

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.

Copyright Statement

© 2011 City of Vancouver. Any or all of *Early Vancouver* may be used without restriction as to the nature or purpose of the use, even if that use is for commercial purposes. You may copy, distribute, adapt and transmit the work. It is required that a link or attribution be made to the City of Vancouver.

Reproductions

High resolution versions of any graphic items in *Early Vancouver* are available. A fee may apply.

Citing Information

When referencing the 2011 edition of *Early Vancouver*, please cite the page number that appears at the bottom of the page in the PDF version only, not the page number indicated by your PDF reader. Here are samples of how to cite this source:

Footnote or Endnote Reference:

Major James Skitt Matthews, *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 7 (Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 2011), 33.

Bibliographic Entry:

Matthews, Major James Skitt. *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 7. Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 2011.

Contact Information

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



CONVERSATION WITH MISS ISABEL SMITH, ONE OF THE GRADUATES OF THE EARLY NURSING SCHOOLS OF THE VANCOUVER CITY HOSPITAL, PENDER AND CAMBIE STREETS, WHO NOW RESIDES WITH HER SISTER, MISS ROSINA E. SMITH, AT 3188 WEST 27TH AVENUE.

Miss Isabel kindly called at the residence of Major Matthews, 1158 Arbutus Street, 10 July 1948, and remained for tea. Mrs. J.S. Matthews, also a graduate of the early nursing schools, was present.

VANCOUVER CITY HOSPITAL. EARLY NURSING SCHOOLS.

Miss Smith: "I came to Vancouver from Calgary by C.P.R. in the early spring of one eight nine nine" (1899), "and got off at the old C.P.R. station over the water. I was born in Montréal. My father died when I was very, very young. I had an uncle who lived near Calgary, Alexander Allen, and my mother and three others of the family (one boy and two girls beside myself) went out to Calgary and to my uncle. I was in school in Montréal, so I did not come until the next year. It was really the little town of Okotoks. I was 16, but I started teaching school, a little country school, for about three years. Then I took a notion that I wanted to be a nurse.

"Someone had told me about the beauties of Vancouver. I enquired about the hospitals for training. I was told that there was a large hospital in Vancouver, called St. Luke's Hospital, which was graduating nurses. I corresponded, myself, with what I thought was the superintendent of nurses. Her replies were so evasive regarding the training school, but gave a very glorified picture of how graduates had prospered, and so on. I asked in reply for the number of beds they had, and the type of hospital, but the information sent was elusive, but all the time encouraging me to come. So I made up my mind to come, and leaving Mother and the family behind, set out for Vancouver. As I came through the mountains they enthralled me so that I hardly got any sleep; I was watching its marvels. A nurse met me at the C.P.R. Station, Vancouver, and we walked to St. Luke's Home at the corner of Gore and Cordova streets."

ST. LUKE'S HOME. SISTER FRANCES.

"When we arrived at St. Luke's, I asked the nurse where the hospital was. She replied, hesitatingly, 'Why, it's here.' So my next question was, 'Well, where are the patients?' She, the nurse, became very busy just about that time and went and got Sister Frances. Sister Frances was very nice, and friendly, but I was so bewildered about the absence of anything that appeared to look like a hospital. I think I am right in saying that, at that particular time, there was not one patient there, but in the next day or two a patient arrived. The staff of nurses were out on private cases. They told me that most the nursing was outside of the hospital. I made enquiries from the nurse who met me. There was just one nurse there in readiness for patients, so I asked her was there not a large hospital in the city. Then, I remember, every meal time the conversation led by Sister Frances related to some 'horrible' things which had occurred in the City Hospital. When I had an afternoon, I went up town and asked a policeman to direct to the City Hospital, which he did. I interviewed Miss Clendenning, explaining to her my position. She informed that a training school was being started—it was already under way—and after getting particulars as to my qualifications and so on, informed me that I would be accepted as a probationer should I care to come."

THE OFFICE AND WARDS. MISS CLENNING, MATRON.

