

**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**

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Archives

**[LETTER FROM GEO. DITCHAM.]**

1090 Victoria Avenue,  
Oak Bay,  
Victoria, B.C.,  
Dec. 2, 1936.

J.S. Matthews Esq.,  
Vancouver City Archivist.

Dear Sir.

In reply to your favour of 28<sup>th</sup> ult. in re Methodist Church building at old Granville, I regret that I am unable to give you information required.

I do not remember any Methodist building in 1880—the ministers Bryant and his successor Thompson, I do remember—Turner was up in the Nicola Valley 1876 when I went through to Kamloops.

The Sullivans, coloured, were Methodists in Granville. Arthur was organist at St. James, Milligan lived at Moodyville.

It runs in my mind that Methodists held services in the school at Hastings Mill.

Yours very truly,

Geo. Ditcham

**MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH MR. AND MRS. JACOB DORMAN, OF SNUG COVE, BOWEN ISLAND, WHO CALLED AT THE CITY ARCHIVES, 11 FEBRUARY 1937.**

Mr. Dorman, despite his age, is very active, hair steel grey, ruddy complexion; Mrs. Dorman, much shorter, very demure and quite, with a charmingly faint smile, and twinkle in her eyes.

Mr. Dorman said: "I served with Lord Roberts's army on his march to Khandahar; I was not actually at Khandahar; was in the Indian army four years; then in 1882 I married Miss Sarah Adams in London, England, and we have been married fifty-five years and have twenty-four grandchildren and one great-grandchild. Then, in the Great War, I managed to squeeze in despite my age and eyesight, but it was quite a task dodging the doctors; I got by through subterfuge; learnt the letters of the eye test off by heart, but got them wrong, and got caught, but a sergeant passed me without the officer's knowledge, and I served with the Engineers. Was at Vernon camp first; then enlisted for overseas at Vancouver.

"I went to Yale, B.C., from Carlton Place, Ontario, and came on to 'Yaletown,' Vancouver to again work for the Canadian Pacific Railway in March 1887 when the machine shops at Yale burned down; we came through Port Moody, and down the inlet on the *Princess Louise*."

**ARRIVAL FIRST TRAIN VANCOUVER, 23 MAY 1887.**

"I was working at the machine shop and roundhouse down on Drake Street—the first machine shop which I will give you a photo of; here it is; you will see me in it" (in the light coloured overalls, with arms folded, beside man in white overalls seated on ground.) "This photo is of the entire machine shop crew in 1888 or 1889; it was taken by C.S. Bailey; you can tell the date from that. All the bosses went to see the first train come in." (Photo N. Can. 23.)

**FIRST ELECTRIC LIGHT, VANCOUVER.**

"The first electric light plant in Vancouver was down on Abbott Street between Pender and Hastings; they were having trouble down there, so Lacey R. Johnson, master mechanic of the C.P.R., asked me to go down there and take charge.

"Our children now living are:

1. Robert, in the *Sun* office, Vancouver. Born in England, 12 December 1884.

2. Ellen, widow, Mrs. Ellen Armstrong.
3. William, born in Vancouver, 6 October 1888.
4. Alfred, born in Vancouver.
5. George, now in Nanaimo.
6. Grace, Mrs. John Taylor.
7. Ernest, now on Bowen Island.
8. Percy Charles, now in Vancouver, [born] about 1909.

**MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH MRS. C.R. DRANEY (DAUGHTER [OF] ANGUS C. FRASER OF JERICHO AND GASTOWN), 2570 HEMLOCK STREET, 22 APRIL 1936.**

**JERICHO. DR. J.M. LEFEVRE. ANGUS C. FRASER.**

City Archivist: Mrs. Dr. Lefevre has asked me to tea at four o'clock today.

Mrs. Draney: "Oh, how I remember her when I was a little girl. We were living at Jericho then and I broke my arm, and Father" (Angus C. Fraser) "went up to Vancouver and brought Dr. Lefevre back to Jericho in a canoe. Then afterwards, when Dr. and Mrs. Lefevre lived in their little cottage on Hastings Street" (north side, between Granville and Seymour, see photo No. Str. 100, and 128) "before they built their house where the General Post Office is now, Mrs. Lefevre—when the doctor was away—used to massage my arm for me. I wonder if she remembers it?"

According to Mrs. W.E. Draney, 3263 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, daughter of Mrs. Duncan R. Reid, first lady school trustee of Vancouver, her eldest brother, eldest child of Mrs. Reid, was born in Vancouver on 31 July 1886, just six weeks after the great fire in which she (Mrs. Draney) was scorched about the head (see Mrs. Reid account in *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 2) and he was born in their little house on Pender Street (West), now about the site of the C.P.R. Freight office.

Mrs. Reid claimed, before her death, that he was the first child born in Vancouver, but this has subsequently proved not to be correct, for the first child was one of the Macey family, a son, still living (1937) in Vancouver.

The name of the son born July 31<sup>st</sup> is Campbell Draney.

Mrs. Draney's younger brother was born Christmas day, 1892.

J.S. Matthews.

**FIRST CHILD BORN IN VANCOUVER.**

Memo of conversation with Mrs. William E. Draney, 3263 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Kitsilano, Vancouver, over the phone, 4 May 1937.

City Archivist (Major Matthews): Mrs. Draney, I have just been down to the City Solicitor's office, and have made a sworn affidavit that your Mother told me that your brother, Alexander Campbell Reid, was the first child born in Vancouver; she could not have known at that time about the Macey boy; nor did I know.

Mrs. Draney: "Well, they did not register births in those days. Mother always said that the McNeill girl was the first child born in Vancouver. I have heard Mother and Mrs. Cordiner talking about it, and Mother was saying it was a pity the City Council honoured the wrong person when they gave Miss Jackson the address and silver service. But I don't think Miss Jackson knew she was not the first; they did not register births in those days."

**ALEX MCNEILL DAUGHTER, BORN VANCOUVER, 28 APRIL 1886, REPUTED FIRST BIRTH IN VANCOUVER.**

Note by City Archivist: A clipping, taken from some Vancouver newspaper a good many years ago, presumably the *Province* magazine section, states that the *Vancouver Weekly Herald* of 30 April 1886 records that the first birth in Vancouver was a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Alex McNeill, which child was born in 28 April 1886, "two days after Vancouver's first mayor and Council were nominated." The item