

Early Vancouver

Volume Six

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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

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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[LETTER FROM J.S. MATTHEWS TO COLONEL J.P. FELL.]

22nd August, 1944.

Dear Col. Fell:

May I asked you the privilege of submitting certain matters to you.

About 10 years ago someone told me that some particular place in Vancouver had been named to honor some individual; I made a note of it, and later added other notes about other places in and about the city. The result has been that there is now in this institution a record of 3000 named places which, figuratively, can be seen from the City Hall tower, and how they got their names, when, and why. It has been a long task, is never finished, and has been done little by little. Among them are Lonsdale Gardens, Lonsdale Estate; Lonsdale Avenue. Among the many references to this property—going back to Alexander Merryfield, who pre-empted it, I note an item—just one—that in 1893 the North Vancouver Council ordered the setting out of

“LONSDALE AVENUE: from the waterfront to Keith Road.”

These place name records are in constant use; for instance, the “Province” of last Saturday, magazine section, published a half page on downtown street names; the writer, Rev. A.E. Cooke, spent four days in this office extracting his information, and, of course, we like what we give out to be absolutely authentic. We have here, too, a docket marked “FELL, Col. J.P.” into which we put such as newspaper clippings concerning your self; Fell’s Fill; the North Vancouver Engineers, and so on. And, we have another docket on “LONSDALE, Lord.”

There seems to be nothing definite here as to how Lonsdale Ave., etc., got its name; some say one thing; some another. The best way, if you would consent, is to have it down in writing from someone who knows just exactly who it was intended to honor; what relationship to Lord Lonsdale; when he was here, and who it was who applied the name. Then we make copies of the letter or document, and place those copies in the proper files so that when anyone comes in seeking information, the whole matter is there for them to see.

It would be very agreeable to us to receive the facts about the Lonsdale naming if you would be so good as to put them down for us.

Colonel J.P. Fell,
Vancouver.

With best wishes,
Most sincerely,
J.S. Matthews
City Archivist