

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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scarce; no one was overloaded with it. Chief of Police Stewart was fire chief, licence inspector and health officer all in one, and Sergeant Haywood, still with us, helped all they could.

Of the early civic officials besides Sergeant Haywood, of the first City Police, all I can think of are the four living members of the Volunteer Fire Brigade. Hugh Campbell lives in Fairview, and still has his red fire vest; Fred Upham lives on Georgia St. West; Jack Mateer lives on Seventh Ave. West; Herbert Martin was the water boy; his task was to keep drinking water handy; hold things or run messages. Of the Coffee Brigade, I fear there are none save myself alone.

It is but sixty-two years; a very short time. Sixty-two years since all Vancouver was standing forest save for a few blocks of scattered dwellings. Today the third, and perhaps soon to be the second, largest city in our Dominion, and none more beautiful; where everything is at hand to make life enjoyable. Grand old Vancouver. I'm glad I came.

Mrs. S.H. Ramage
1110 West 8th Ave.,
Vancouver
Bay. 6039 R.

March 8th 1948.

Note: Mrs. Ramage died in the spring of 1955.

CONVERSATION WITH ERNEST FREDERICK RINGLE, PIONEER, 1889, OF 433 WEST 21ST AVENUE, WHO CAME TO VANCOUVER IN FEBRUARY 1889, AT THE CITY ARCHIVES, 10 SEPTEMBER 1948.

Mr. Ringle brought some old school photos.

CENTRAL SCHOOL. TREMONT HOTEL.

Mr. Ringle: "I came to Vancouver from Kitchener, Ontario, by C.P.R. when I was three years old. My Father and Mother were Charles and Eliza Ringle, and we came, together with my elder brother, Charles—he is in Nebraska now—who appears in the Central School photo. In the early days we lived on Water Street, between Abbott and Carrall Street, back of the Tremont Hotel; Billy Jones run the hotel. I went to the Central School; I think Miss Hartney was the first teacher, but the first I recall was Miss Buttimer.

"After school days, I worked for a time in the Hastings Sawmill; then after that with Fooshee and Foster, gunsmiths, and then for the 'O'Neill' Company; I am a tile layer; I have been with them forty years.

"In 1912, September 21st, at the Lutheran Church I married Miss Helen Schwarz, daughter of Mrs. Emily Schwarz, and we have one child, our daughter, Miss Viola, who lives with us.

"Father went off on a farm at Vernon, and died in 1919, and Father is buried at Vernon. Mother died here in Vancouver in 1927, and is buried Mountain View.

"After we left living on Water Street, we went into the 1200 block Richards Street; then we moved from there to Hornby Street, 1300 block, and lived there 26 years; the number was 1364 Hornby, and, after we left Hornby Street about 1933, we moved to our present home, 433 West 21st Avenue."

WOODWARD'S STORE. SLAB TOWN. ROYAL CITY PLANING MILLS. "CRAZY GEORGE." "TEXAS." LOGGING OXEN. S.S. SENATOR. HASTINGS SAWMILL. PETE LARSON. BLACKBERRIES.

"Woodward's store, on Hastings Street, as I first remember it was a frog pond; as 'kids' we used to catch them. Then, in the early days, down at the old Royal City Planing Mills, on Carrall Street, on False Creek, we used to go down there swimming—no trunks—just bare naked; no one would ever come around there. We used to call it 'Slab Town.' Slabs from the mill were piled on the mudflat, covered with sawdust, and made dry land. Then there was 'Crazy George.' He used to chase us kids—the kids used to tease him—but he was harmless. He lived all over; everywhere."

CARRALL STREET. R.C.M.P. ANDY LINTON'S FLOAT. MOODYVILLE.

"'Texas' was another queer character; he used to whistle down on the docks. Then, they used to load logging oxen down at the foot of Carrall Street, by the R.C.M.P. and used to put them on a scow and take them up the coast. It was all hand logging and logging oxen before they got the horses. And we used to get on the old *Senator* at Andy Linton's float, and go over to Moodyville picking blueberries. Years after, Pete Larson moved over there and built an hotel; you only had to go up the hill half a block and you could pick all the blueberries you wanted. The Indians used to come over in canoes and sell blackberries in little basket; you could get a great big basket full for about fifty cents; and that was a lot of money in those days; And in those days, it was interesting to see these big sailing ships loading big timber at the Hastings Sawmill."

Narrated as I typed. J.S.M.

CONVERSATION WITH THOMAS WILLIAM ROBERTS, OF 1147 TRANS-CANADA HIGHWAY, ABBOTTSFORD, WHO CALLED AT THE CITY ARCHIVES, 31 OCTOBER 1949.

ROBERTS CREEK.

Mr. Roberts: "I came here in December 1889 from a place called Redditch" (sic) "on the Midland Railway, 14 miles from Birmingham, England; came C.P.R. by myself; worked at a place called Crowfoot, west of Medicine Hat. I was there in November. I was 22 then as I was born the 24th of November, 1867. My father's name was Thomas Roberts, and Mother's was Harriet. I shall be 82 on November 24 next.

"After I got here in 1889, I worked for Mr. M.S. Rose, the plumber, on Abbott Street, for a while. My parents, that is, Father, Mother, and also two sisters, came out the next year, 1890. One of my sisters, Mrs. Minnie Langley, lives in San Francisco, and the other, Mrs. Alice Steinburner" (sic) "lives in Squamish. He, Steinburner, is buried at Roberts Creek. My brother, Frank Roberts, came out afterwards, about 1900."

ANDY LINTON. TOM CAMPBELL. ROBBY MITCHELL. ROBERTS CREEK. MARK ROSE.

"Well, you see, I wanted a home for my people; we all thought we could find a home away from the town most anywhere. Mark Rose found out from the Land Office that there was land up the coast for preemption. He was a pretty good sailor and we—that is, M.S. Rose and myself—went up the coast. We went up in a clinker-built boat, about thirty feet long—double-ender. We hired the boat from Andy Linton at Carrall Street. It had sails. We sailed both ways; first time I was ever in a sailboat. There were other settlers up there—Tom Campbell and Robby Mitchell. They had two claims there right next to Roberts Creek. Of course, at that time, the creek hadn't any name at all. Johnson Brothers—they surveyed the claim for me—and for the other two people who had staked. Mitchell and Campbell lived there for a few years. They were fishermen, but where they are now I don't know; none of their descendants are there. I don't think they were married. Mitchell and Campbell had staked half a mile—that is, one-quarter of a mile each—along the beach to the west of the creek. So I staked half a mile along the beach on the east side of the creek, but only half a mile back in place of a mile like the other two. I made application, then got it surveyed, and I got my preemption records. I lived there a few years until about 1896—got my certificate for improvement—and finally my crown grant about 1896."

Major Matthews: Well, did your father and mother and sisters go up there to live?

Mr. Roberts: "Not my sisters. They worked in town here for Pat Carey at the Brunswick Hotel on Hastings Street, where the Rex Theatre is now. About 1897 they started calling it Roberts Creek. Exactly when ought to be easy to find out from the Post Office. For a long time we got our mail at Gibson's Landing.

"I went back to Colorado, and then to the Klondyke in 1901. When I came back from the north I got married. We have five children; all are married—three boys and two girls. Two of them served in the last war.

"I helped to build the" (J.M.) "Browning House on the northwest corner of Burrard and Georgia" (afterwards Glencoe Lodge.) "There was a man nearby; he was blasting stumps, and he broke the