

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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Footnote or Endnote Reference:

Major James Skitt Matthews, *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 7 (Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 2011), 33.

Bibliographic Entry:

Matthews, Major James Skitt. *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 7. Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 2011.

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“MORAL REFORMER AND TEETOTAL CRANK.”

Brigadier General Odlum, commanding 11th Canadian Infantry Brigade, is meant.

CABLE.

Vancouver, B.C.
18th November 1947

Her Royal Highness Princess Elizabeth,
Buckingham Palace,
LONDON, Eng.

All Vancouver wishes you happiness and eagerly looks forward to welcoming you and your husband on your visit to Canada next year.

Charles Jones
Mayor

THE CORONATION.

Coronation Day, 2nd June, 1953
(as darkness falls)

Dear Mr. McAdam:

I arose at 3:00 a.m. Six hours later, at 9:00 a.m. I turned off the radio. Except for intermissions for a cup of tea, I listened, and at the conclusion I was sore with sitting. The reception was perfect.

The mighty and magnificent, the mystery and the marvel of it all leaves me bewildered, and I, of Vancouver, am not alone; my nieces were up even earlier. They heard the Archbishop's questions and charges; Her Majesty's responses. They tell me they heard every word of her Oath; somehow I missed that part. We heard the description, which the announcer said was the most beautiful he had ever seen, as the Queen passed out of the west door, wearing her crown. We listened as the Queen Mother entered her carriage, and then heard of the huge green umbrellas which sheltered the eminent, and finally the ancient coach drove up, and Her Majesty commenced her progress. We followed the progress up Whitehall, Pall Mall, Piccadilly, Hyde Park, Marble Arch, Oxford street, Regent street, and finally The Mall, and we did not leave her until she had entered her Palace. Band after band played "God Save the Queen," slowly, ponderously magnificent music, as she passed. The announcers described those from Fiji, Somaliland, Bermuda, Kenya, The Cape, Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom as they passed. It spoke of the great of the Commonwealth seated, unperturbed as the rain fell, or, now and again, a glint of sunshine. As for the Irish—southern—no word of them. Not a word did I hear.

In Vancouver it was a lovely day, neither too hot not too cold. As I went to the military parade in the Capilano Stadium, I drove through the city. At the Hudson's Bay, Eatons and Woodwards, the decorations were superb. The Hudson's Bay had a huge photograph of the Queen in every one of their many windows. Eatons had the whole state carriage, life size, drawn by eight white horses, life size, high up above the verandah or canopy. It was a magnificent costly display. Woodward had the Archbishop in the act of crowning; all life-size and true replica.

Haul down your Canadian ensign; it is out of fashion. Evidently those of Vancouver prefer the greater to the lesser; they want to belong to the Commonwealth and the Empire. Canada is alright, so is Vancouver, but we don't want a Canadian flag nor a Vancouver flag. They want the Commonwealth flag. It is true there were a few Canadian ensigns fluttering, but all the great business firms flew Union Jacks, and at Kitsilano Beach, where I live, it was hard to find a Canadian ensign. I suppose the proportion of Union Jacks to ensigns was ten to one on homes, and down town buildings. Firms such as the Imperial Oil, Canadian Bakeries, Northern Electric, all were Union Jacks and no ensigns.

Then, at the great military parade at Capilano Stadium, and in the presence of an enormous crowd of 10,000 at least, the I.O.D.E. marched past, every woman carrying a great big Union Jack, so big that each had to hold up the fly.

It has been a great day, and now I must leave, for it is growing dark, and the fireworks over English Bay about to commence.

Best wishes

Most sincerely,

J.S. Matthews

W.A. McAdam Esq.,
B.C. House
London.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE GREAT FIRE, 13 JUNE 1886, BY A GIRL WHO PASSED THROUGH IT.

By Mrs. S.H. Ramage, 1110 West Eighth Avenue, Vancouver, "Princess Anne," daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Sanders, pioneers, "Before the Fire," who came here in March 1886—before the railway reached Port Moody. Their home was one of the few which escaped the "Great Fire."

Mrs. Ramage is the lady in whose honour "Princess Street" (now Pender Street East), a street from Westminster Avenue (now Main Street) was named. West of Westminster Avenue, it was Dupont Street; east of Westminster Avenue, it was "Princess Street," so called because the little daughter of Alderman and Mrs. Sanders lived there with her parents, played in the green grass in the gutter and was known as "The Princess." She also plucked the posy from the flowers which decorated the locomotive, Canadian Pacific Railway, No. 374 (now at Kitsilano Beach) which drew the first passenger train into Vancouver, 23 May 1887, on the eve of the Golden Jubilee birthday of Queen Victoria, the Good. Mrs. Ramage is the sole survivor of the famous "Coffee Brigade" of Vancouver, a group of pioneer women who followed the Vancouver Volunteer Fire Brigade to fires, and supplied them, whilst the men fought fire, with hot coffee.

Her manuscript is dated 8 March 1948.

Vancouver

1886–1948

One beautiful Sunday morning, 13th June, 1886 [*note: the 13th June 1948 will be a Sunday*] the waters of Vancouver Harbour were sparkling in the brilliant sunshine. Across Burrard Inlet, which, as a harbour is second to none in the world, the mountains stood in all their majestic beauty; covered with green forest gathering in the sunshine.

Our "City"—Vancouver—was young and small; it stood between Westminster Avenue, now Main street and Cambie street, the harbour shore on the north, and False Creek on the south; all else was the clearing and its stumps, or forest. The City was resting; it was the Sabbath. Most of the people were on their way from Church; the Presbyterian Church, which was on Cordova street near Westminster Avenue, and after the service was over, many of them gathered outside the church to gossip.

A group of four young men were talking together, and one said "This is a grand day to burn those branches and bushes"; another replied "Well, if you do it, we will, too." Two of the young men were clearing lands at Granville street; the other two were doing the same thing where now stands Victory Square. Calling "so long" to me they went off to get their mid-day meal. We went home to get ours and return to Sunday school.

A brisk wind was blowing, and when we got back to the church the smoke from the clearing fires in the west was drifting over the little wooden city. In a very few minutes it became so dense that Sunday school was dismissed, and we were told to go home.