

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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Gradually, the bicycle craze died down, and the street car system was extended into even remote and sparsely settled districts; then the motor car came. The bicycle paths fell into disrepair, and finally mysteriously disappeared.

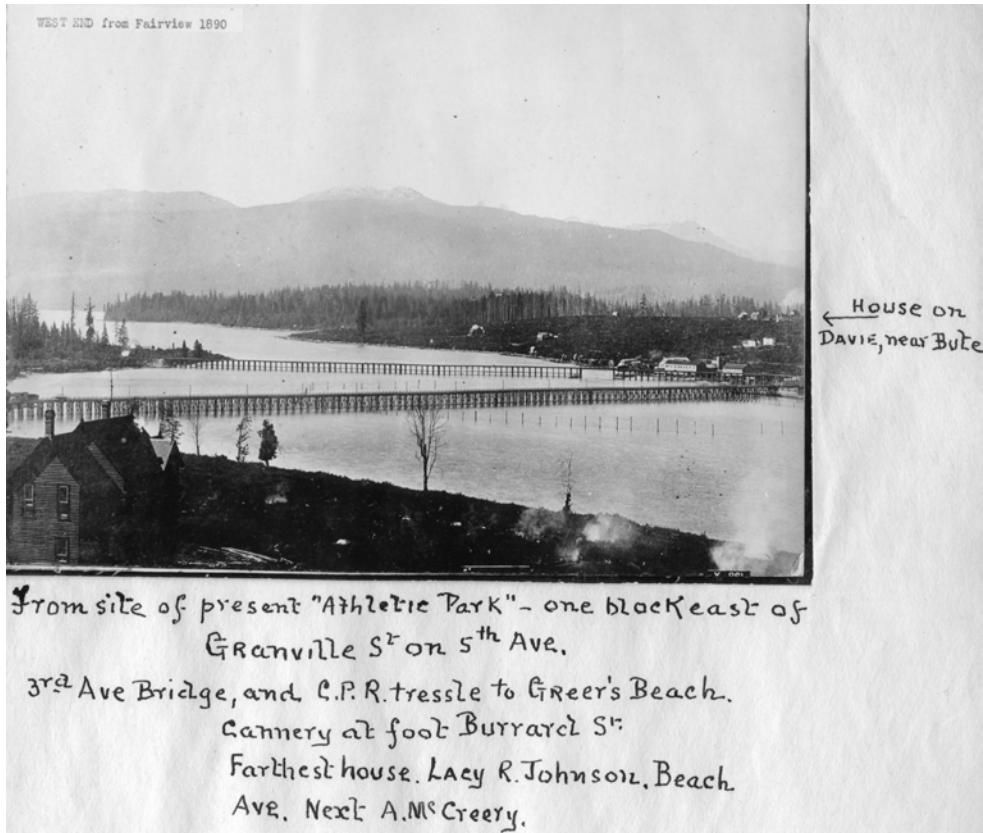
J. S. Matthews

NOTE ADDED LATER:

This was written in 1931. It's very different in 1941. Many bicycles now. JSM



Item # EarlyVan_v1_0048



Item # EarlyVan_v1_0049



Item # EarlyVan_v1_0050

15 JULY 1931 - "WEST END, 1890," THE PHOTOGRAPH.

A photograph, entitled "West End, 1890" has been sold by Mr. W. Chapman, to the number of three hundred, so he says, Vancouver people. He holds the copyright. [NOTE ADDED LATER: Not correct.] It was taken in 1890 from a point in Fairview just behind the present Recreation Park, situate on Fifth Avenue West just about a block east of Granville Street South. Mr. Chapman is a recluse who has lived for the past twenty-one years in an old sealing schooner, which, during all that time, has lain under the Kitsilano railway bridge.

The details of the photograph as related to me by Mr. Chapman are:

Immediately in the foreground there was once a house which blocked or spoilt the pictorial effect, so he removed it, by patching, from the photo. It stood just behind the dark bush in the picture, and must have been a very early house. It is still standing in 1931, just across from the southeast corner of Recreation Park. A little lane runs down the side of the board fence of the ball ground, and the house is just on the corner. Mr. Proud lived in it in 1915.

