

## **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 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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to give up, but the north country required a man, God had seen fit to decree that he should go, and he accepted the duty.

### **CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL.**

Mr. A.E. Beck told me today that he was present at the committee meeting which arranged the details of the laying of the corner stone of Christ Church. Mr. William Downie (of the C.P.R.), afterwards Grand Master of the Freemasons, proposed that the freemasons should lay the cornerstone. Mr. Beck said, "I replied, 'why the freemasons? I don't know if there is any meaning to all the circling around and contortions they go through. The whole thing is as unintelligible to me as a lot of prairie Indians beating their tom toms and dancing around in a circle.' 'Well,' replied Mr. Downie," continued Mr. Beck, "when the freemasons circle around, Mr. Beck, each time they circle around they drop something in the cup." 'Oh, I see,'" Mr. Beck said he replied. "then in that case I think we had better have them."

Mr. Beck had been relating the difficulties they had experienced in financing Christ Church at the commencement, the old "root house," the insistence of Mr. Browning that something be done about the property purchased from the C.P.R.—payment, I suppose—how Mr. Browning had said, "that it was a valuable corner," rather ominously, and how he, Mr. Beck, had replied that that might be so, but that, equally ominously, if Mr. Browning did not "look out," and "did anything"—presumably dispose of the property over their heads—there would be trouble as he would offend many influential people. Mr. Browning was C.P.R. land commissioner. He had told Mr. Browning that they would ultimately come out all right.

J.S. Matthews

### **14 OCTOBER 1931 - KITSILANO BEACH. WILD ANIMALS OF VANCOUVER.**

In view of Mr. William Hunt's story about finding a deposit of elk dung under a tree just south of the Kitsilano "hotel site" at Kitsilano Beach, and Mr. Pittendrigh's story of finding elk horns, bleached, at Little Lake (now Deer Lake), and the similarity of the flora, etc. at both places—wet, swampy muskeg bordering water—one story confirms the other that these animals did exist around Vancouver at one time, and that they found a pleasing habitat, and perhaps food agreeable to them in and around such peaty places.

### **THE "JUNGLE" OF 1931. HASTINGS SAWMILL, SITE, 1931.**

In conversation with Alderman Warner Loat today, I remarked to him that when the "Jungle" was broken up by the health authorities in September 1931, that the men who lived in it had drawn up a crude memorial in testimony of their appreciation of the benevolence of the Commissioners of the Vancouver Harbour Board; that it was written on a piece of foolscap paper, nicely phrased, and signed by a large number of men. He said in reply that some newspaper had published a disparaging report upon the character of these men, that one of them had complained to him of it, stating that the men of the "jungle" were not "roughs" nor "toughs," but a body of well-behaved earnest men who desired nothing more than to be good citizens, support themselves, and find work, but who were penniless and unable to find work. Colonel Williams told me that one man, at least, was university educated, and Cambridge at that.

J.S. Matthews, 1931

### **14 OCTOBER 1931 – WELL-KNOWN PEOPLE.**

The story is told as happening at Gibson's Landing in the summer of 1931. Colonel Malkin, lately Mayor of Vancouver, and recently appointed Honourable Lieutenant Colonel of the British Columbia Regiment, but who had never previously worn a uniform, was summering at "Gibson's," and was down on the wharf to meet the boat. He is a very mannerly man, precise, reserved.

The Reverend Canon Sovereign came down the gang plank. Colonel Malkin hurried forward with extended hand, and, many people being within hearing, greeting him with an effusive welcome, more than ordinarily loud for Colonel Malkin, "How do you do, Canon Sovereign?"

Canon Sovereign, who has a rather high-pitched voice which carries well, responded in kind with "and how are you, *Colonel* Malkin?" (Emphasis on "Colonel.")

Mr. Stirling, who was a friendly spectator to the performance, ejaculated, "Listen to the big guns roar."

"And pray what do you mean by that, Mr. Stirling?" ask Colonel Malkin enquiringly.

"Smooth bores," replied Mr. Stirling without hesitation and with a smile.

At the time Brigadier General Victor W. Odlum, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., was "running" for parliament for Vancouver South (approximately 1925), large advertising placards were appearing in street car advertising giving his full military title and the *initials* of his honours. It is reported that a stenographer, on reading the placards, exclaimed that they meant, "Come Boys, Don't Say Odlum, Call Me General." General Odlum was, so it is said, at one time the youngest general in the British Army (38) and upon his return from the war was, at first, much acclaimed, which afterwards led, unjustly, to a common assumption that he was domineering, self-opinionated, and self-important. As he grew older, he relaxed this stiffness.

#### **14 OCTOBER 1931 - EARLY PUBLIC LIBRARY. CORDOVA STREET AND HASTINGS MILL.**

Attention was drawn to an article which appeared in the *Vancouver Star*, 19 August 1931, in reference to the demise of Mr. H. Beeman in which it is stated that "Mr. and Mrs. Machin were the founders and first librarians of the city, which originated in a little store on Cordova Street."

Mr. H.P. McCraney says that this is an inaccuracy, and relates as follows:

"After the city" (Vancouver) "got started, the boarding house at the Hastings Sawmill was discontinued. Other boarding houses were springing up and there was no need to keep it on, so Mr. Alexander decided to close it. With the closing of the boarding house, there was no further use for the library there, and the books were collected in a pile and lay unused. Mr. Alexander mentioned the matter to the Reverend H.G. Fiennes-Clinton of St. James Church" (Father Clinton), "and asked Father Clinton if he could make use of them as they were no longer wanted. Mr. Clinton spoke to Mr. Carter-Cotton" (of the *News-Advertiser* afterwards.) "Mr. Carter-Cotton and I lived in the same house on Carrall Street. Mr. Carter-Cotton spoke to me. The three of us, Father Clinton, Mr. Carter-Cotton and myself got together and appointed ourselves a library committee and took over the books. Some of them are in the Vancouver Public Library yet" (1931).

"We took the books, went around town, gathered up all the old books and magazines we could collect, also collected some money whenever and wherever we could get it. We hired a room over McLennan and McFeely's store, the old store on Cordova Street on the south side about half way between Abbott and Cambie streets, and put George Pollay and his wife in charge. I think Mrs. Pollay is living yet; Mr. Pollay was afterwards killed in a mining accident, and George Pollay was librarian there for several years" (?) "before the Machins came. We kept minute books; I wonder what has become of them." (Continued.)

#### **15 OCTOBER 1931 - THE ELLESMERE ROOMS. PENDER STREET WEST.**

The Ellesmere Rooms is a tall wooden building still standing, in 1931, at the corner of Pender Street West and Homer Street (northwest corner), and lower portion of which is now used for cheap stores and offices. It was the first large "boarding house."