

Early Vancouver

Volume Five

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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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THE NAMING OF VANCOUVER.

From the report of the Vancouver Canadian Club, 1910-1911 (printed), page 14 and 16.

On February 23rd 1911, Mr. R.H. Alexander, manager of the Hastings Sawmill, pioneer, "Overlander of 1862," and of Alexander street, addressed the Canadian Club of Vancouver. This is what he is reported to have said:

The little village of Granville began to increase, and incorporation was talked of. The question of a name was discussed, and perhaps not many knew the reasons for the name, which, as one of the signers of the petition for incorporation, I will tell you, THE NAME WAS THE CHOICE OF SIR WILLIAM VAN HORNE. When the question first arose, the old residents naturally thought the old name good enough, but SIR WILLIAM USED ALL HIS INFLUENCE WITH US FOR THE NAME VANCOUVER; but we said "This is the Mainland; we don't want to be confounded with Vancouver Island." "Never mind," he said, "if you call it Granville or Liverpool, or any other name, it conveys no idea of location." Now people will remember that at school in their atlases they saw an island called Vancouver away up at the left hand corner of North America, and though they may, to some extent, confound the city that is to be with the island, still it gives them a notion of whereabouts in the world it is, and so it was name VANCOUVER. I was greatly struck with the correctness of his view in this, as a few years afterwards, being in London, I was introduced to a gentleman there by a friend who, when making the introduction said "Mr. Alexander is from British Columbia," at which he looked blank. My friend laughingly said, "I don't believe you know where it is," when he replied, "To tell the truth I am a bit hazy about it; isn't it down somewhere near the Isthmus of Panama!" "No," said my friend, "it's Vancouver; haven't you heard of it!" "Oh, Vancouver—oh, yes, of course I know all about Vancouver." British Columbia seemed to have to them some connection with British Guiana or British Honduras and as the State of Columbia was down there, so probably was British Columbia, but Vancouver, that was quite understandable.

THE NAME DEADMAN'S ISLAND. JERICO, JERRY'S COVE.

I was somewhat amused lately to see a legendary Indian story as to the origin of the name "Deadman's Island." It has no such poetic origin; the fact is there was no cemetery nearer than New Westminster, and occasional waifs and strays were buried on the island, and from that the mill hands gave it that name. What is known as Jericho, where the Country Club is located, was so called from "Jerry" Rogers, who had his house and camp there; someone called it Jericho in fun, and the name stuck.

Note by J.S.M.: In isolated Burrard Inlet they had to make fun somehow. Sobriquets was one way, so nearly everyone had a nickname; there were very few who had not.