

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.

Copyright Statement

© 2011 City of Vancouver. Any or all of *Early Vancouver* may be used without restriction as to the nature or purpose of the use, even if that use is for commercial purposes. You may copy, distribute, adapt and transmit the work. It is required that a link or attribution be made to the City of Vancouver.

Reproductions

High resolution versions of any graphic items in *Early Vancouver* are available. A fee may apply.

Citing Information

When referencing the 2011 edition of *Early Vancouver*, please cite the page number that appears at the bottom of the page in the PDF version only, not the page number indicated by your PDF reader. Here are samples of how to cite this source:

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.

Contact Information

City of Vancouver Archives
1150 Chestnut Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 3J9
604.736.8561
archives@vancouver.ca
vancouver.ca/archives



well; Dr. Beckingsale was the doctor. Miss Edith Jackson was born later, and was, I think, the first white girl born in Vancouver after incorporation as a city. Fred" (Frederick Charles) "was born sometime in May just after incorporation."

(Note: Miss Edith Jackson was the *fourth* white child born in Vancouver, not the first.)

POSTSCRIPT.

The "discovery," in September 1939, of the "lost" first white child, i.e., Miss Margaret Florence McNeil, born 27th (or 28th) April 1886, residing at 2043 S.E. 16th Avenue, Portland, Oregon, and employed as glove buyer by Olds, Workman and King, department store, has finally cleared up the former mystery of what was the fate of the first baby of Vancouver city after incorporation.

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH HIS WORSHIP THOS. F. NEELANDS, MAYOR OF VANCOUVER, 1902-3, NOW RESIDENT WITH MRS. NEELANDS AT 1665 WEST SEVENTH AVENUE, VANCOUVER. UNDATED, BUT SUMMER, 1936.

His Worship, now retired, called at the City Archives to chat. He suffers, more or less, from deficient sight, which prevents reading of newspapers, but not other daily activities; Mrs. Neelands is frail of health, too.

COATS OF ARMS, VANCOUVER. ADOPTED 2 FEBRUARY 1903.

His Worship said: "The question of improving the original coat of arms of Vancouver—that was the idea, of course—was first taken up during the regime of Mayor Townley in 1901. I was then an alderman on the Council, and Mayor Townley proposed it, and others agreed, that we should have something more elaborate, something which would add to the imagination, so Mayor Townley got a gentleman, a Mr. Blomfield, to make two drawings. In due course, Mr. Blomfield sent in his drawings, he was paid for his services, and nothing more was heard of it that year, 1901.

"Later, during my term of office, 1902-3—I succeeded Mayor Townley as mayor—the Council again looked at the designs, selected the most fitting, as we thought, and made an alteration or two. For instance, Mr. Blomfield had the oilskin coat on the fisherman very long, down to the fisherman's heels; we shortened it; then we made a change in the axe, and to balance the two sides" (dexter and sinister), "we put a piece of timber behind the lumberman to match the oar behind the fisherman. Col. Tracey, the city engineer, had the alterations in the design made.

"After we had adopted the new crest, Mr. Blomfield wrote complaining that we had not consulted him before making the alterations, but that did not make any difference; it appeared to us to be, essentially, no different from Mr. Blomfield's original design. It is said that it is faulty heraldry; that the crown should be used only in connection with a fortified city, but we liked the look of it, and we left the crown. The remainder represents, essentially, what the first crest, the engine, etc., represented, and the sea is represented in the new crest by the waves."

City Archivist: What did you put the V-shaped thing (caduceus) in the middle for?

His Worship: "That represents commerce."

MOTTO, CITY OF VANCOUVER.

"As to the motto, this is the interesting part. It was thought by some that it would be more dignified if it was translated into Latin, so we submitted the motto to a professor of languages in the University at Kingston; to a professor of languages in the Toronto University; then someone suggested that the Rev. Father Clinton of St. James Church was a good Latin scholar, so we included him; three in all.

"In each case the translation submitted was different, so that we decided to leave the motto in English, so that everyone could understand it after they had read it. That's as far as I can go on the coat of arms. Mayor Townley started the change; my council finished it."

VANCOUVER GENERAL HOSPITAL. FAIRVIEW, 1901.

His Worship, continuing: "Well, of course, the old hospital at the corner of Cambie and Pender was getting congested; the matter came up from time to time that it would have to be enlarged; I thought the

surroundings were not suitable for enlargement. Col. T.O. Townley was mayor in 1901; I was alderman, and chairman of the finance committee. So the question of a new site was looked into; several sites were examined, and when the final selection was made we obtained from the Land Department of the Canadian Pacific Railway, an option on quite a big piece of land; I think it was two blocks, and for, I think from memory, \$5,500. Of course, the original location has been greatly enlarged since.

“As I say, the matter of a site came up in the council and five aldermen were delegated to view the alternative sites, but only two aldermen, Ald. Grant and myself, took any interest. We looked at two sites across False Creek; one in Mount Pleasant, one in Fairview, and there was another in the West End; that was in 1901.

“You must reflect that, in 1901, there was a tremendous lot of vacant land in Vancouver, and that is why I do not know now the exact location of the sites we examined, although a record might be available if wanted which would show it.

“So, Grant and I visited the Fairview site, and thoroughly examined it, and we thought we had chosen the highest part. The area was vacant then, covered with forest debris, stumps, small trees, bushes; a wild and silent place. Afterwards, we found to our regret that we had not chosen the highest part; the highest part was a little to the west where the King Edward” (VII) “High School was afterwards built. But of course we had to take into consideration convenience of access; the Cambie Street bridge made it convenient, and we wanted to get away from the congested part of the city.

“I do not recall what population the city had then, but it was under thirty-five thousand. It required some little imagination as to the future of the city both as to population and direction of growth, but in view of what has happened, I still think we made a good choice.

“At that time, of course, Mount Pleasant and Fairview were leading residential districts. There were no such places as Kitsilano, Shaughnessy, Kerrisdale, Grandview, or Hastings as we know them today, and the West End was sparsely populated. There were locations in Mount Pleasant which would have been suitable, but the Fairview site was more accessible on account of the bridges, and its position centrally to the density of population. Where, if you had a choice, could you put a general hospital today, and improve upon the location? Then again, remember, we had nothing to go on other than our idea of what a wilderness might grow into.

“If mistake we made at all, it was that we did not go a few more blocks further south, perhaps four or five; but then, we had to make the hospital as convenient as we could for the transportation we had at that time, and that, of course, was a single street car line up hill and down dale along Ninth Avenue, which was then little more than a narrow dusty dirt road in summer, and a winding trail of mud in winter.”

GENEALOGY.

“My father came to Canada in 1832, when he was nine years old; my great-great-grandfather lived to a great age, my grandfather to 56, and my father to 66; we came from Ottawa to Vancouver; I had five brothers altogether; one died at 22, two others have died since; one was a lieutenant-colonel, with D.S.O., at Fort William; two beside myself survive. I had six nephews overseas; I have no children of my own.

“I came to Vancouver in November 1885, then went back to Victoria for a few weeks, and came back in March 1886.”

See also “Macey.”