

Early Vancouver

Volume Two

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

2011 Edition (Originally Published 1933)

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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Seventh Avenue East
Westminster Ave.
The "New Road," (Westminster Road)
approx. 1888 or 1889

Item # EarlyVan_v2_058



JOHN McDOUGALL
Contractor and Miner
Vancouver, Cariboo, and Yukon.

Cut the 'New Road', now Kingway, through forest from
New Westminster to Granville, 1884. Cleared off the
trees from 440 acres of 'West End', Vancouver, 1887.
etc..etc.

Item # EarlyVan_v2_059

All's Not Gold That Crackles

Sir,—J. A. Stephenson thinks there should be more wooden money or paper money. Paper money is the main cause of present world panic. I have been fifty-one years in the mining business in Washington, British Columbia, Yukon and Alaska. I can see how natural our Creator distributed so evenly all metals necessary for the human race. No farmer could sow grain more evenly. There is no mountain of either metal. There should be no wood or straw currency to replace metals. One billion dollars in paper money can be made out of one of the spruce trees on the Pacific Coast.

The only industry that is going to last to the end of time is the finding of food from land and water and the mining of minerals from the earth. The fertilizer from minerals is best to grow food. The two industries will always work hand in hand to furnish labor for the human race. If this paper money is burned and metals are used as currency, there will be work in mines for one-third of the idle men in North America, and the food, clothing and machinery needed by them will give work to the other two-thirds.

I have a four-year-old clipping from a New York paper wherein a wild mining engineer wrote there would be no more gold to mine in 100 years. If he had said a million years he would be making a big mistake. Our Creator's volcanic factory is making metals all the time.

Mr. Stephenson might as well say that diamonds and rubies should be made out of wood. His paper money has taken the lustre of the once precious gems. The real money will make them look like they did in King Solomon's time, when there was no paper money. We should look to the industries that are going to last.

Quesnel, B. C. JOHN McDOUGALL.

*His last letter to the press
a month or so before he
died in Quesnell B.C.
Feb. 28th or Mar. 1st 1933*

LETTERS OF JOHN McDUGALL ("CHINESE McDUGALL").

Quesnel, B.C.

[No date; received 8 August 1932.]

Major J.S. Matthews, V.D.

Dear sir:

I will be pleased to give you all the information I can about what is interesting referring to the early times on the peninsula between New Westminster Coal harbour and the North arm of the Fraser River, and two Hastings two and a half mile apart the eastern one was built on by two highly esteemed miners from Cariboo in the early 70s. Mr. George Black built and owned a hotel and Mr. John Fannan built and owned a shoe making shop and an amusement shop he was a number one bird and animal stuffer, and first big game guide and hunter in B.C. his first big mule deer from the Okanagan Lake mountain range to the west, the stuffed deer is in the Victoria Museum. In 1885 he sold his collection of birds and animals to the B.C. Government for \$1800.00 and was given charge of the museum. Mr. Black built a large dance hall for tourists and was a good manager of what was I think the first tourist camp in B.C. I boarded there in the summer of 1886, and many families came through there from New Westminster and Victoria. There was Mr. and Mrs. Cambie Mr. and Mrs. Strong Mr. David and Isick Oppenheimer and families, Samuel Brighthouse, Carbolt [Corbould] and family from New Westminster, J.W. Steward, [Stewart] (now General Steward) and him and I would go out on the new wharf and fasten part of a sack to a barrel hoop with meat on the sack and let it down to the bottom we would get twenty pounds of fine crabs in twenty minutes the wimman folk would make a ten pound dish of crab salad and with sandwiches crackers and beer we would have a fine midnight lunch at the dance hall mostly every night. There was a wagon road partly built from there to New Westminster I came over it with a party of ten on the 26th December 1878 we were waiting in New Westminster to go to Victoria, but there was too much ice on the river and we were notified that the boat was going around to Burrard Inlet to take us. we left at 9 p.m. with two small horses and a sleigh the snow was ten inches deep, we had axes and lanterns. There was a great deal of brush and vine maple bent down with the snow over the pathway. the small Indian horses helped as they knew how to crawl under the snow laden brush and saved us a lot of easy work the women and children were covered with horse blankets and often rolled over the side of the sleigh with its weight of snow. We were wet and cold and highly pleased when we came in sight of Mr. Black's hotel at 3 a.m. after a warming and a good hot meal we went to the boat it was tied to piles at the end of a 100 foot wharf built of two lengths of two large cedar logs with planks on them. I got down on my hands and knees got the children to put their arms around my neck while I climbed the rope ladder to the board deck. we arrived in Victoria at 11 a.m. the best of friends It was the first road from Burrard Inlet and Fraser river.