"The main building, brick, still standing, facing Cambie Street, was the men's wards. The entrance from Cambie Street was in the centre. I was taken through that building along a covered corridor to the second brick building behind. On the first floor—the right—was the pharmacy and the storeroom or supply room—linens, etc.; then beyond that was a hallway, still in the second brick building, and, at right angles, a tiny hall and door led to the dining room for the matron and the doctor which they used as an office. That is, the desk was there. Let me make it clear to you. The Medical Superintendent and the Matron (Miss Clendenning) used the same room for office and their private dining room. I should say the room was twelve feet by ten feet.

"To the left—opposite the entrance to the room just mentioned—was a small sitting room, about as big as this dining room, twelve feet by twelve feet. It was used by the Medical Superintendent but chiefly by the Lady Superintendent, Miss Clendenning. It was a useful room for people to sit while waiting to see the Medical Superintendent or Matron.

“Then, the doctor’s sleeping room (Medical Superintendent’s) was beyond the sitting room. Miss Clendenning’s bedroom was on that side, looking into the lane. That concludes the right hand side.

“Then, to the left hand side, was the general kitchen, with a large pantry and store room. Then, the nurses’ dining room took up the remainder.

“In the main building, facing Cambie Street, there were four wards—two upstairs, two downstairs. Each ward had four beds on each side, and two beds down the centre—ten beds to each ward—forty in all, though, originally, intended to be thirty-two beds. We were crowded and the two beds placed centrally in each ward were added.”

Note: In 1949-1950 the buildings were torn down and the site made into a parking lot for the Downtown Parking Commission. J.S.M.

At this point Miss Smith was called to her ailing sister waiting in a motor car, and the conversation ceased.

J.S. Matthews

10 July 1948.

“THE MERRY CHILDREN OF VANCOUVER” IN STANLEY PARK.

One brilliant summer’s day last year, our photographic artist, Mr. Art Jones, strolling with his camera in Stanley Park, observed a group of merry little children, under their beloved governess, fondly known to them as “Ting,” though actually Mrs. G.M. Bingham, 1560 Nelson Street, marching on their way to play. Mr. Jones instantly saw the beauty of the scene, and created one of the most charming of all photographs of our famous park. It was reproduced, together with its story by Miss Muriel Maclean, in our magazine section, 21st September 1946. The City Archivist obtained some prints, and sent them to the Lord Derby, to illustrate to that venerable gentleman, the great changes which have taken place in Stanley Park since he assisted at its dedication in 1889. Lord Derby’s two letters are his acknowledgment.

It was the original intention to honour Lord Strathcona by naming our famous domain “Strathcona Park,” but Lord Strathcona hesitated, and requested that he be allowed to ask Lord Stanley, Governor General, to accept the distinction; which he, Lord Stanley, did, and upon the occasion of his first visit, a ceremony took place at the end of the Pipe Line Road, First Narrows, upon a grassy spot, known as “Chaythoos,” in Squamish Indian tongue, beside the wooden mausoleum of Khay-tulk, son of Chief Khahtsahlanogh, from whom our great suburb, Kitsilano, takes its name. Lord Stanley laid the foundation stones of a cairn, composed of samples of the ores of British Columbia, which has since been lost or destroyed. Then, throwing his both arms to the heavens as though embracing within them the whole of the one thousand acres of primeval forest, he dedicated Stanley Park with these words:

“To the use and enjoyment of the peoples of all colours, creeds and customs for all time.”

Bending forward, he poured the champagne from its bottle slowly to the ground, and solemnly pronounced, “I name thee Stanley Park.”

The present Rt. Hon. the Earl of Derby, K.G., is the son of His Excellency Lord Stanley of Preston, Governor General of Canada, 1888-1893, and was present as his father’s A.D.C. at the ceremony. The reference in his letter to Lady Derby is that their recent marriage made the visit to Vancouver part of their honeymoon. He is the seventeenth to bear the title, pronounced “Darby,” created in 1485, the first being Sir Thomas Stanley, K.G., who was summoned to Parliament as Baron Stanley in 1456. The present earl, now 82, served in the South African War, 1900-1901, was mentioned in despatches, and has since filled countless public offices including Ambassador to France, Postmaster-General, Secretary of State for War, and Lord Mayor of Liverpool.

In addition to being a King of the Garter, the highest honour excepting the Victoria Cross at His Majesty’s disposal, Lord Derby takes a keen delight in being a fully fledged member of the “Hot Stove Hockey League,” as the notable band of retired, or “has been,” hockey players are known, and takes much