

Early Vancouver

Volume One

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2011 Edition (Originally Published 1932)

Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1931-1932.

*A Collection of Historical Data, Maps, and Plans Made with the Assistance of
Pioneers of Vancouver Between March and December 1931.*

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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5 JANUARY 1932 - THE SMALLPOX SCARE.

"Oh yes, I should say it was a scare in 1893; we had thirty-two cases of smallpox, sixteen of them at Cedar Cove and sixteen at Deadman's Island. I was in charge at Cedar Cove and lost two; one was a woman, she was dying when she reached the hospital; the other was a man who volunteered—they said he had had the smallpox and was immune, but he drank, and he died. The people were so scared they would not let the Victoria boats land at the C.P.R. wharf, and passengers had to land at Hastings and walk back. The first case came from Victoria." (See Mrs. J.Z. Hall. See Mrs. Dr. Lefevre.)

"Mr. Gallagher is not quite correct about the first hospital; it was not quite in the angle of Alexander and Powell Street, but on the north side, between Campbell Avenue and Hawks Avenue. The second hospital was a frame building facing on Pender Street between Cambie and Beatty streets. It was opened, I think, 1890" (try 1888), "and pulled down when they built the Rotary Clinic."

NOTE ADDED LATER:

(Wrong. They turned it around—now the Labour Temple on Beatty Street, 1935.)

The first *City Hospital* faced Beatty Street. The C.P.R. Hospital was on Powell Street and was used by the City until they built their own.

See panoramic of Vancouver, 1890; also Dr. Robertson's in Volume 3 and J.B. Ray in Volume 3. JSM

"Gardner Johnson did not hurt his leg in the fire." (See A.E. Beck) "He broke his leg doing chain work on the survey gang with L.A. Hamilton.

"My records? I destroyed them, before I went to Parksville.

"The first telephone? That was in George Black's meat shop in front of the old jail."

JSM

10 JANUARY 1932 - MR. SAM GREER. GREER'S BEACH. MR. T. MATHEWS.

Memorandum of conversation with Mr. Thomas Mathews, one of the executors of the will of the late Mr. Sam Greer of Greer's Beach. I remarked to him that it had been stated that Mr. Greer had been "bought off" by the C.P.R. for \$40,000, and that he went to Florida and built a hotel with it. (See Greer's Beach, H.P. McCraney, 23 December 1931.)

"That is an unqualified fable," said Mr. Mathews. "Mr. Greer never received anything from the Canadian Pacific Railway. Mr. Gideon Robertson, an old pioneer, told me before he died that he had, at one time long ago, been authorised by the C.P.R. to approach Mr. Greer with an offer of \$12,000, but that Mr. Greer had indignantly refused it.

"How could he have received \$40,000 or anything else from the C.P.R. and then be still fighting his cause continually up to 1923 or later? The explanation of Mr. Greer's residence in Florida is that—a thing I did not know for many years—he served in the United States Navy during the Civil War, and was entitled to a land grant, went to Florida, got his land grant and built a hotel on it. In 1909 he was appealing to Sir Richard McBride, premier of B.C., to assist him in reopening his claim to Greer's Beach.

"Mr. Greer did leave at his death some C.P.R. and Union Pacific Railroad stock; he had bought it. His estate, which I distributed, was less than \$7,000. I will show you his account in my old ledger.

"You see," pointing to the entry in the old book, "his estate was \$6,984.64, and it was divided as per his will. You see, Mrs. J.Z. Hall, his daughter, got \$790, and some of the others the same amount."

Query: What do you think of his case, Mr. Mathews?

"If his land had been of no value, he would have had it yet, and you can quote me as saying so."

Note: Mr. Mathews is a man of few words and of careful utterances.

"Why, there were, as far as I remember, 4,800 signatures of the petition to have him released from the penitentiary. I helped to get up the petition which went to Ottawa. I got a lot of them, but his daughter, Mrs. Hall, got most; she was a 'brick' of a girl. The signatures came from everywhere, Victoria, Nanaimo and New Westminster, as well as here in Vancouver.

"Block 182" (west of Trafalgar Street) "was owned by Hon. John Robson; at least, it was in his name, but it was always understood that there were others associated with him. Hon. Mr. Smythe was one, and some Victoria politicians and some C.P.R. men." (See *The Fight for Greer's Beach* in which Sir Frank Barnard, Major Dupont, Hon. Mr. Eberts, and T.H. White, then C.P.R. surveyors, are mentioned.)

"I have always heard that his first wife was a very fine woman, but she was dead when the Greer's Beach trouble started. His second wife, who was there, was a foreigner, German, I think."

JSM

11 JANUARY 1932 - 6TH REGIMENT, THE DUKE OF CONNAUGHT'S OWN RIFLES 1899-1920. 7TH BATTALION, CANADIAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE 1914-1919. 1ST B.C. REGIMENT, (7TH BATTALION C.E.F.) D.C.O. 1920-1930. THE B.C. REGIMENT (D.C.O.R.) 1930. MAJOR G.W. MELHUSH, O.C., 6TH REGIMENT D.C.O.R.

"If the general order issued by the Militia Department in Ottawa in September 1920—in reference to the reorganisation of the old pre-war militia regiments, and their amalgamation with the disbanded overseas battalions to create units which would perpetuate the traditions of them both—was ever carried out in respect to the old 6th Regiment, the Duke of Connaught's Own Rifles, in Vancouver, then, as the last commanding officer of that old regiment, I have no knowledge of it, nor ever had. I have no recollection of ever attending any meeting of the officers, ex-officers of both organisations for the purpose of selecting a commanding officer, nor have I ever heard of any other officer of the 6th Regiment D.C.O.R. who did. What I do recall is an officer of the 11th Irish Fusiliers—General Odium's pre-war regiment—named Daykin, a comparative stranger, coming to my office in the Rogers Building and asking me to sign a letter which he himself had prepared. So far as I recall now, it was addressed to the headquarters M.D. No. 11, Victoria, and it said that Lieutenant Colonel John McMillan, our former quartermaster in the 6th, and also for a time quartermaster in the 7th, was a selection of the officers of the 6th Regiment D.C.O.R. as the commanding officer of the perpetuating unit, now the British Columbia Regiment (D.C.O.R.).

"I was astounded at his effrontery, and indignantly refused to sign anything of the sort. Colonel McMillan had not even returned from overseas; we did not know what he might want or desire, and besides, Daykin was never a 6th officer; he belonged to another regiment, the 11th, and I resented his interference very much indeed. He evidently was supported by someone else, someone in authority.

"Another incident I recall was a telegram which Lieutenant Colonel John W. Warden, D.S.O., O.B.E., V.D., one of our old officers, sent to some friend in high authority at Ottawa, protesting against the treatment being meted out to officers of the old 6th Regiment D.C.O.R., and bluntly stating that he thought it was the work of Brigadier General V.W. Odium, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., whom I may add was never a friend, nor even fair, to the old 6th Regiment D.C.O.R.

"The proper man to have reorganised the old 6th Regiment D.C.O.R. and 7th Battalion C.E.F. into a new regiment perpetuating the traditions of both, was Lieutenant Colonel Warden, a distinguished and illustrious officer of both units, and who was held in high esteem. But John had no money to speak of, and he told me how he resented General Odium suggesting to him that the position required a man of means and affluence.