

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.

Copyright Statement

© 2011 City of Vancouver. Any or all of *Early Vancouver* may be used without restriction as to the nature or purpose of the use, even if that use is for commercial purposes. You may copy, distribute, adapt and transmit the work. It is required that a link or attribution be made to the City of Vancouver.

Reproductions

High resolution versions of any graphic items in *Early Vancouver* are available. A fee may apply.

Citing Information

When referencing the 2011 edition of *Early Vancouver*, please cite the page number that appears at the bottom of the page in the PDF version only, not the page number indicated by your PDF reader. Here are samples of how to cite this source:

Footnote or Endnote Reference:

Major James Skitt Matthews, *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 1 (Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 2011), 33.

Bibliographic Entry:

Matthews, Major James Skitt. *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 1. Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 2011.

Contact Information

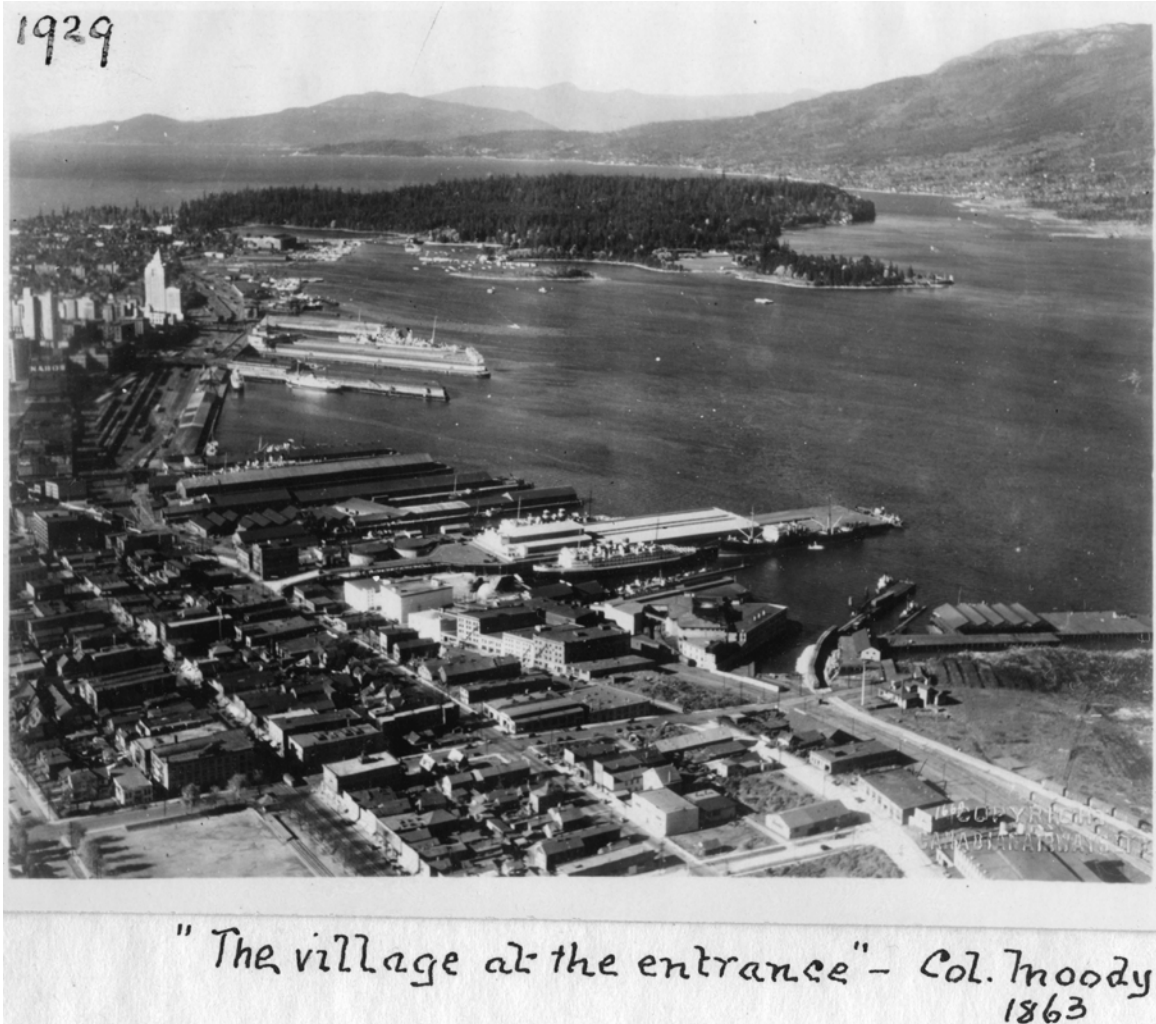
City of Vancouver Archives
1150 Chestnut Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 3J9
604.736.8561
archives@vancouver.ca
vancouver.ca/archives



NOTE ADDED LATER:

Nonsense.