John McDougall.

Now about the wagon road that I built between New Westminster and Granville in 1884 the specifications called for the road to be around thirty inches above the edge of the ditches and thirty feet wide, the ditches to be three feet wide and 1½ feet deep. The extra work that I had to do to drain the water from the ditches and many culverts cost \$1800.00. My bid for the contract was \$17,500.00 when I finished Baley Ross overseer for the building and Mr. Gore the surveyor general went over the road and Mr. Gore was so pleased with my work that he asked me by letter next spring to put in a bid on the 36 mile Marbel canyon and Hat creek road from Mr. Kerbils roadhouse at the mouth of Hat creek on the Cariboo road to Captain Martles ranch in Marbel canyon. I made \$4600.00 on my Kingsway contract in four months. The next bidder for the contract above me tried to use a political pull to get the contract he was a road builder and he and two brothers had a number of men working for them in Premier John Robison's district. He told John that that boy McDougall had no experience in road building and could not do the work for the amount of his bid Mr. Robison told him it is this way Angus if that boy can't build the road his bondsmen can two wealthy men are the boys bondsmen one is Hugh Keefer who made \$150,000 on the C.P.R. last year the other Ben Vanvolkenboro [?] with butcher shops strung for six

hundred miles from Barkerville in the Cariboo to Victoria. So Angles had to allow the boy to do the work. Mr. Jo Hunter [A.G. Smith, *Land Registrar, Vancouver*, says, "Joe Hunter was son-in-law to Hon. John Robson."] government surveyor surveyed the road and had many short turns in it there was two military reserves on the rough and he did not like to cross them with a road. Seeing the short turns in his survey I wrote to him to Victoria B.C. he told me to straighten the line of the road to suit myself so I undertook to straighten about six miles about the center of the road. There was a great lot of second growth up to fifty feet high. as I did not have a transect it was a new sort of a job there was a large amount of wind falls three deep in places and very large timber that fell when the big fire rushed through there in the late sixties. It happened that there were two burnt stubs more than 100 feet high and not far from Mr. Hunter's survey line and six miles apart. I climbed a second growth spruce tree to the top about fifty feet from there I had a good view of the big stub in the north west direction six miles away so I climbed down and got four of my men with axes and three long staks, and I went up to the top of the tree again I think got my men to drive three stakes in line with the big high stub six miles away the stakes about 100 feet apart. by moving the hindmost stake 100 feet and staking it in line with the other two stakes north west I managed to get a new straight line through the thick undergrowth for the six miles and less than ten feet from the high north west burnt stub. I was well pleased with my new survey and felt very thankful that Mr. Hunter was so kind as to allow me to survey the road line to suit myself. My new line was on better ground for a road bed and was the means of the road been about 1000 feet shorter and I was delighted by cutting out the many short turns that would look so bad where the land was almost level. No doubt but that Mr. Hunter like myself felt that we were building what would be always a country road. and at this day July 23 1932 I feel proud of what the boy did in 1884.

John McDougall

A few lines about my friend Mr. Jo Hunter who made the first survey of the road now known as Kingsway. he was a member of parliament for the Cariboo district in 1886 and 7 and 8 he was the engineer that built the Quesnel lake dam in the Cariboo district the lake is 75 miles in length and fifty miles wide and the lake dammed to the height of nine feet. it was about the largest body of water dammed it was built for placer mining purposes. Mr. Hunter a large proud man highly esteemed by his many friends for his business and honest qualities. While a member of parliament two small opposition members in the space of five years accused him of been on friendly terms with a dishonest party they depended that Jo was too proud and big to strike them and there was a law against dueling, but Jo saw self protection above dueling and handed each one of his insulters on each occasion a loaded revolver and asked them to choose their distance in each case the little fellows got on their knees and begged of Jo to allow them to apologize. I think Jo's example could be used to advantage every once in a while to help decent politics.

John McDougall

I don't know when the Fals creek bridge was built I went over it in 1884 and a wagon road that led from it to Mr. Magee's farm on the north arm valley of the Fraser River he had about twenty acres in crop he was highly pleased with the growth of everything he planted. the branches of his fruit trees were hanging load of fine fruit. There may be parties on the farm who can tell when the road and bridge was built.