The tree on the far side of False Creek, the tall fir or hemlock, is at the foot of Broughton Street, just in front of Mrs. J.C. Keith's garden, which runs down to the water. The stump is still there in 1931.

Across False Creek are three houses in the West End. Two only remain in 1931. The third, A. McCreery's, was removed three or four years ago when "Tudor Manor," a large apartment, was built.

The one at the top is on Davie Street; it is on the skyline. Today it is numbered 1112 and 1114 Davie Street, a three-storey building with balconies on the second and third floors, and stands on the south side of Davie Street, third building from the Capitola Apartments. Two large rowan or mountain ash trees, at least twelve inches through, which shows their age, stand on the lawn. It was built by Mr. Bouchier, who died in the spring of 1931. Walter Leek, president of the Vancouver Exhibition Association, once lived in it.

A Frenchman, Mr. Bouchier, later employed by the late Senator S.J. Crowe, built it. He died in the spring of 1931.

The assessment roll, at the City Hall, dated 1888 of this property:

F.D. Boucher, Lot 2, Block 25, D.L. 185, (assessed) \$275.00

Alfonse Moriw (?), Lot 3, Block 25, D.L. 185, (assessed) \$275.00

On 10 July 1931, whilst photographing this building with a photographer (photo in Archives) Major Matthews removed from the outside wall, by pulling it with his fingers, a "ten penny nail," about three inches long, of the old square cut type with oblong head, a type found in all early Vancouver buildings—used before the "wire" or round "drawn" nail was in common use. The nail is badly rusted, but quite strong, after forty-one years exposure to the weather. It is now in the Vancouver City Museum. The wood of the corner was rotted, but where protected from weather was as sound as the day put in.

The third house, lowest down the hill, is on Beach Avenue, still standing in 1931 (see photo in Archives) and is now the second home east from Bute Street—runs from Pacific to Beach—the back facing the Royal Mansions. It was built by (Captain) Lacy R. Johnson, master mechanic of the Canadian Pacific Railway, about 1890 or earlier. He was an officer of Vancouver's first militia unit, and afterwards moved to Montreal.

In the far distance, the forest runs along Nicola Street. The well-known pioneer, Mr. W.D. Burdis, built a small cottage with a steeple roof—now 1931 in the lane between Pendrell and Comox streets at Gilford Street. In this forest, the timber was all around, and when Gilford Street—stated by Mr. Burdis to be the first street opened up from Burrard Inlet to English Bay—was cleared, it was found that it was in the middle of the street and had to be moved. It was not the first house in the West End. It was afterwards moved again to its present location in the lane, and is still occupied.

JSM

15 JULY 1931 - TALTON PLACE.

Talton Place, still so known to residents of the real estate boom days, was a loosely defined section bounded on the west by the Marpole Interurban car tracks, on the east by Cypress Street, and centred about 13th, 14th, 15th and 16th avenues west, but more especially 14th and 15th avenues. My recollection is that the first house built in this section, then a rough tract of semi-cleared land, was built in August 1910.

At the period the real estate boom was booming fiercely; the people were pouring into Vancouver; houses were going up in all directions, Kitsilano included.

A firm called the Prudential Builders Limited, closely allied to the old B.C. Permanent Loan Co. (Langlois, manager) "put on" Talton Place. It was not the first of their ventures. They had a factory on Dufferin or Lorne Street, built "ready made," or sectional houses—houses made to a standard, which could be put up in sections, each one capable of slight alteration as to exterior. Many were shipped to prairie provinces; many were erected in Vancouver.

The "Place" was intended to be a select district; everything was to be done for the purchaser before he walked in. There was to be no more of the endless work of making lawns, putting up fences, planting shrubs, etc. The lawns were to be levelled, the ornamental and useful trees