

Early Vancouver

Volume One

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

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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1. -- Balfour, 2. Dan McGillvary, who built it, 3. Harry Abbott, Sup^r, 4. H.T. Cambie, Chf. Engineer,
5. Mayor Oppenheimer of Vancouver, 6. Lacy R. Johnson, Master Mechanic, 7. -- Ceperley, of Van'or,
8. Armstrong, of Armstrong and Morrison, Contractors.



Opening of Fraser River bridge at Mission, B.C. (about 1890)

Item # EarlyVan_v1_0088

12 DECEMBER 1931 - CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY. BRIDGES. CONSTRUCTION OF C.P.R. AND OFFICIALS.

"The old photograph must be of the opening of the 'Mission Bridge,' across the Fraser River at Mission City," said Mr. Paul Marmette at "Earls Court," Georgia Street West, today when shown an old photo of a large group of railway officials grouped around the end of a "Colonist" car standing on rails crossing a wooden bridge. "I do not know what else it could be.

"I was a draughtsman drawing plans for bridges on the C.P.R. Line. The government constructed the main line from Kamloops to Port Moody, and then handed it over to the C.P.R. There was no celebration when the Stave and Pitt River bridges were opened; they were government constructed. It could not be the Kitsilano Bridge; there would be no occasion for a crowd like this for the opening of that bridge. Dan McGillvary constructed the 'Mission Bridge' for the C.P.R. and when it was opening there was a big crowd, a big spread in the camp, champagne flowed like water. It would be approximately 1890."

Query: Did you get some of it?

Answer: (with a smile) "I got some of it.

"I worked for Onderdonk; I never heard anyone speak a bad word of Onderdonk. I was at Yale for five years, from 1880 to 1885, then I went down river in the old Hudson's Bay *Beaver* to Victoria, came back to Vancouver in February 1886. I had joined the C.P.R. The C.P.R. general offices

and Mr. Abbott were located at Port Moody; the Engineering Department was at Hastings, George Black's; I stayed there 18 months drawing bridge plans, etc.

"Those I recognise in the pictures are:

Extreme left-hand, hand in pockets: Balfour

Extreme left-hand sitting on rails: Dan McGillvary

Fourth man on rails, gloved hands: Paul Marmette (myself)

Centre standing, side-whiskers and collar: Harry Abbott

Next man standing, exact centre, beard: H.J. Cambie

Next man standing, light coat, imperial beard: David Oppenheimer, second mayor of Vancouver

Next man standing, black fur cap: Lacy R. Johnson, Master Mechanic

Very fat face on right: Armstrong, of Armstrong and Morrison

On car, extreme right, bear, hat touching: 'T' Ceperley

Hat touching Oppenheimer's white cuff: Hugh Walkem"

All deceased, save speaker, Paul Marmette.

14 DECEMBER 1931 – SALMON.

"I've seen the pigs eating them in Yale Creek, up at Yale," was the comment which Mr. W.H. Evans, one of the crew which drew the first train into Port Moody, who afterwards was the first resident of the new C.P.R. subdivision to the west of Greer's Beach, and now retired, still resides there at 2030 Whyte Avenue, [made] when [told] Mr. Marmette's remarks re the abundance of salmon in the river in construction days. "They were just black in the creek. In the Fraser River I have seen them so thick—you have heard the expression about 'walking across the river on their backs,'—well, I have not seen them so thick as that—so thick you could hardly wade through the water without stepping on them."

THE GREAT FIRE OF 1886. FIRES OF CLEARING OPERATIONS.

"There was a second fire which alarmed the people on Vancouver, in 1887," continued Mr. Evans. "It was in 1887, in the spring, about April or May, I think. I drew a freight train into Vancouver that afternoon, it must have been about four or five o'clock; there was great excitement. Went up to my room on Carrall Street, and then thought I had better go out and see how things were. The C.P.R. shops were on Pender Street then, back of the present B.C. Electric Railway offices. I saw what the situation was, so went over to my engine at the shops. Mr. Downie, the superintendent, came along. I took three or four cars, hitched my engines and started off. As I crossed Carrall Street, Jim Doige asked me to take his wife, and when I stopped the engine to pick her up, many women and children 'piled' up on the tender. Then I started to take the cars out of the yard; had to take them out two or more miles to get clear of the fire, it was burning all around, all around the city; people were pulling things out of buildings, furniture and everything else. When I got clear of the fire, I found another engine had gone out ahead of me with twenty or thirty cars. The wind went down again about midnight.