

Early Vancouver

Volume Two

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Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1932.

Supplemental to volume one collected in 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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19 JULY 1935 – INDIAN CHURCH AT GRANVILLE, 1875-6. FIRST METHODIST CHURCH IN VANCOUVER. FIRST CHURCH IN VANCOUVER.

In conversation today with Mr. Ernest Robson, son of the late Dr. Robson, pioneer Methodist minister, he told me that, while his father was never stationed at the parsonage at Granville, he had often visited there and that his recollection was, and that he had confirmed it by conversing with Mrs. [blank] née Thompson, daughter of the Rev. Thompson who was stationed at Granville, that the old Indian church was during later years, and prior to its destruction by fire on 13 June 1886, used by the children as a playhouse. He said that Mrs. [blank] said she had often played in it.

Upon showing him the map of Granville, August 1885, made for insurance purposes showing the exact locations of every building, and pointing out a small building touching the shoreline immediately in front of the parsonage, he said he thought that was the boathouse, and recalled it because as a boy, he slipped through the slats of the wooden ways up which they drew their boats, dropped as far as his neck, and had to be sawn out. I pointed out that the Indians tied their canoes to the steps and he replied that he was under the impression that the Indian church adjoined the boat house.

J.S. Matthews, City Archivist, Vancouver.

See *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 2.

THE FIRST METHODIST IN VANCOUVER, MRS. JOSEPHINE SULLIVAN.

Rev. C.M. Tate, Methodist Indian Missionary, 16 July 1932:

"Mrs. Josephine Sullivan was the first Methodist in Vancouver, a coloured lady, wife of 'Old Man' (also coloured) Sullivan, cook at the Moodyville Sawmill. When her husband died, Arthur, her son, moved over to a new sort of place which was starting at Granville, and brought his mother with him. Arthur was 'sort of dark,' too."

See *Early Vancouver*, Matthews, 1931, re Sullivans.

THE FIRST METHODIST HALL (USED AS FIRST CHURCH).

Extract, Letter, Ernest S. Robson, son of Rev. Ebenezer Robson, D.D., 10 July 1932:

"My statement re first Water Street hall is correct, as can be proved by my father's diary. The following extracts from the article by Mrs. N. O'Connor of New Westminster, as published in the *Western Recorder* of October 1893 will be of interest:

Every Tuesday evening a class meeting was held at the house of Mrs. Josephine Sullivan, when seven was the largest number present. This was the extent of the membership at this time, March 1884. Thursday evening was prayer meeting at the parsonage. Mr. W.H. Irwin, the school teacher in Granville, was the local preacher and he would take charge of some of the church services. He has since become minister in the United States. The school house became too small to hold the congregation, so it was decided by the officials to rent a larger place. The only available place was Blair's Hall. A saloon was on the front of the lot, and the hall at the back; the access to it was through an alley. There was a Chinese washhouse on the side where the entrance to the hall was. A Chinese lady was shot one Saturday night in the washhouse and it cast quite a gloom over the service the next day.

In the fall of 1885 revival services were held.

About the time the meetings closed there was a great influx of people from everywhere, as the C.P.R. terminus was to be at Coal Harbour. The Presbyterians were holding services at this time, too; had not been long in the field. It was not very satisfactory to hold services in the hall any longer, so it was decided to build a hall for ourselves. Mrs. B.H. Wilson donated the lot, if my memory is correct, and the hall was built with some volunteer labour. There were subscriptions to the building fund. Rev. E. Robson preached the opening services, May 23rd 1886, and three

weeks later the big fire of June 13 1886 came and the hall and parsonage were both burned with contents. After the fire it was rebuilt, same shape, same size. Services were held in different buildings until the hall was finished.

"I am sorry there are no illustrations with Mrs. O'Connor's article. Mrs. O'Connor's wedding was the only one solemnized in the second Water Street Hall; this took place 19 June 1887.

"Ernest S. Robson."

THE FIRST METHODIST PARSONAGE.

Extract, letter, 5 July 1932, by Ernest S. Robson, son of Rev. Ebenezer Robson, D.D.:

"I was a guest at the old parsonage, built by the Rev. James Turner, during the summer of 1880. I have never seen a picture of it. The services were held in the village school house until just before the Fire, when the first Water Street Hall, built by the Rev. Joseph Hall was dedicated, my father coming over from Nanaimo in order to take part in the services."

The placing of these buildings may be inexact in view of account, see *Weekly News-Advertiser*, 3 October 1888, which says, "the first parsonage was built on lot 14, which, together with the adjoining lot, No. 15, was kindly donated by the Provincial Government."

The Rev. Mr. Tate, since died, once said, "When the survey was made, the parsonage was found to be on the street."

The facts probably are that no one knows exactly where it did stand. Probably, like many other early buildings, it was built on ground which the builder thought or guessed to be the location of the lot of land.

J.S. Matthews, June 1933.

NOTE ADDED LATER:

Maps of the location since found. JSM, 1934. See World newspaper, 1896. See Sanborn Fire map, 1885.