

Early Vancouver

Volume Five

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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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Footnote or Endnote Reference:

Major James Skitt Matthews, *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 5 (Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 2011), 33.

Bibliographic Entry:

Matthews, Major James Skitt. *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 5. Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 2011.

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“THE MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR,” I.E., REV. JAMES TURNER OF GRANVILLE, B.C.

Just who told me—I have heard it so many times—the Rev. James Turner, who, with the Indians built, and he afterwards in company with Rev. Charles M. Tate, dedicated the first church in Vancouver, used to be known colloquially as “the Minister of the Interior,” because his ministry extended all over the “Interior,” then so called more than today, of British Columbia. He was stationed in Salmon Arm at one time, and I recall having heard that he was short of a church to hold a service, so prevailed upon the C.P.R. to sidetrack a coach for the purpose; the story runs something like that.

J.S. Matthews.

Dr. A.M. Sanford has, so Rev. Tanner (sic) told me, quite a lot of his papers.

JSM.

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH GEORGE F. UPHAM, 1125 WEST 12TH AVENUE, ONE OF THE FEW SURVIVING MEMBERS OF THE VOLUNTEER FIRE BRIGADE, “BEFORE THE FIRE” (JUNE 1886), WHO CALLED AT THE CITY ARCHIVES TO CHAT, 18 FEBRUARY 1937.

ARRIVAL FIRST TRAIN VANCOUVER, 23 MAY 1887.

Mr. Upham said: “I was a member of the first volunteer fire brigade, and we were paraded to swell the throngs to witness the great event of the arrival of the first passenger train from Montréal in Vancouver. We did not take the engines down, just the hose reels, and that was the first day we wore our fancy helmets.

“There are very few of our old volunteer firemen left to tell the tale, but, thank God, I am one of them.”

ARRIVAL FIRST TRAIN PORT MOODY, 4 JULY 1886.

“I also saw the first passenger train arrive in Port Moody, 4th July 1886.”

FIRST LADY PASSENGER BY RAIL OVER ROCKIES.

(Exclusive of Mrs. Abbott and Mrs. Lefevre and their party who arrived in Mr. Abbott’s car, 27 or 28 June 1886.)

“You see, there was the mayor of Seattle and the city clerk, and the mayor of Nanaimo and the city clerk, and the mayor of Victoria and the city clerk, and the mayor of Westminster and his clerk, and Mayor MacLean and” (City Clerk) “Tom McGuigan, and we had all got there too soon, and had an hour and a half to wait, so everybody made pretty good use of the time up at the hotel, and of course when the train *did* arrive, they were all pretty well warmed up.

“Well. They had prepared a fine bouquet of rose buds to give the first lady passenger to come over the Rockies in a passenger train. Tom McGuigan had a nice little address all ready for her; guess he had got it off by heart, but, anyway, he read it from a piece of notepaper, nicely fixed up for her, and when the lady, Mrs. Hirschberg, with her two daughters, stepped off the train, Tom approached her, and made his little speech, and handed her the written address, which she took. Mayor MacLean’s part was to hand her the bouquet of rose buds, which he did, but did not make such a to-do about it as Tom; he just bowed and presented them.”

City Archivist (JSM): Mrs. Hirschberg (or Hirshberg); what did you say her name was?

Mr. Upham: “Yes. Mrs. Hirschberg; she came out to take over the Leland Hotel on Hastings Street.”

City Archivist: Well, Hirschberg committed suicide, didn’t he? Frank Hart (see *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 3, F.W. Hart) told me that when the city got Mountain View Cemetery, he (the undertaker) couldn’t open it because no one would die, but finally Hirshberg volunteered, and they opened it with him.

Mr. Upham: “Make any man commit suicide to have a wife like that; a hard old bat; she was hard, *hard*.”