

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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Miss Isabel Opilvie Hamilton raises the Union Jack which veils the bronze commemorative panel to her father, Alexander Hamilton, Major I.S. Matthews who designed it. On April 24th 1933, at the Stanley Park Pavilion, and in the presence of 100 pioneers here before the train, 23 May 1887 and others, in banquet assembled at 5 guests of the Park Commissioners. City Archives.

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[photo annotation:]

Miss Isobel Ogilvie Hamilton raised the Union Jack which veils the bronze commemorative panel to her father, Lauchlan Alexander Hamilton; Major J.S. Matthews, who designed it. On April 20th 1953, at the Stanley Park Pavilion, and in the presence of 100 pioneers “here before the train,” 23 May 1887, and others, in banquet assembled as guests of the Park Commissioners.

City Archives.

[LETTER FROM J.S. MATTHEWS TO ISOBEL O. HAMILTON.]

“What a mighty man was L.A. Hamilton. He laid out this great city when it was nothing save forest.”

Dean Swanson, Christ Church Cathedral, Sermon, Sunday evening, 8 January 1950. Dean Swanson said I said that to him. Perhaps I did; it must be so, but I don't recall when or where.

At home, late Sunday evening.

Jan. 8th, 1950.

Dear Miss Hamilton:

The new City Council, Parks Board and School Board have just taken office for the new Year, and, according to custom, attended church; this time in the evening—tonight. I have just returned to my home, and am typing this before going to bed. I want you to have it at once.

The Mayor, Aldermen, Park Commissioners and School Trustees, and the higher civic officials, together with their wives and daughters, sat in the front of the Cathedral in reserved seats. The Dean's sermon was such as is suitable for the ears of men with their cares and responsibilities, and he was commenting upon the age—the long long years—of some cities as compared with Vancouver, and our astonishment that this great community of half a million persons, with its monumental buildings, luxurious offices, beautiful homes and green lawns is not yet 65 years old. He was speaking of the vision, the courage, and the energy of our founders, “The Builders” of Vancouver, and counselling that we, in our day, emulate their conception of the future of Vancouver.

It was then that he used the sentence: “What a mighty man was L.A. Hamilton, he laid out this great city when all was forest.”

I wonder if he knew that your dear Father was Treasurer of the Anglican Synod for so many years. I imagine he must. But, it was very inspiring to me to hear that tribute to your Father. And, mind you, a vast radio audience was listening—all over British Columbia.

With my deep respects,

Most sincerely,

CITY ARCHIVIST

Miss Isobel O. Hamilton,
Lorne Park, Ont.