

## **Early Vancouver**

### **Volume Six**

**By: Major J.S. Matthews, V.D.**

**2011 Edition (Originally Published 1945)**

*Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1940-1945.*

*Supplemental to volumes one, two, three, four and five collected in 1931, 1932, 1934, 1939 and 1944.*

### **About the 2011 Edition**

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**CONVERSATION WITH MR. W.A. GRAFTON, OF GRAFTON BAY, GRAFTON LAKE, BOWEN ISLAND, AND OF 542 WEST 6<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE, VANCOUVER, WHO VERY KINDLY CALLED AT THE CITY ARCHIVES THIS MORNING, 7 SEPTEMBER 1944—MY 66<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY—AND STAYED GOSSIPING FOR AN HOUR.**

He is not very well; is suffering from some stiffness; I gave him a walking stick, one which once belonged to Col. J.W. Warden, D.S.O.

**POINT ATKINSON LIGHTHOUSE. H.M.S. *EGERIA*. MR. AND MRS. WALTER ERWIN.**

Mr. Grafton said: "The old lighthouse had two coal oil lamps; they ran eight hours; they were old-fashioned, with round wick, in a circle, and there were eight hundred pounds of lead to keep them going."

Major Matthews: Did you ever see it?

Mr. Grafton: (astonished) "Did I ever see it? Why, I attended it. It was regulated with a fan. You see, those wings on the fan, you twisted them to regulate the light. They were very particular. The captain of the *Egeria* complained that the light was running three seconds slow, and made a special trip ashore to complain. I was alone; Mr. and Mrs. Erwin were up town. That was about 1888."

**FOG ALARM. THE LIGHT LAMPS.**

"There was no fog alarm in those days, and the light would run for eight hours without winding; one winding did eight hours. The winding crank was in the tower. You see, that shaft was square, and ran all the way from the top of the tower to the rock below the house, and the eight hundred pounds of lead was in sections, sections of twenty-five pounds weight about, and slipped on the wire; had a slot in them. The weight was just the same as a clock; the weight kept the machine running. Then when the weight got to the bottom—about twenty-five feet—the machine stopped, and you went up to the top of the tower and wound it up again with the crank handle, and the wire wound around a drum. The two lamps were on a sort of table. The lamp was prevented from twisting by the square shaft right to the rock floor. The lamps didn't burn much oil."

**THE REFLECTORS.**

"The lights were set in a hood reflector of silver-plated copper; we polished them every day."

**THE LIGHTHOUSE. FOG ALARM, CIRCA 1889. S.S. *SIR JAMES DOUGLAS*. ORIGINAL LIGHTHOUSE.**

"The lighthouse was a square tower; there were no other buildings except the cow shed and the boathouse, and the boathouse was in the same place as it is now. The square lighthouse tower sloped inwards to the top to where the light was, and the ground floor was the light-keeper's kitchen and bedroom. Above that was another bedroom, and on top was the light. Pretty easy going those days. There was no fog alarm to look after, and so long as your lights were burning you did not have to go out in the rain. The lighthouse had a big wide verandah. I came to Vancouver in 1887, and was out there off and on after that. I forget what year the steam fog alarm was put in, but I think it was in 1889. Old Capt. Lewis used to come in now and again to see if the fog alarm was going; he came in the *Sir James Douglas*.

"This photo" (C.V. P. Out. 219, N. Out. 134) "of the Point Atkinson lighthouse is part of the original lighthouse. It is the same original tower; the only difference is that an addition has been built to the east end of it. At first there was just the square tower as shown, but later they added the living quarters with the two chimneys and three windows."

**POINT ATKINSON LIGHTHOUSE. WATER AND WOOD.**

"Underneath the big wide verandah was the wood storage, and the water storage tank. We saved the water from the roof; it ran through a big can full of sand, and on into the water storage tank below, and we had a hand pump to pump it into the kitchen."

**NEW POINT ATKINSON LIGHTHOUSE. LIGHT-KEEPER'S RESIDENCE.**

"Then, about 1911, they built the present lighthouse and pulled the old one down. And they built a residence for the light-keeper, but it is out of sight; that's why it is not shown in this illustration in the

*Province.*" (See file, "Point Atkinson Lighthouse," undated clipping from the *Province* captioned "OLDER THAN VANCOUVER.")

### **THE CITY COUNCIL, 1943.**

As described by R. Rowe Holland, Esq., Chairman, Parks Board, Governor, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and Governor, City Archives, Vancouver, at a banquet tendered to Major J.S. Matthews, City Archivist, Stanley Park Pavilion, on the evening of his sixty-fifth birthday, 7 September 1943, and attended by about thirty of the eminent of Vancouver, including the Hon. and Mrs. Eric Hamber (formerly Lieutenant-Governor), the presidents of Vancouver Exhibition, Tourist Association, Women's Canadian Club, University of B.C., Pioneers' Association, Howard Green, M.P., Mrs. Tillie Rolston, M.L.A., etc.

Mr. Holland: "And the City Council, an aggregation of one hundred and twenty-five dollars a month men."

(No one protested; some smiled.)

And to which Major Matthews, "under his breath," added: "Masquerading under the misnomer of City Fathers," so that, the full comment is:

The City Council, an aggregation of one hundred and thirty-five [*not twenty-five*] dollar a month men, masquerading under the misnomer of City Fathers.

There is no civic government in Vancouver. We have an administration, but not a government. We are supposed to have democracy; actually, we have a most vicious form of autocracy—because it masquerades as democracy and the electors cannot see that it is not. It is idiotic, not democratic. One hundred thousand electors are on the rolls, most of whom know nothing of civic affairs; they vote for representatives they have never even seen, whose names are frequently unknown to them until the ballot paper is before them. One hundred thousand have surrendered to eight aldermen. Council meetings are frequently held in secret, and when held in the Chamber—in the afternoon when business men are in their offices, and working men at their work—are rarely attended by more than two or three spectators.

### **CONVERSATION WITH FORMER REEVE SAM CHURCHILL (OF CHURCHILL STREET), POINT GREY MUNICIPALITY, AT CITY ARCHIVES, 9 SEPTEMBER 1943.**

#### **CHINESE DEAD. SHAUGHNESSY HEIGHTS, 1908. GRANVILLE STREET SOUTH AT 16<sup>TH</sup>.**

Mr. Churchill said: "One day, 1908, I met a C.P.R. foreman in what is now Shaughnessy Heights; it would be about Granville Street and 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue, just there, and lots of trees. He said to me, 'Wait till I show you something,' and I followed him from the" (North Arm) "road down a little trail into the woods a piece, just a little way. About a few yards from the road we came on two dead Chinamen lying under the big trees. They were fully clothed. They had poisoned themselves. The Chinese had a habit of doing that, when they became old or useless. The two Chinamen had just gone there and poisoned themselves."

#### **FAIRVIEW.**

"In 1890 there was not a house west of Ontario Street until you came to Greer's Beach" (now Kitsilano Beach.) (Note by JSM: Not strictly correct, but very nearly so.)

#### **NOTE BY JSM.**

The disappearance of Chinese under peculiar circumstances is remarked upon by Dr. Langis, former C.P.R. doctor. In his conversations he speaks of it occurring, to his personal knowledge, at Kamloops and Port Moody, and gives his opinions. He refers to the Chinese doing away with themselves, or being done away with by their friends, when they have become useless by accident on C.P.R. construction.