

Early Vancouver

Volume Five

By: Major J.S. Matthews, V.D.

2011 Edition (Originally Published 1945)

Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1936-1945.

Supplemental to volumes one, two, three and four collected in 1931, 1932 and 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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ST. JAMES CHURCH.

"Many think that the St. James Church being rebuilt now is the second St. James, but it is the third, as the first one was burnt down the afternoon of the fire. We attended services at 8 and 11 o'clock that morning, and the Sunday School was in session when the fire approached the church. Father Clinton, seeing the danger, took all the children to safety over the trail to False Creek. He did do so much at the time of the fire, and at all times, too, for that matter.

"Capt. and Mrs. J.A. Raymur were instrumental in building St. James Church, and when it was finished the Church Committee could not agree upon a name to give the church, so the naming of it was left to Capt. Raymur. He consulted his wife, in the presence of the Rev. Mr. Ditcham, and Mrs. Raymur said, 'Why not call it after you, James?' Mr. Ditcham reported it to Bishop Sillitoe, and Bishop Sillitoe, sensing the humour of it, said, 'Shall it be James the Less, or James the Great,' and Capt. Raymur said, 'James the Great, of course,' so that explains the naming of St. James Church."

Edited and approved by Miss Lawson, M.B.E., Victoria, B.C., 12 June 1936.

FURTHER MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH MRS. PETER LAWSON, 4311 ALBERT STREET, VANCOUVER, WHILST ON BOARD S.S. *PRINCESS JOAN*, PROCEEDING TO NEWCASTLE ISLAND FOR ANNUAL PICNIC OF VANCOUVER PIONEERS ASSOCIATION, 14 JUNE 1939.

VANCOUVER HIGH SCHOOL. EAST END SCHOOL. MOUNT PLEASANT SCHOOL, THE BARN.

Major Matthews: Were you the first school pupil in Vancouver to become a Vancouver school teacher?

Mrs. Lawson: "When I came to Vancouver from Winnipeg in October 1889, I was Miss Barnes, and I had with me my normal school diploma, obtained in Manitoba, but before I could attend the Vancouver High School, I was required to sit my entrance examination, which I did, and was admitted to the high school class in January 1890. I think there were high school classes before January 1890; I have been told there were, and it is not likely that I should have been required to sit an entrance examination if there had not been.

"In January 1890, Miss McDougall of the Mount Pleasant School was ill, and although I was without a British Columbia teacher's certificate, and was a high school pupil, I was asked to go up to Mount Pleasant School, 'the Barn,' we called it, and take her place for a week while she was away. Then I returned to the high school, which was held in a room in the Central School, a brick building on Pender Street."

Major Matthews: Who could possibly have preceded you as a Burrard Inlet school pupil who became a Vancouver school teacher?

Mrs. Lawson: "I have never known or heard of such a person; there may have been, I don't know; it has never occurred to me before that I might be the first pupil to become a teacher in Vancouver.

"Then, 26th June 1890, the examinations were held, and in July it was announced I was the head pupil. I was the first pupil in Vancouver to receive the gold medal for the highest marks. I think there had been high school classes before 1890, but the examinations in June 1890 were the first, I think, in which they gave anything to the leading pupil. You can easily verify it; it is recorded at the head of a list posted up at the King Edward High School—'Miss Catherine A. Barnes, 1890,' it says, or something like that; anyway, I appear as the first pupil in Vancouver to take the gold medal; my name is first on the roll.

"In addition, I was given a book, a beautifully bound book—I have it yet. It is Scott's Poetical Works. The inscription in this book reads: 'A PRIZE PRESENTED TO MISS CATHERINE A. BARNES HEAD PUPIL OF HIGH SCHOOL, BY HON. JOHN ROBSON, VANCOUVER, 26TH JUNE 1890.'

"Then, in August 1890, I was appointed to the East End School; that is, the Oppenheimer Street School.

"There were four teachers there; I was the junior. The principal was Mr. Ganton, then Miss Alice Christie, a friend of our family when both families were in Manitoba—she had not attended any Vancouver school as pupil—and thirdly, Mr. J.J. Dougan, for many years in Vancouver schools, and well known; lastly, myself.

“Mrs. Robinson, née Jesse Black, of the 1890 high school class, became a teacher after I did; she taught about five years and then married; I remained a teacher for twenty years, and then married. Mr. Lawson has died.”

EAST END SCHOOL. OPPENHEIMER STREET SCHOOL. STRATHCONA SCHOOL. VANCOUVER HIGH SCHOOL. CENTRAL SCHOOL.

“There was a class of High School pupils in 1889. I joined in January, and remained until June 1890, then went to Victoria, sat the teacher’s examinations, passed, and was appointed to staff of Oppenheimer Street School under Mr. Ganton.

“The first day at Oppenheimer Street School, in August 1890, I had eighty-six pupils, and did not know a soul in the school. I had an average, for one whole month, of one hundred and three in my class; primary children, that is, beginners.

“There were four rows of two-pupil seats, and I put three children on a two-pupil seat. I had one row of seats filled with two ‘big’ beginners; and the smaller beginners in the next three rows—three in a two-pupil seat. The remainder sat on the platform at the head of the room. Slates, pencils, and blackboard and chalk, of course, in those days.

“I stayed as teacher at Oppenheimer Street School until February 1891, when we were moved to the new brick Strathcona School on old Princess Street, now Pender Street East. It was Princess Street, Dupont Street, and Pender Street, then; same street with three names for different parts. The new ‘big’ Strathcona School—it was only eight rooms—was well supplied with pupils; I remained at Strathcona School as teacher for twenty years, until 1910.”

Approved by Mrs. Lawson, 28 July 1939, J.S. Matthews.