

Early Vancouver

Volume Seven

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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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THE FIRST BRICK BUILDING IN VANCOUVER. THE FERGUSON BLOCK. A.G. FERGUSON OF FERGUSON'S POINT, STANLEY PARK.

836 Vernon Ave.,
Victoria, B.C.
Feb. 10th, 1937.

Major Matthews.

Sir:

I arrived in Vancouver two days after the fire in 1886. I was on the platform, where the first train arrived, bedecked with flags. I also worked on the first brick building in Vancouver, the Ferguson Block. I left Vancouver in 1892.

Yours respectfully,

Fred M. Tatham

Note: this building stood on the southeast corner of Powell and Carrall streets on the site of the first wooden Ferguson Block, which was destroyed in the Great Fire, 13 June 1886. The third Ferguson building stood on the southwest corner of Richards and Hastings streets, the present site of the Standard building.

February 1956. J.S.M.

CONVERSATION WITH MR. ARTHUR J. FORD, PIONEER, 1888, WHO KINDLY CALLED AT THE CITY ARCHIVES THIS AFTERNOON, BRINGING WITH HIM A SMALL SECTION OF WOOD, ABOUT EIGHT INCHES SQUARE, FULL OF TOREDO [TEREDO] WORM BORE HOLES, 27 SEPTEMBER 1946. FIRST C.P.R. WHARF, 1886. TOREDOES [TEREDOS].

Mr. Ford: "This is a section cut from the piles of the first Canadian Pacific Railway wharf at the foot of Granville Street. It was being taken out to be replaced and I was standing nearby and asked them to cut these pieces off for me as I wanted to keep it as a curiosity. I don't know just the precise year, but I should think it would be about 1889. That would mean that the piles were in the inlet for about three years."

S.S. BEAVER COPPER SPIKE.

"This five inch copper spike is from the old *Beaver* as she lay on the rocks in the First Narrows after she was wrecked. I took it out myself in 1889."

(Note: the spike is slightly bent; is squared about 5/16 with a square head.)

SEWERAGE. SEPTIC TANK. SICH'S CORNER.

"When I was with Rodney, at Sich's Corner" (southwest corner of Cambie and Cordova) "my father came from England to visit me. At the time there was a great discussion going on in Vancouver regarding the sewerage. My father told me that they had just put in a new system in Exeter, Devonshire; the Cameron Septic tank system. I asked him to send me all the particulars he could. This the firm of Cameron, Cummings and Martin did and I, at once, took it up with the City Council, and, after many months of negotiations, sold the rights to the city. This was the first sewerage system Vancouver had. Years after this, Mr. Cameron came to this country and was City Engineer of North Vancouver."

BOOK OF CLIPPINGS, SEPTIC TANK, 1899.

"This is a book of newspaper clippings about it. You may have it if you wish."

BOOK OF POINT GREY LAND SALES, 1906. RANK AND FORD, AUCTIONEERS.

"This is the auctioneers' record of sales book at the auction sale of lands in what is now the great city of Vancouver. The lands belonged to the Provincial government and were situated in Point Grey, Hastings,

South Vancouver, old city of Vancouver, and city of North Vancouver, and even Lulu Island. Mr. Rankin and I were both of us auctioneers at the sale, which was held in O'Brien Hall, southeast corner of Hastings and Homer streets. The hall would hold perhaps seven hundred and fifty and it was so crowded one could hardly get it. It was a four day sale. We opened the sale and sold until about one o'clock, then opened again about two o'clock and sold until about five. In one afternoon, a Wednesday, I sold three hundred and twelve parcels in four hours. That was fast. In the first day the sales totalled over a quarter of a million dollars. After that they were not so large, but averaged about one hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

"This is our record of sales book, and if you wish to have it, you are welcome to it."

CITY OF VANCOUVER, SIXTY-FIVE YEARS OLD TODAY.

4866 Manor street
Vancouver, B.C.
April 5th, 1951.

My dear Major:

Thank you for the photos, which arrived safely; the people made a good job of it. I can assure you that I appreciate it sincerely. I am afraid my writing is very bad today—not feeling up to the mark.

Regarding my life; a few points might interest you enough to put with what you have got. First thing on landing in Canada I joined the Bank of British North America in Montreal; only stayed with that a few months; got the wanderlust, so packed up and came to Vancouver.

MILK DELIVERY.

The first job I had in Vancouver, went to George Black's ranch in Coquitlam and spent several weeks pulling turnips. A short time after that I came back to town and got a job driving a milk wagon for the Seymour Creek Milk Ranch owned by Rolph, Phibbs and Thompson. I rowed a boat of milk cans across the inlet to Hastings where we kept a horse and truck. I had three places only to deliver the milk, Hotel Vancouver, Leland Hotel and a private house, and then home, or rather Hastings, put up the horse and row home. When I got back to the ranch, had lunch, washed the milk cans, then I was through until next morning—real early—up at 5 a.m.; load up the boat, and once more hit the sea for Hastings. I can tell you in winter it was no picnic—dark, snow, wind, and strong tide running, and devilish cold. Had to be done; milk due at destination seven a.m.

I might say I was made a mason in 1904, Acacia Lodge, G.R.B.C. No. 22. Also in 1904 I got my notary commission from the B.C. Government signed by the then Lieutenant Governor, Sir Henri Joly de Lobiniere. I don't know that there are many older commissions in B.C.

Once more thanking you for your kindness.

Yours

very sincerely,

Arthur J. Ford.