

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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SAMUEL GREER, OF GREER'S BEACH, AND SHERIFF ARMSTRONG. DESTRUCTION OF MR. GREER'S HOME BY CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY.

Excerpt, letter from J. Fred Sanders, Esq., son of Alderman Edwin Sanders, pioneer, "Here before the Fire," 1886, from his office 509 Richards Street:

August 4th, 1949.

Dear Major Matthews:

I was so glad that you were able to get a proper newspaper write-up for Mrs. J.Z. Hall when she passed on. When reading of Mrs. Hall's early life [*note: she was a Miss Greer*] I was reminded of a happening of which I was a near witness.

One day, when I was a child, my father [*Alderman Edwin Sanders*] decided that we would go to a picnic at a quarry which was at the end of the C.P.R. [*note: it was at the foot of Trafalgar Street, on the beach, and the remains are there yet, 1949*] at what is now Kitsilano Beach. When we arrived at the Greer home [*note: at the foot of Yew Street*], after we had crossed the railway trestle across False Creek, we noticed that there was a flat car standing on the tracks and about it were a group of men, one of whom was recognised by my father as Sheriff Armstrong of New Westminster.

Being acquainted they had a conversation and we continued on our way west [*to the foot of Trafalgar Street.*] We noticed nothing unusual at the time, and it may be that my father had a suspicion of what was about to happen as he was very conversant with civic happenings, but, if he had, he certainly did not tell me.

After a very enjoyable time at the quarry, we returned home along the tracks. When we got to the Greer home we found it in ashes, and no trace of home nor the flat car which was there when we passed. We learned the story, which is now history, afterwards, and I have heard it from Mr. Sam Greer's own lips many times.

Yours sincerely,

J. Fred Sanders

Note: the C.P.R. officials had burned Mr. Greer's home and barn, which stood 100 feet west of the foot of Yew Street, beside the creek. J.S.M.

HADDEN PARK.

Unveiling of the Memorial of stone and bronze, erected by the Board of Park Commissioners, Vancouver, at Hadden Park, Kitsilano Beach, Vancouver, to commemorate the gift of Hadden Park to the children of Vancouver by the late Harvey Hadden, Esq., October 1928. The memorial was unveiled by Major J.S. Matthews, V.D., City Archivist, (the earliest resident, 1910-1950, in the nearby locality.)

Major Matthews:

Mr. Chairman, Your Worship, Mr. Reeve, Ladies and Gentlemen:

When men, having first provided for their own as is right and proper that they should, turn aside in their path and devote their talents to the common weal, it is fitting and proper that they receive the plaudits of their fellows, that their good works be acknowledged, and others encouraged to emulate their example. Neglect to make an acknowledgement is ungracious and a dereliction. The most civilised man, and most intelligent, is he who serves his fellows most. Such a man was the late Mr. Hadden. He knew when to take occasion by the hand; first to provide for his own needs, and secondly, when to provide for the needs of others. "Vancouver has been good to me," said Mr. Hadden, "I should like to be good to Vancouver."

Concealed beneath this Union Jack lies a huge boulder weighing three tons, and upon it has been affixed a slab of bronze bearing the inscription:

“HADDEN PARK WAS GIVEN TO THE CITIZENS OF VANCOUVER FOR THEIR USE AND ENJOYMENT BY HARVEY HADDEN, 1928.”

The stone and the bronze are in themselves almost valueless, but, as symbols, together they constitute a memorial which will serve as a reminder to refresh the memories of all who pass by, perhaps to generations as yet unborn, of a good man and his good deed. I now expose it to your gaze.

EXCERPT, LETTER, COL. THE HON. ERIC W. HAMBER, C.M.G., LL.D. TO MAJOR J.S. MATTHEWS.

(About) 15 March 1952.

JOHN HENDRY PARK. TROUT LAKE. D.L. 195.

“Mr. Tisdall, who was on the Parks Board, approached me to buy it, and I told him that if it was intended for the Parks Board and if they named it JOHN HENDRY PARK that I would deed the property to them. This they undertook to do. I have it in writing. The land was given to them in the consideration that it be named John Hendry Park. You have the right understanding of the whole matter.”

MRS. MARY RITER HAMILTON, VANCOUVER, 1952.

Exhibit of her paintings at the Vancouver Art Gallery, 1145 West Georgia Street, by the Women's Auxiliary of the Vancouver Art Gallery, on Tuesday, 4 March 1952, at 2:30 p.m. Exhibit opened by Major J.S. Matthews, V.D., City Archivist.

Major Matthews:

Madam Chairman, Mrs. Hamilton and Ladies:

By request, I declare this exhibit open. My gratitude to the ladies of the Auxiliary is offered for the opportunity to do so. I am convinced that the people of Vancouver, with especial emphasis on the men of the Canadian Legion, the War Amps, and particularly the veterans of 1914-1918, applaud you for what is being done this afternoon towards one for whom they have respect and admiration, and whom is held as one of their own.

We are assembled here to pay tribute to a gracious and gallant lady, Mrs. Hamilton. The tradition of our land is limited to the very few, and even midst the most eminent it is a very deep footprint in the sand which the next tide does not wash away. It is fitting and proper that those who bring lustre to our land should receive the plaudits of their fellows, that others may see and emulate their good example.

Recently I asked a young man if he remembered the name of the general who commanded the Canadian troops in the first Great War. He replied, “No, sir.” Then I asked if he knew who wrote the history of that war, and again he replied, “No, sir.” I presume that if I had asked about Mrs. Hamilton he would have replied, “No, sir.” Yet, thirty years ago all three names were on every tongue. General Currie fought the battles, John Buchan wrote about them, and while Lord Tweedsmuir was writing, Mrs. Hamilton was painting the battle scenes about which he wrote. That holocaust cost Canada 50,000 killed and a quarter of a million maimed. Our part cannot be fully understood without mention of the achievements of all three names. There are among our ex-soldiers those who have an admiration, almost amounting to reverence, for the gentle lady who had the courage, the fortitude and the perception to enter that hellfire corner called Ypres, or that muck heap called the Somme, in the wild and freezing winter of 1919, and make a pictorial record of what could be seen before the green growth of the following spring had concealed much of the devastation spread about in all its naked horror. She must have been the first woman in history to do such a thing. She must have been fully qualified or she would not have been allowed