J.S. Matthews



Item # EarlyVan_v1_0065

17 OCTOBER 1931 - KITSILANO. GREER'S BEACH. FIRST NARROWS.

Mr. W.F. Findlay today threw some light on a letter, dated 13 March 1885, written by Mr. W.C. Van Horne, Vice President, Canadian Pacific Railway, to the Honourable Sir D.L. MacPherson, K.C.M.G., Minister of the Interior, Ottawa, in which he says, "Owing to the extreme forces of the tide at the First Narrows for large steamships will be almost impracticable except at low tide, and from investigations recently made it seems that English Bay must be utilised as the main harbour, and that the railway must be extended to run along that bay."

He then asks that several hundred acres of naval reserve at the south shore of English Bay be granted to the C.P.R. for railway purposes. This letter was used in connection with the famous Greer's Beach Case.

Just what Sir William had in mind when he refers to the force of the tide has been generally assumed to be the acquisition of still more land; they were the days of land grabbing; everyone

was into it; and, further, a syndicate of influential men, some of them high in gubernatorial circles, owned Lot 192, and probably wanted a railway there. (See *The Fight for Kitsilano Beach* by J.S. Matthews in Vancouver City Museum.)

Mr. Findlay said today, "One of the first C.P.R. Oriental liners was the *Parthia*. You must realise that steamships in those days were of very low power as compared with those of today. The old *Parthia* could not do more than twelve knots, and in the early days the tide in the narrows was at least two knots stronger than it is today now that it has been largely dredged. The *Parthia* could not get out of the Narrows easily when the tide was coming in; she had to take a run at it. I have myself beaten her out. I recall on one occasion I was out in the Narrows in a row boat trolling for salmon when the *Parthia* came along on her way out. Of course, I knew the tides between Brockton Point and Prospect Point, and took advantage of the back eddies; I could get out almost without rowing at all. On this occasion, I nearly beat her out of the Narrows, and it surprised me at the time that I should do so. The *Parthia*'s twelve knots was the best she could do under the most favourable conditions; under ordinary circumstances, she could not do more than about nine, and the tide at that time ran about nine knots when coming in full and strong, so she was pretty much at a standstill. On this occasion, she failed on her first try, and backed up almost as far as where North Vancouver is, and took a second run at it. The Narrows at that time was not as wide as it is now, and there was not much room for manoeuvring a big steamer. If they had waited an hour or so they could have got out easily in the slack tide. About the only thing to do with a big steamer when she could not 'make it' was to go astern and have another try; there was no room for manoeuvring.

"I forget now whether it was the *Parthia* or *Batavia* which came first; it was one or the other. The *Abyssinia* came later, and for a time did 'land office business.'"

From Mr. Findlay's story it can be surmised that Mr. W.C. Van Horne, afterwards Sir William, would probably have been advised, as early as 1885, by his engineers that difficulty would be experienced with the tides of the First Narrows in getting the low-powered steamers out of Burrard Inlet without delays for suitable tides, and that this prompted him to conceive the idea of docks outside the narrows. (The old map shows docks at Kitsilano.) He could hardly have known that the day was coming when steamers would have the power they now have, the speed of trains, and populations equal to a small city.

JSM

18 OCTOBER 1931 - DUKE OF CONNAUGHT'S OWN RIFLES. LIEUTENANT COLONEL C.A. WORSNOP.

In the summer of 1920 I was walking on Robson Street when I met Lieutenant Colonel C.A. Worsnop (he died 31 December 1920), (*NOTE ADDED LATER*: Colonel C.B. Worsnop says 31 December 1922) one of the officers who organised the first militia unit in Vancouver, No. 5 Company, British Columbia Brigade of Garrison Artillery, and who subsequently was the first officer commanding the famous 6th Regiment, the Duke of Connaught's Own Rifles, a military unit of which H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught, K.G., once said, "and I hope that in this respect you will long continue to set an example to the other regiments of Canada." Colonel Worsnop invited me to take a few steps with him; it was a warm summer's day, and he was enjoying the sunshine.

I asked him how it came about that we adopted our regimental title, and he replied in words akin to what follows:

"When General Hutton decided that we must be changed from artillery he offered me a choice of what we should be changed into at a private luncheon we had together in the old Hotel Vancouver. General Hutton sat on one side of a small table, and myself on the other. General Hutton said, 'What would you like to be, Colonel Worsnop, fusiliers or rifles?' I replied at once, 'Oh, I'd prefer to be rifles.' 'Then I'll see what I can do to get the Duke of Connaught to be your honorary colonel,' said General Hutton.