

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



thereon. It was erected upon two large cedar logs about 10 ft. high by four or five ft. in diameter placed one on each side of the causeway. The two towers or uprights on these logs being built of 2 x 4 studding about three ft. square by about fifteen or so ft. high, which in turn was close boarded and treated by an ornamental rustication of small cedar poles cut and nailed on horizontally all the way up, between which the arch was sprung or formed and upon which the lettering forming the words "Stanley Park" were cut out of round small cedar poles and nailed to place.

And here is where I must pause a little and toot my own horn. I was very proud of this lettering as I had cut and formed them and always felt they were of right shape and good proportion. The towers on each side were further treated on top with cedar poles pyramid shape and two small flag poles, to which of course flags were flown.

This arch stood for a number of years at the entrance of the park and was considered quite an ornamental rustic feature, but which of course due to time and traffic considerations had to be finally taken down to make way for things of a larger concept.

Trusting the foregoing will give you the desired information and willing to be of any help in regard to matters of early days in this or other regard, I am

Yours

truly,

J.H. Bowman

4676-5th Avenue,
Vancouver, B.C.

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH THOS. W. BOYD OF 1203 WEST BROADWAY, 9 FEBRUARY 1938.

Partner of the pioneer contracting firm of Boyd and Clandenning, a tall well-preserved gentleman of great age (he was 80, 8 January 1938) who kindly called at the City Archives for a chat. (See James Clandenning, alderman 1895-1896; see Boyd and Clandenning, Council minutes, 1886.)

C.P.R. TOWNSITE. CLEARING THE FOREST. C.P.R. CONSTRUCTION.

Mr. Boyd says: "I came to Gastown in 1884. I had worked for the C.P.R., and was one of the first to get to the Columbia River—from the west, in the winter of 1884 and 1885. It was in that winter, 1884-1885, that we were building a wagon road, a tote road we called it, from Eagle Pass, now Sicamous, to the Columbia River bank opposite what is now Revelstoke.

"I was a young fellow of twenty; there was snow on the ground, and it was some time between the 1st and 15th of November 1884 that we reached the west bank of the Columbia River, and there was a tent on the other side, the east bank, of the engineers; that was all there was, nothing else, just a tent; we had come from Eagle Pass" (Sicamous.)

"That was the month before Christmas 1884, and I know that it was, because we spent Christmas in the tie camp at Blind Bay on the Little Shuswap Lake, and had lots to eat; it is the fact that we had been short of food, and then got lots to eat at the tie camp, that impresses the date on my memory.

"There were about one hundred men, working on the tote road from Eagle Pass to the Columbia River, and we were building about a mile a day, and the teams could not keep up. The road was so bad, and it was raining all the time, and what with the blowing of the stumps, and the great holes thus made, and the teams getting into those holes, we got short of food, but we did not blame the teams; they did their best; it was a difficult situation."

GRANITE CREEK.

“Well, we went back to the Little Shuswap, and to Blind Bay for Christmas, 1884, and got lots to eat, and enjoyed it. We stayed at the Camp all winter 1884-1885 getting out timber for bridges, and then I cut my foot with an axe, and came down to Westminster about August 1885; no doctor, just wait until it healed; I didn't go back, but went over to Vancouver Island to help build the island railway; did not stay long, and was back in New Westminster in October 1885, and went up to Granite Creek, where there was a gold boom; we thought we were going to make our fortunes in two weeks. I stayed about two weeks, and then came back to New Westminster for Christmas 1885.”

VANCOUVER IMPROVEMENT CO. C.P.R. TOWNSITE. HARRY ABBOTT. L.A. HAMILTON. J.W. STEWART.

“Then Harry Abbott came out as general superintendent; L.A. Hamilton came too, and J.W. Stewart, he was just a boy, and I think went back to the States to college. Harry Abbott called for tenders to clear and slash the C.P.R. Townsite. The Vancouver Improvement Company had been organised five or six months. They had east of Carrall Street, and the C.P.R. west of Carrall Street; the Vancouver Improvement land was pretty easy clearing; the Hastings Sawmill had already done some of it.

“We put in a tender for twenty-six dollars an acre to cut and slash as far west as Burrard Street; Hugh Keefer had a tender in, but we were the lowest; we were to cut the trees down and slash. Then they asked us to cut the limbs off the trees, and put on two dollars more, \$28 in all.

“We were to cut all down, and slash D.L. 541 for the C.P.R.; \$28 an acre, for cutting down everything that was, and cutting the limbs off the trees. How did we cut it down? Well, we did anything, the idea was to get it down: smash little trees with big ones; anything, but get it down. There were some specifications we had to observe; for instance, to lay all the trees, as far as was possible, one way, that is, we fell one tree north and the next south, so that they all lay in a general direction; it would be easier to handle afterwards than if they were crossed; we did the best we could in that respect.”

“NORTH AMERICAN CHINAMEN.” CLEARING THE FOREST. THE GREAT FIRE.

