

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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"Brickmaker's Claim", 1863. Royal Engineer survey, March 1863. "Heavily timbered land, very swampy in places". District Lot 185. All west of Burrard street to "Government Reserve", i.e. Stanley Park. This scene was in Stanley Park but it gives an idea of the appearance of downtown Vancouver in 1885 when J. A. Hamilton surveyed the primeval forest into streets and named them. Loggers, at first, felled those trees only which were about sixty feet to the first branch. The smaller ones made spars for sailing ships. City Archives 4.3.11.

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[photo annotation:]

"Brickmaker's Claim," 1863. Royal Engineer survey, March 1863 "Heavily timbered land; very swampy in places." District Lot 185. All west of Burrard street to "Government Reserve," i.e., Stanley Park. This scene was in Stanley Park, but it gives an idea of the appearance of downtown Vancouver in 1885 when L.A. Hamilton surveyed the primeval forest into streets and named them. Loggers, at first, felled those trees only which were about sixty feet to the first branch. The smaller ones made spars for sailing ships.

City Archives. J.S.M.

ROYAL ENGINEERS SURVEY, 1863.

BURRARD INLET AND FALSE CREEK.

In 1933 an old flexible cover book lay on the desk of the Land Registrar, Court House, Vancouver. Major Matthews asked permission to photostat its 30 pages and front and back cover. The paper was frail; the ink faded with age; some of the reproductions were scarcely legible. In 1954 Major Matthews had white photostat prints made from the inferior black negatives, and then, with a fine pen and microscope, traced black India ink over all lines and figures. This is the finished work. The old book was afterwards sent by the Land Registrar to John Hosie, Provincial Archivist, Victoria.

In 1859 H.M.S. *Plumper*, surveying ship, charted the waters of Burrard Inlet, and made the first coast line diagram showing the shape of Vancouver Harbour. Land laws were introduced in 1860, and the preemption of land began. See District Lot 181, 182, 183 and 184.

In October 1862, John Morton preempted D.L. 185, our "West End." Robert Burnaby, preemptor of D.L. 181, see page 9, wrote Morton complaining that Morton had encroached upon his preemption. Morton showed the letter to Judge Begbie, who advised Morton to carry on. Colonel Moody's letter, 26 January 1863, shown herein, instructing survey of Burrard Inlet, and report on "occupations recently made by any parties" may have been inspired by both Morton and Burnaby, that is, the "Brickmaker's Claim," i.e., D.L. 185, and the exact location of Morton's cabin is shown. See page 15.

The survey was conducted, probably, with the aid of a boat. Measurements appear to have been taken at low tide, with the chain men walking on sand, mud and rocks; the shores were thickly strewn with boulders, large and small. The instruments are said to have been more cumbersome than modern instruments. Quill pens were used for writing and drawing.

Jericho appears as "Naval Reserve," page 3; Stanley Park as "Military Reserve," page 21; Capilano as "Reserve," pages 5 and 6; and the area between Heatley Avenue and Burrard Street is shown as "Naval Reserve." D.L. 196, Heatley Avenue to Carrall Street, later known as the "85 acres," is not shown; it was taken, afterwards, from the "Naval Reserve." The distance at Carrall Street, afterwards the eastern boundary of Granville Townsite, from the inlet to the creek, was of no interest to the survey party, see page 13. Coal, or Deadman's Island, page 19, was not named.

The "Indian house," page 22, a little east of Prospect Point, was the home of Chief Khaht-sah-la-no, i.e., Kitsilano. Homulchesun village appears as "Indian village," near mouth of "large river," i.e., Capilano, page 6. An unexplained square, indicating a habitation, page 23, is shown at Ferguson Point; it may have been a preemptor's hut, a R.E. survey camp, or a cedar shake shelter of Squamish. Siwash Rock, page 23, is marked as "large rock about 30 feet high."

J.S. Matthews

City Archives, City Hall,
Vancouver, Canada
16 July 1954

Note: a compilation subsequently bound into book form.

J.S.M.