

Early Vancouver

Volume Seven

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

2011 Edition (Originally Published 1956)

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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EXCERPT FROM *THE BUZZER*, PUBLISHED BY THE BRITISH COLUMBIA ELECTRIC RAILWAY COMPANY LTD., VANCOUVER, FRIDAY, 6 OCTOBER 1950.

Sunday, September 17, civic officials and many prominent citizens paid their respects to Teddy Lyons and old No. 124 who have jointly acted as ambassadors of goodwill for Vancouver for some 40 years.

Following the journey, many suggestions poured in to the BCE urging that the old car be preserved as an historic link with the early days of the city.

Among these came a request to President A.E. "Dal" Grauer from Major J.S. Matthews, Vancouver's venerable and respected archivist.

As a result of these requests, Mr. Grauer has given orders that the old car not be scrapped until the wish of the citizens of Vancouver becomes known.

THE FAMOUS OBSERVATION CAR.

The last run of the celebrated "observation car," a street car specially fitted for sightseeing, roofless, and with seats in tiers rising from front to back each higher than those in front, took place, with much official ceremony, on 17 September 1950. It had been in operation about 40 years.

A year or so later it was sold and, in 1955, was operating on the streets of Montréal.

J.S.M.

THE BURRARD TELESCOPE AND INSPECTOR HENRY LARSEN. ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE SHIP *St. Roch*.

20th June 1947.

Dear Sir Gerald:

I am in a hurry, but can spare five minutes to tell you; before I forget.

Inspector Henry Larsen, of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police "St. Roch" had lunch with me here in the City Archives, and has just this minute gone back downtown.

While here I asked him to look at the City below through the telescope. He looked; then looked some more, and then exclaimed "This is wonderful! This is better than we have on the 'St. Roch,'" and then he said something else which I forget, but he was very much enamoured with the telescope.

Inspector Larsen's name will be famous as long as the history of the world is written. Capt. Vancouver, in 1792, was trying to sail a vessel from the Pacific to the Atlantic. Many navigators tried—all failed. In 1942 he sailed his little Vancouver built "St. Roch" from the Pacific to the Atlantic by the North West Passage; the first man in history to do it. Then, in 1944 he sailed her back again. About 30 years ago a ship got through from east to west, so that his voyage westwards was the second ship in history to pass from Atlantic to Pacific but he was the first from Pacific to Atlantic.

He says that your telescope is "wonderful," and much better than theirs on the "St. Roch."

With my respects to

Lady Burrard and best wishes

Most sincerely,

J.S. Matthews

Major Sir Gerald Burrard, Bart, D.S.O.

Willow Lodge
Hungerford, Berks
England.

CONVERSATION (OVER THE PHONE) WITH SUB-INSPECTOR HENRY LARSEN, R.C.M.P., OF THE R.C.M.P. SCHOONER *St. Roch*, 5 JANUARY 1948.

His address is that of Mrs. Larsen, 2440 Central Avenue, Victoria.

R.C.M.P. SCHOONER *St. Roch*. NORTH WEST PASSAGE. SUB-INSPECTOR HENRY LARSEN.

(Note: I was alone in the City Archives when the telephone rang; picked up the receiver—heard a voice but could not hear the name given. Inspector Larsen's voice and speech are very clear, but low, modulated and unhurried, but my hearing is none too good, and, at first, I could not hear the name of the speaker. J.S.M.)

Major Matthews: Who did you say? (Voice continues.)

Major Matthews: Cannot hear. What? Larsen? Larsen of North Vancouver? What?

Inspector Larsen: "*St. Roch*."

Major Matthews: Gracious. Where are you? In Vancouver? I heard you were coming out for Christmas. Where's the *St. Roch*? Cambridge Bay?

Inspector Larsen: "No. Herschel Island. Thank you very much for your Christmas cake. We didn't get it—not yet, but they will get it in a month or so. It got left behind by the plane."

Major Matthews: I packed it in a box lined with plenty of cotton wool, then put the small box inside a much larger one, and filled the space with prunes. I didn't think when I used prunes for packing that you probably get more prunes than you want; I should have used dates or figs. The idea of the prunes was to act as a buffer so that the ornamental sugar icing would not be broken.

Inspector Larsen: "Very kind of you. They'll get it in about a month."

Major Matthews: By dog team. Do the planes stop at Aklavik?

Inspector Larsen: "No. By plane all the way. They stop at Aklavik, of course, and then fly on to Herschel Island."

Major Matthews: I sent you an *Illustrated London News* of the Princess Elizabeth's wedding last 20 November. Did you get it? Nice thing; one dollar a copy, and the postage was plenty; eighty cents—nothing save airmail to Aklavik.

Inspector Larsen: "That's very kind of you; they'll get it all right."

Major Matthews: How long are you out for?

Inspector Larsen: "Cannot say for sure, but expect it will be several months."

Major Matthews: Where are you now; what's your address?

Inspector Larsen: "Down in the Federal Building, Vancouver, in the office. 2440 Central Avenue, Victoria. I came over this morning."

Major Matthews: Give my respects to Mrs. Larsen when you get home. And, don't forget, lunch is on the table here waiting for you. I haven't got that label on the piece of Australian gum wood you gave me from the *St. Roch*; must get it put on before you come up.

Inspector Larsen: "All right. Good bye." (Telephone receiver put back.)