“All axes those days; not so many saws as now; not so many ‘North American Chinamen’ around.” (Note: i.e. Eastern Canadians.) “Then, afterwards we had got the cutting and slashing; after the ‘Fire’ of June 13th, they gave us three hundred dollars an acre for close cutting and clearing everything off so that the fire would not run over it again. You see, the main big fire of June 13th was caused by so much rubbish on the ground.”

PLANKING STREETS, ETC. GRANVILLE STREET. HASTINGS STREET. PENDER STREET. CORDOVA STREET.

“Then, after we had done the clearing contract, we had the contract for clearing Cordova, Hastings and Pender from Carrall to Burrard, all between Pender and Cordova, right down to the C.P.R. station, and also clearing Granville everything off right down to False Creek. McGillivray planked Hastings Street, but we had the sidewalks.”

GRANVILLE STREET SOUTH. CENTRE STREET. SHAUGHNESSY.

“Then, we first graded Granville Street South from False Creek to Ninth Avenue” (Broadway) “under Lawson, the city engineer, and had trouble over the level crossings. Lawson wanted the crossings of the cross avenue level, so that you went up the hill by steps, as it were, but Tracy, the city engineer after him, altered that, and made the crossing on the rise, so as to make the grade easier for the horses. I don't remember going any further than Ninth Avenue.”

FAIRVIEW. NORTH ARM ROAD. MAGEE ROAD. JOHNSON ROAD.

“Then we did a lot of dyking at Matsqui, and elsewhere. In 1909, from Fourteenth Avenue to the south was nothing but a sixteen foot road the stages could travel on. Frank Bowser was reeve at the time, and Point Grey municipality had lots of money, and we graded the North Arm Road” (Granville South) “as far as Magee Road” (49th Avenue) “and then turned down the Magee Road as far west as the Johnson Road; graded the whole sixty-six feet.”

Note: a map of Vancouver (presented by H.R. Bray), issued by A.W. Ross & Co., real estate (Ross & Ceperley) in 1886 or 1887, shows a trail, commencing on the shore of False Creek, about 250 feet east of Centre Street (Granville Street South) and proceeding sinuously along the western crest of a deep ravine with creek in bottom, finally terminates—on the map—where the trail crosses Tenth Avenue at what is now Granville Street South.

It was near the mouth of this creek—between Hemlock and Granville streets, that there was a logging dump, and it was here that L.A. Hamilton, who surveyed the street system of Vancouver in 1885, had a camp.

This trail, considered romantically, could be accepted as the first form of the present busy thoroughfare known as Granville Street South. It has been said that by means of it, it was possible to reach the North Arm, although the connecting logging trails have been more or less lost to record. J.S.M.

CROWS NEST PASS RAILWAY.

“Afterwards we helped construct the Crows Nest Pass Railway in 1895, with W.H. Armstrong; then we built the first bridge across the river at Westminster; Bob Armstrong and W.H. Armstrong; and fifteen miles of the Pacific Great Eastern Railway; and fifteen miles of the Canadian Northern Railway at Louis Creek, North Thompson, and then I got tired, and the war came on, and I was sixty years old, and I had put up buildings and buildings, and now they are not worth anything, nor the land either, and you cannot say anything about it.”

GENEALOGY.

“My name? Thomas Henry Boyd, born Colchester Co., Nova Scotia, sixth January 1867, married Louisa Fulmore in Montréal, 1893, at old Dr. Campbell’s house. We have one daughter, she is single, born in Vancouver in 1896; one daughter, Mary, died in 1895. Mrs. Boyd is still living.”

Mr. Boyd died 31 July 1938. Endeavours to have this narrative revised before his death were not successful. J.S. Matthews.

FIRST BRICK BUILDING IN VANCOUVER.

EXCERPT, *VANCOUVER HERALD (WEEKLY)*, 3 SEPTEMBER 1886.

“Vancouver,” Caption, 5 cols.

Pleace and Co. hardware merchants, had a brick building recently erected on Powell Street to meet their increased business. It was the first brick building put up in Vancouver, and was built by Mr. James Baxter.

Note by JSM: Afterwards Oppenheimer Bros. warehouse, and used as “City Hall” accommodation whilst the first City Hall was being built, approximately September 1886; now, on 1937, the paint warehouse and office of Henry Darling & Son Ltd., paints, 28 Powell Street.

SAME PAPER, 31 DECEMBER 1886.

“Vancouver,” caption, continued from first page.

Templeton & Northcott, after the fire, commenced the erection of a two story brick building on the site of their former store on the corner of Carrall and Hastings Street. It was the second brick building completed in the city.

EXCERPTS, *VANCOUVER WEEKLY HERALD*, 12 FEBRUARY 1886, No. 5.

Advertisement.

TENDERS.

Sealed tenders for underbrushing portions of Lot 185, from FIFTY (50) ACRES AND UPWARDS, to FIVE HUNDRED AND FIFTY (550) ACRES, will be received by the undersigned up to 12 o'clock noon of Saturday, Feb. 13th, 1886.