

**Early Vancouver**

**Volume Seven**

**By: Major J.S. Matthews, V.D.**

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*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 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the City's founding. The project was made possible by funding from the Vancouver Historical Society.

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**SESQUICENTENNIAL OF BURIAL OF CAPTAIN VANCOUVER, 18 MAY 1798-1948.**

City Hall,  
6<sup>th</sup> May, 1948.

Dear Mr. Sutherland: *[Mayor's Secretary]*

The scene, as I see it in my mind's eye, is a solemn procession of dignitaries of church, state, and public life, representing Canada, and British Columbia in particular, King's Lynn where he was born, Richmond where he was buried, and the City of London itself, all clothed in official raiment with gold chains of office, etc., etc., and the clergy in the white habiliments of the Church of England, slowly wending its way from St. Peter's Church, Petersham, Surrey, at the conclusion of the divine service within the sacred edifice itself.

You can with me, I think, see the assemblage quietly arrange itself about the grave, standing as best they can, beneath the trees on the narrow paths which separate other mounds beneath which the forefathers of Richmond sleep.

The clergyman intones a supplication to the Almighty; the highest dignitary bows to lay the wreath about the tomb. Then someone speaks to the assemblage and tells why all have come. At this moment, the Agent-General or someone he appoints reads the cable from the Citizens of Vancouver, and, my idea is that such cable cannot be worded other than in solemn parlance. Hence I drew up this:

Vancouver  
18<sup>th</sup> May, 1948.

Agent General,  
British Columbia House  
London.

Beside his graveside upon this solemn sesquicentennial of his burial, the tribute of the Citizens of Vancouver, Canada, to the great navigator whose honored name we bear, is our prayer that we, in our day, may so conduct our lives that our posterity in turn will be equally indebted to us. Please convey our greetings to the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor; to the Mayors of King's Lynn and of Richmond, to our fellow Canadians in the British Isles, and to all those of gallant England this day assembled to do reverence to Captain George Vancouver.

Note: Acting Mayor Miller cabled this exactly as I wrote it. J.S. Matthews

**SESQUICENTENNIAL OF BURIAL OF CAPTAIN VANCOUVER, 18 MAY 1798-1948.**

6<sup>th</sup> May, 1948.

Dear Mr. Mayor:

Word reached me, somehow, that the Hon. Mr. Sinclair has been indisposed, and is not on duty at your City Hall. So, I regret I am unable to address you by name.

Our Mayor's Secretary asked me to draw up a message to be sent by cable or airmail to W.A. McAdam, Esq., C.M.G., Agent-General for British Columbia, British Columbia House, 1 Regent street, London, S.W.1, and it occurs to me that it would not be amiss if carbon copies of what I sent downstairs to his office were also passed on to you, and this I am doing.

The ceremony at Capt. Vancouver's graveside on the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his burial 18<sup>th</sup> May, will be a function attended by many of the British Isles and Canadians in the British Isles, and, in the evening (following the divine service at 3 p.m. in St. Peter's Church, Petersham, Surrey) there will be a banquet given by the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor of London in the Mansion House. The whole ceremony will be broadcast throughout Canada by the Canadian

Broadcasting Corporation. Just what we shall do here in Vancouver I do not know precisely, but I understand a wreath is to be placed by our Mayor at the foot of the statue of Capt. Vancouver in front of our City Hall.

It occurred to me that the City of Vancouver, Washington, should be represented at the services at St. Peter's. How this is to be done I cannot say. It might so be that you could send a message by cable or airmail, or it might be that someone from the United States Embassy in London would attend in person.

Anyway, it does not harm to inform you, and harm might be done if I did not.

Most sincerely,

CITY ARCHIVIST

The Honourable the Mayor,  
Portland,  
Ore.

**CAPTAIN VANCOUVER'S GRAVE AT ST. PETER'S. ANNUAL WREATH, MAY 18<sup>TH</sup>. CITY OF VANCOUVER TAKES OVER FROM NATIVE SONS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.**

Mayor's Office  
City Hall  
Vancouver, Canada  
18<sup>th</sup> April, 1950

W.A. McAdam, Esq., C.M.G.,  
Agent-General, British Columbia House,  
1 Regent St., London, S.W. 1.

Dear Mr. McAdam:

Thank you for your letter of the 13<sup>th</sup> April re the procedure of identifying the wreath placed annually on Captain Vancouver's grave.

I quite agree with you that if the City is bearing the cost of this, it would be well to place it in the name of the City. I think it is a duty the City should feel privileged to carry out.

Many thanks for drawing my attention to the matter.

Yours truly,

Chas. E. Thompson.

Mayor.

**EXPLANATION BY CITY ARCHIVIST.**

The explanation, of course, is that the Native Sons of B.C. have long since lost interest in the formal solemn ceremony of laying the annual wreath, and, for years past, the only part they played was receiving the account from the Agent-General, passing it on to the City, who sent them a cheque, and they forwarded the cheque to the Agent-General. Other than that they knew nothing about it.

J.S.M.