

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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VANCOUVER—A SHORT HISTORY

Published 1936.

In 1934, two small boys, of 12 or 13 years, and one by name Gross, timorously rapped on the door of a small room, City Hall, 16 Hastings Street East, Vancouver. Room 1016, the "CITY ARCHIVES," was ten feet by sixteen, and a cardboard sign on the door, "CITY ARCHIVIST," designated its purpose. Inside was a litter of parcels of brown paper, cardboard cartons, shabby boxes, a desk, a chair, no other furniture, no phone, but a borrowed typewriter, and the City Archivist himself.

The boys peeped in; "Can we come in, mister?" They could. They sat down.

They were from Templeton Junior High School, they said; and wanted historical material for the school magazine; someone had sent them. They stayed an hour or more. The first question they plied was, "What do you know about...?" mentioning something. It was a queer way for a lad to address a major with a bald head, but the archivist rose to the occasion, and successfully withstood their assaults. The two boys came back on many occasions; principally Saturday morning at noon, just as the archivist was leaving for a week end rest.

The outcome was an invitation to the archivist to address the scholars of the Templeton High School, but not until after the "TEE JAY," June 1935, Vol. VIII, No. 7, the school publication had been mimeographed. (See page 19.)

Later, Mr. Kenneth A. Waites, one of the leading teachers, called at the "City Archives," and to make quite a long story shorter, early in the Golden Jubilee year he conceived an idea to publish a booklet. This idea, after a great deal of work, mostly on his part, finally culminated in "VANCOUVER—A SHORT HISTORY."

The first five thousand sold for ten cents, and went so fast that a second five thousand was printed; ten thousand in all; in September 1936 none were obtainable; out of print.

Then, on Sept. 29th, 1936, in compliance with the request of W.A. McAdam Esq. Agent-General for B.C. in London, England, fifty copies were sent him for distribution in the British Isles. In the words of the hard working Waites, the boys of the "Templeton School" were "tickled pink."

Perhaps, who knows, the two small boys at the door were the heralds announcing that a start was being made on the writing of the marvellous romance, THE HISTORY OF VANCOUVER.

30 September 1936.

J.S. Matthews

City Archivist.