

Early Vancouver

Volume Seven

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

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Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected between 1931-1956.

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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Contact Information

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



8 MAY 1956.

Mrs. James Nixon, daughter of Kenneth C. Campbell, who worked on construction of C.P.R.:

MOUNT PLEASANT. 29TH AVENUE EAST. SOPHIA STREET. WATER FROM WELL.

Mrs. Nixon: "When we moved to our place on Sophia Street, just off 29th Avenue East, Mount Pleasant, my husband dug a twenty-two foot well, and we pulled our water up with a rope. Wonderful water. All our neighbours got their water from our well, and pulled it up themselves. We had to go to 15th Avenue for our mail."

CANNON SHOT.

On 21 September 1954, Mr. George Donovan of 3698 Cambridge Street, Vancouver (and of Donovan Ltd., 449 East Hastings, typewriters) called at the City Archives, bringing with him a heavy cannon shot, twelve inches long, five inches diameter, slightly rusted, and weighing probably forty pounds. It has copper driving bands, and the marks of the grooves (when fired) are cut into the copper.

Mr. Donovan said:

"This shot was ploughed up at Ladysmith about 1952, by a man whose name I cannot recall but which I will get for you. His little farm is about half a mile north of Ladysmith, above the main road about four blocks; he was just ploughing a field. He was just ploughing along, when the plough unearthed it. He took it to his basement. I was stopping at the Europe Hotel in Ladysmith, and he gave it to me.

"Then about a year ago I phoned you and asked if you wanted it, and here it is.

"The contour level where it was found would be about seventy-five or one hundred feet and distant from the sea about half a mile."

16 NOVEMBER 1948 – THE CHAIN GANG, VANCOUVER.

From the *News-Herald*, Vancouver, 12 November 1948, article, "When Vancouver was young," by J.K. Nesbitt.

Assistant jailor J[ohn] Clough returned from flying visit to England ... even the chaingang men were glad to see their kindly but strict guardian back ...

It should be explained that it was the custom of the time to put prisoners to work on public buildings, and each day, in charge of a guard, they marched through the streets, all chained together, the chains making great clanking noises as the men marched, and people stood on street corners to gawk at them.

The author of the article is quite in error, because:

1. It was not the custom of the time *to put prisoners to work on public buildings*.
2. They were not *marched through the streets*.
3. They were not *all chained together*, there were no chains.
4. There were no *"great clanking noises as they marched"*.
5. People did not *stand on street corners to gawk at them*.

THE FACTS.

The chain gang was composed of short term offenders for minor offences, such as drunk and disorderly, sentenced to three, seven or fourteen days, by the Police Magistrate, hard labour, usually loggers, sailors accustomed to hard work. "White collar" men, or those not physically strong, were never on the chain gang. These strong men climbed up on a farm wagon equipped with cross seats, in rows, and sat down facing the two horses drawing the wagon. John Clough, or his successor O'Grady, was on the driver's seat. About 8:30 a.m. each morning (but only when the weather was fine), the wagon moved off from the Powell Street City Gaol, and, avoiding the principal thoroughfares, was driven very slowly, at a walking