalomaniac," etc., and several aldermen gave cause for astonishment; they were an extraordinary and eccentric body with two or three only of the twelve who seemed to have a conception of the responsibilities and duties of their office.