

## **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 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the City's founding. The project was made possible by funding from the Vancouver Historical Society.

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**MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH HAROLD E. RIDLEY, 1833 WEST 4<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE, VANCOUVER, CHRISTMAS EVE, 1936.**

**DEADMAN'S ISLAND. EARLY CEMETERIES.**

Mr. Ridley said: "The little collection of graves on Deadman's Island wasn't a cemetery; just graves in the trees."

City Archivist: Do you recall where they were. Which way did you turn after you crossed the little footbridge from Stanley Park? My recollection is that we turned to the left a few steps; that is, towards the east.

Mr. Ridley: "No; it was to the west a step or two; into the trees. McCartney's little son was buried apart from the rest; little fence around it."

City Archivist: Well, I remember them as little bits of enclosures, not much bigger than a large table, fenced in with sharp pointed pickets, split cedar or sawn, I forget, and more grass inside the fence than outside, and the seed heads of the grass sticking up above the pickets.

Mrs. Ridley: (smilingly) "That's it."

**BROCKTON POINT. EARLY CEMETERIES.**

Mr. Ridley: "The graveyard by the nine o'clock gun was just about one hundred feet further on towards Brockton Point; just who was buried there, I cannot think at this moment."

**MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH DR. A.M. ROBERTSON, FIRST CITY HEALTH OFFICER, AT HIS OFFICE, 525 SEYMOUR STREET, VANCOUVER.**

Dr. Robertson looks fairly vigorous, luxuriant white hair, and attends his office each day despite the fact that this is his fiftieth year as a medical practitioner, in Vancouver.

I showed Dr. Robertson a photo of a gang of men laying street railway tracks on Powell Street, 1889 (opposite 637 Powell Street, between Heatley and Carl Avenue) and pointed out a building which I hoped he would say was the first hospital, the C.P.R. hospital in Vancouver, 1886.

**FIRST HOSPITAL IN VANCOUVER. C.P.R. HOSPITAL.**

Dr. Robertson: "I think that *must be* the first hospital, the one the C.P.R. had; it looks like it; the two windows on the side are in the same position, but the building looks almost too new; I am not sure; it is in the position the hospital was, about opposite the old Barnard Castle Hotel, and I don't know what other building it could be. This photo was taken some three years after I was first there, and after the city got their own hospital, perhaps the C.P.R. sold or rented the old building for a store or something; this long white looking building, and this smaller" (darker) "one to the north of it" (with the forest behind.)

**DR. J.M. LEFEVRE.**

"You see, Dr. Lefevre was the C.P.R. medical superintendent, and I was his assistant; I came here as his assistant. Each week I walked down the right of way from Port Moody while the C.P.R. construction was going on, and visited the camps on the way. Then I went back to Port Moody on the *Princess Louise*. Dr. Lefevre started the hospital."

**C.P.R. CONSTRUCTION. PORT MOODY.**

"Dr. Lefevre got sick of walking down to the hospital on Powell Street from his office uptown" (on Hastings Street near Granville Street), "got sick of walking back and forth—it was quite a long hard walk in the mud and roots in those days—and he left it to me to do, and" (significantly) "the walk back from Port Moody, too."

**STREET CAR RAILS (CURVES). MAYOR GARDEN (HERMON, BURWELL AND GARDEN).**

"Look at these curves" (passing siding) "in these car tracks." (See photo C.V.P. Trans. 11. N. Trans 7.) "Those were all curved by hand. I remember once someone saying to Jimmy Garden that the street car

curves on the street car corners were better than they used to be, and Jimmy retorted, 'Yes, I put them in, but we put them in by hand.' The curve in the rails in those days, in the first street car tracks, were all done by hand. Nowadays the curves in the rails are put in by machinery, before they are laid, but when the first street car curves were put down in Vancouver, it was all done by hand."

#### **THE FIRST NURSE.**

City Archivist: Remarkable thing, Dr. Robertson, that you, the doctor, and J.B. Kay, a patient, both of the first hospital, are still with us to celebrate the Golden Jubilee year.

Dr. Robertson: "Don't recall Kay. The hospital was a two-storey affair; only two beds I can recall upstairs. Hughes, who was cook as well as nurse, slept up there, and afterwards there was a woman used to come; she slept up there. I was never up there more than once or twice; the four beds and kitchen were downstairs; it was right beside the track, but of course there were no ties on the right of way from Port Moody; I walked on the grade."

As narrated to me today, 19 February 1936.

J.S. Matthews.

#### **MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION OF A FEW MOMENTS WITH MRS. JONATHAN ROGERS OF VANCOUVER, 16 FEBRUARY 1938.**

Who very kindly called at the City Archives and presented me with a small and a large copper medallion, issued by C.W. McCain, in 1901, etc., made from the historic steamer *Beaver*, and also with a coverless copy of the first edition of the history of the *Beaver*, autographed by the author, C.W. McCain.

#### **S.S. BEAVER.**

Mrs. Rogers: "Of course, you know, Mr. McCain blew up the *Beaver*; that was to increase the value of his own relics, so that no one else should get any more."

Major Matthews: Well, may I presume to point out, this office has to be very, very careful what they record.

Mrs. Rogers: "Quite so. All I know of it personally is that Mr. Rogers" (Mrs. Rogers's husband) "told me he" (Mr. McCain) "did; that he blew her up."

#### **DEADMAN'S ISLAND. STANLEY PARK.**

"I was in London, and Lord Dunedin asked me, 'How is the island; have you got it still?'"

"I replied, 'Yes, we have,' and he answered, 'And, so you should have; I know something about it; it was proven that it was part of the reserve'" (Stanley Park); "I had the last word in that matter, on the Privy Council."

"Then Lord Dunedin said to me, 'What you ought to ask me is, How much were you offered?'"

Major Matthews: Did Lord Dunedin say that to you?

Mrs. Rogers: "Oh, yes. That I know about positively. Those were his remarks to me; there's no hearsay about that."

#### **DEADMAN'S ISLAND.**

The judgment of Lord Dunedin, of Privy Council, London, England, in the Deadman's Island case, Attorney-General of B.C. versus Attorney-General of Canada, 1906, Appeal cases, page 552. (In Corporation Counsel's Office, City Hall.)

#### **BY AN OLD TIMER.**

To have served under every mayor since the incorporation of Vancouver, is the unique distinction held by two civic employees, Chief J.H. Carlisle, head of Vancouver Volunteer Fire Brigade, Vancouver's Fire Brigade, and Josiah Romang, janitor of the City Hall.