

Early Vancouver

Volume Seven

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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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human beings lying killed or wounded on an area of ground no larger than the city of Vancouver. Both of us were wounded, and it is due to his gallantry that I am here tonight. The names of the actions at which we were present have been engraved upon the hilt.

But swords are no longer carried, and perhaps never will be again. At the divine service parade at the Cenotaph last Remembrance Day not one officer of many carried a sword. The day of the cavalry charge is gone. Men fight from Jeeps, tanks, aeroplanes, and in narrow passages underground, or with rifles which kill at a mile. Swords would be an encumbrance to be entangled in the machinery.

For an officer to surrender his sword can be a dire disgrace. But the years have taken my strength. His Majesty no longer needs my services. I was retired—retaining rank. This evening I desire to surrender mine—not to a foe, but with fond recollections, to friends, brothers of the Masonic Order for which, save alone the Christian Church, I hold nothing in higher esteem.

Worshipful Master. With its point turned towards me and away from you, I surrender an old treasure, my sword. Will you do me the honour to accept it?

LATER.

Brother the Tiler is admitted to lodgeroom.

Brother Matthews: Brother Tiler. If you would be so good as to refer to your bible, New Testament, Matthew, Chapter 10, verse 34—I am indebted to Worshipful Brother Graves for assisting me to find the chapter and verse—Matthew, 10:34, you can read that when Christ was addressing his disciples He said this:

“Think not that I come to send peace on earth; I come not to send peace, but a sword.”

It would be impertinence on my part to attempt to elucidate what Christ referred to. You know, and all freemasons know, briefly, to crush the evil; crown the right.

By permission of our Master, I entrust to your tender keeping this sword; the symbol used by Christ, whose example we emulate.

PIONEERS OF VANCOUVER, 1886.

In compliment to the Pioneers of Vancouver and vicinity who were resident here in 1886 or earlier, a banquet was tendered by the Board of Park Commissioners, and held in the Stanley Park Pavilion on Monday, 9 April 1951, at 6:00 p.m.

Vancouver was incorporated on 6 April 1886, and the banquet was held on the nearest convenient date to the sixty-fifth anniversary.

Commissioner Arnold presided.

The City Archivist (Major Matthews).

Mr. Chairman, Your Worship, Ladies and Gentlemen:

A sense of deep humility, amounting to almost reverence, is the emotion which overwhelms me as I stand before this assemblage of Pioneers of Vancouver. Here, before and about us, is a remarkable scene, unique in that it cannot be duplicated in the wide, wide world. In the years to be this evening will be a tradition to those of Vancouver who follow us.

These few ladies and gentlemen gathered here have lived in Vancouver since the hour of its birth. They are among the last of the Founders of Vancouver, a great city and a great port. They were the genesis of a community now spreading thirty miles wide by twenty deep. They are the symbol of great men, great events and great achievements. They are some of the original builders of Canada of which our city is part.

As young adventurers, with rosy cheeks and full of vigour, they came to the wilderness on Vancouver Harbour where, at high tide, the waters lapped the lower branches of the forest which

lines its shores. They came with vision, energy and courage, with the power of justice and the patience of strength; with faith in their God, their country, their fellows and in themselves. A rare opportunity lay open and they seized it for themselves and for us. They were men and women of peace, and they laboured to create. There is not a single spot of blood upon our escutcheon. They were among the principals in one of the great incidents in the chronicle of mankind, one which, forever, must interest the peoples of all nations. They saw Vancouver before it had any civic administration at all. They saw the first train arrive—the train which made Canada whole.

Canada is not so many square miles of earth. Since the dawn of time Canada has always been three thousand miles from sea to sea, but it was empty, silent and still. They made it live; at least, this part of it. Canada is the blood and bone of its people. Canada is men and women. Here, seated about it, is the living genesis of our great metropolis, and the vast empire which lies about us. Their greying hairs are dear as a reminder of the effort which they made; each wrinkle of their cheeks is beautiful to our eyes for it is the mark of a tribulation overcome. Nobility is not a clanking sword nor brilliant coronet. Nobility is laudable conduct, however lowly, and some of their tasks were necessarily humble. The majority have departed. If you would see their monument, go forth and look around. These precious few remain. If, as has been said, the secret of happiness in old age is the contemplation of one's own work and to see that it is good, then, in all faith, Mr. Chairman, you must be presiding over one of the happiest groups of persons in all Canada.

May I be privileged to remind the pioneers themselves that it is due to the gracious thoughtfulness of the Board of Park Commissioners that this pleasurable compliment to you is being paid by the people of Vancouver. It is characteristic of the Commissioners, for as representatives of all Vancouverians, they have ever taken occasion by the hand whenever they could find excuse to give visible evidence to you of the esteem and affection in which you, our pioneers, are held by the citizenry. In this particular instance, the Board and Mr. Stroyan, the Superintendent, astutely recalled that last Friday, April 6th, was the anniversary of our incorporation as a city, a mere legal term and form, but which, interpreted, means that sixty-five years ago you were all busily engaged in laying our civic corner stone and with precious little mortar to do it with. Mr. Campbell, seated here, was actually present at the first meeting of the first City Council.

For generations, perhaps centuries, all those who come after will admire your noble work, and hold you in fond recollection. Figuratively, in one loud united accord, they will acclaim, "Bravo; bravo; our beloved pioneers."

May God bless you all.

REMARKS OF MAJOR J.S. MATTHEWS, V.D. AT A BANQUET GIVEN BY THE WESTMINSTER REGIMENT IN THE ELKS HALL, NEW WESTMINSTER, WEDNESDAY, 23 MAY 1951.

Colonel Cummins and Gentlemen:

Time is short, and, if I may be excused, we will dispense with the customary pleasantries.

1. The authority upon which I speak:

I saw your soldiers depart for and return from the South African war, 1899-1902.

I have worn his Majesty's uniform in Vancouver for 48 years.

In 1907 I wrote the history of your regiment to that year.

Until 1910 I wore the same regimental uniform as your officers did. I was one of them.

You are a machine gun regiment. I was the first volunteer officer in B.C. to be authorised by Ottawa to conduct a machine gun school, and it was in your regiment.

Your regimental badge, a maple leaf before a setting sun, is derived from my family coat-of-arms.