

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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The Last Victims of Civilisation. Vancouver, June 1888. E.L.M.

In pencil on the back is written: "For Cecil Merritt; painted by Emily L. Merritt. In distance, the first C.P.R. Hotel."

These two trees stood in the West End, Vancouver, on or near the corner of Barclay and Thurlow streets, and can be seen, on the photo C.V. Van. Sc. P. 59 N.B. The first C.P.R. Hotel Vancouver stood on the south west corner of Granville and Georgia streets, and is outlined to the right. The buildings to right and left of the trees are on the east side of Granville St. north of Georgia St.

The forest on District Lot 541, or "C.P.R. Town Site" was felled in the spring of 1886 by Boyd and Clendenning, who under contract, received twenty six dollars per acre for slashing and felling, and two dollars extra for cutting the limbs off, \$28.00 in all.

The forest on District Lot 185, or "Brighthouse Estate", adjoining to the west of Burrard street, was felled to about Nicola street, in the spring of 1887 by John "Chinese" McDougall, and his employment of Chinese in preference to whites was the cause of the Chinese Riot of Feb. 1887. For some reason not known, solitary trees were left standing. These are two of them.

Later, Boyd and Clendenning were paid three hundred dollars per acre for close cutting and clearing everything off the "C.P.R. Townsite" so that fire could not run through it again as it had done on 13 June 1886.

Miss Emily L. Merritt was a sister of Colonel Merritt, in whose honour the town of Merritt, B.C. was named. She was a cousin of Captain Cecil Merritt, one of the officers of the 72nd Regt. Seaforth Highlanders, and a gallant gentleman who gave his life in battle in the first world war. In May 1932 Mrs Cecil Merritt, 374 1/2 West 12th Ave, gave permission for this watercolor to be copied by photography.

City Archives, Vancouver, 9.57n.

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[illustration annotation:]

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City Archives, Vancouver. J.S.M.

THE "WEST END," VANCOUVER. LOST IN THE CLEARING.

Excerpt from letter, 29 April 1954, from Miss Marjorie Harris, 1285 Pacific Street, to Major J.S. Matthews:

My father once described to me how he was lost on the trail between what is now Stanley Park and our "West End"; it was a winter's afternoon. There was a fall of snow and he missed the path and got lost. He had been shooting and dusk fell.

There are two or three other instances of persons being lost in the "West End" clearing. One is told by Mrs. (Senator) J.H. King, daughter of Major Lacey R. Johnston, C.P.R. railway official, who built a house on Beach Avenue near Nicola Street, the first in that neighbourhood, about 1889. In going to it, cross country as there were no streets, either Major Johnson or his daughter, or both together, became confused as to the direction, and for a time did not know where they were, or in which direction the house was situate.

"LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT."

Again, in the summer of 1898, J.S. Matthews and his bride lived at 1425 Burrard Street, and, after their evening meal, went together to stroll in the clearing to the westwards. Finding a suitable boulder as a seat, they lingered too long; the sun set, darkness fell, and when they rose to go home, did not know in which direction to go.

They stumbled around in humps and hollows; fell several times, until, finally, they observed a light glimmering in the heavens. It was an electric light bulb shining in the window of the third storey of the wooden St. Paul's Hospital. They, hastening towards it, soon reached Burrard Street, then opened up as far as the hospital, beyond which—towards the south—narrow sinuous path led to their home (at the corner now the north end of the Burrard Bridge.) In 1898 no streets south of the Hospital, save Beach Avenue, were marked; all was clearing.

J.S.M.