Yours truly

John McDougall

P.S.: The road did not go beyond Mr. Magee's farm on the north side of the valley.

When Mr. John Morton came by trail to false creek from New Westminster in 1862 the whole peninsula was a growth of the finest fir spruce and cedar in the world up to 300 feet high. the shade of it prevented undergrowth and it would be easy to blaze a trail through it with a compass. I do not know where Mr. Morton's indian trail would be. the undergrowth and fallen timber caused by fires after his time blotted his trail out of existence. Mr. Morton's house and garden was on the shore directly south of dead man island it was used for a logging camp after his time it

was my camping place while slashing down the timber on the 440 acre Brighthouse estate in the months of April and May 1886.

I may take a trip to Vancouver this summer and call on you

I wish you all kinds of success with your new venture.

Yours truly,

John McDougall

JOHN McDOUGALL. HASTINGS. KINGSWAY.

Copy of letter from John McDougall, Quesnel, B.C.

Quesnel, B.C. August 21 1932.

Dear Mr. Matthews:

I received your nice letter of August 9th. Not being a scholar, the last I would expect is praise for my writing, so don't be too hard on me if I partly blame you for my notorious historical letter.

I never heard of Hocking or surveyed lots at Hastings. There was about two and a half acres cleared near the shore, south from Mr. Black's hotel; a chinaman with a large family built small buildings on the north shore of patch, his daughter was a picture, and classed as the most beautiful on the inlet. He built there in 1883, he had a laundry and sun curing establishment, he would let a hundred foot net to the bottom at high tide, when the tide went out he would get about one hundred pounds of sole flounders cod and crabs. The floating log warf that raised and fell with the tides between piles near Mr. Blacks hotel was the first boat landing and jumping off place for the rowboats that tock the male and pashingers north across the inlet to Moodyville.

KINGSWAY AND CENTRAL PARK.

Now about the jog in Kingsway near Central Park. If I had built the road from the Granville end I think the jog would not be so noticable. It was necessary to build from the Westminster end in order to get my supplys such as powder, meat, horse and ox food, and other supplys. I had to travel many miles to find oxen and horses fit to move the large timber off the roadway. I got a good yoke of oxen from Mr. Kipp of Chilliwac, and I had to go to the Nicklo [Nicola] valley for the two largest horses to be found, one 1400 lbs for \$175.00 from Mr. John Claperton, one of the two old highly respected English familys, the other 1300 lbs for \$175.00 from Mr. Alex Gorden, and with blocks and cables I was able to move the big timbers in piles to burn on the roadway.

It was the Royal Engineers that surveyed the two reserves that I crossed with my three stackes survey in order to save the short turns around the corners of the reserves. They were known as military reserves, I think one was intend as a naval reserve, one joined the other, and according to my measurement they would be a square block of 320 acres. As long as the reserves were not canceled no doubt Mr. Jo Hunter who surveyed around the corners of them knew that a publick road or pathway would not be allowed over them. And when he wrote to me from Victoria to cut out the curves and survey the road to sute myself I think he got information that the two reserves were canceled, and no doubt they were since Queen Victoria concented to have her crown colony known as New Caledonia became a province of the Dominion of Canada, and the people of Vancouver can thank her for her goodness and kindness to sign her name to that document, and allowe me the privilege of climbing fifty feet to the top of a tree to survey a straight road with the stakes across her reserves that should have been named the Queens Way.

The far seeing Royal Engineers who surveyed the two reserves would not tell you or I what they were intended for and if I was on the gorund with them and asked I might expect of them to ask if I had ever seen the rock of Gibraltar as I am satisfied they would feel that they were standing on another rock like it as a fortification on the two reserves would be identically for the

same purpose. A war ship showing her teeth in the Gulf of Georgia could be shelled from there, and the entrance to the Fraser River, English Bay, and Burrard Inlet could be garded from there.

Queen Victoria and her Royal Engineers and sappers and miners should not be forgotten, she sent them with plenty of money and black powder around Cape Horn to build roads and raise her young Caledonia to nationhood, it was them that gouged the first and many miles of the four hundred wagon road to the Cariboo along the jaws of the devils canyon on the Fraser River where mountain goats could not climb, it was the most dangers and expensive part of the road, and it was the building of it that helped to encourage the completing the road to Cariboo, and as soon as the road was built more than half of the population of British Columbia were in Cariboo and settled along the road, and them people who were mostly foriners did not forget what Queen Victoria had to do with the building of the road her birthday was the big day for twelve months in Barkerville the big purses of gold dust brought race horses from California and Oregon. it was the same when I came from Barkerville in 1882 to Lyton where the C.P.R. was building everybody was preparing and practicing for Queen Victoria's birthday sports seven thousand workmen on the road layd down there hammers drills transets levels picks and shovels and all settlers for many miles along the Cariboo road were there.

HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA, THE GOOD.

In those days there could be a purse rased to build a nice high monument built at beacon hill that could be seen from all the boats in and out of Cape Flattery in remembrance of Queen Victoria also one at the Lions Gate where the Royal Engineers and Sappers and miners commenced to build and settle the foundation for the Pacific Crown Colony and the Canadian should enjoy seeing the same accomplished.

BUILDING THE C.P.R. RIGHT OF WAY. BRIGHOUSE ESTATE.

I Have not been at Hastings since I borted at Gorage Blacks Hotel in 1886 and I was too busy to pay much attention to know much about the old settlers that were not there then I had 400 men working 140 in a tented camp one third mile west of the hotel I built the two and one half miles of the C.P.R. from Hastings to Hastings Sawmill and the clearing of the right of way to Port Moody and seventy five on the slashing of the Brighthouse estate. After the grading of the two and one half miles Mr. Cambie chif engineer asked me to give him a bid on the clearing and grading for the station houses and side tracks that are removed now. I lost money on the job I no sooner got started then when 100 carpenters comenced to build north and west and too close by to use powder on the many large stumps that I intend to blow out so had to burn and grub with axes. I did not see any cleared land along Fals creek, the only clearing that I noticed on the Brighthouse, Hailstone, Morton estate of 660 acres [*Note: should be about 540 acres*] is the patch that I described in my last letter.

Yours truly

John McDougall

A short story that you can cut out if not intristing.

In december 1886 Mr. Cambie Chief engineer of the western division of the C.P.R. asked me to give him a bid on the piling of luse rock agenst many fills between Hastings and Port Moody, the swash of the boats up and down the inlet was undermining them I had to get the loose roock from the north arm of the inlet (it was the first rock to come from there). I hired the only scows in Coal Harbor four owned by Capt. MacPhaden and his the only tug boat and his captain at 22 dollars per day I built a floting house on large seder logs for my twenty men shortly after I got started three men came from Victoria one was John Grant who was a member for B.C. for some time and mayor for Victoria one was Moose Ireland a highly respected old timer miner in Cariboo and Peace River the other was Moses Moose a highly respected jew, a miner and fur dealer. It happened in the early seventies that Mr. Ireland crused timber for the Moodyville Company on the North arm of the Inlet, and been a prospector he discovered flote quarts on the west side of the inlet and had them essayed by Mr. John McKelvey in Victoria [*the first Assayer in B.C.*] they assayed \$seven in gold and \$8 in silver in the summer of 1886 there was a quarts

spasm on all over B.C. and that was the cause of the party to come to Vancouver and try and find where the flote quarts came from. I was in Vancouver for supplys they were about stuck for a chance to get to the north arm of the inlet when some one told them I was in town with my tug boat (I was well acquainted with all of them) and John Grant found me and told me what they were up too and offered to give me quarter interest in the propission if I would take them to where Ireland found the flot quarts. having gambled in mining with my parterner Mr. William Pattullo 100 feet under ground on Jack of [blank] creek in Cariboo in 1881 I knew my chances in the new ventures was a million or 0 but to have such three fine parterners looked good so I got a bottel of three star *[Note: brandy]* and a box of segars and Captain Butler tock up to my floating boarding house in time for lunch. My parterner and his brother Thomas Pattullo were two of a large party who left from near Kingston, Ontario for the Cariboo in the early sixtys by the back doar rought from the way of the antlantic and over the rocky mountains. they were a fine lot of men and did well—Pattullo the liberal leader is a nephew. After lunch Mr. Ireland led us to where he found the float quarts in the seventys and it did not take long to find the body of mineraliest bluff of granit where the flote quarts came from it was in the face of a high bluff of granit and there was pocked of quarts forty feet up in the bluff, and by crawling for some distance on a shalf of rock I was able to get to the pocked of quarts on one side was large block of rock about to fall I warned Ireland and Grant standing forty feet below to get out of the and as soon as I touch the rock it fel forty feet on a ledge and split in two one half that would waigh half a ton get on edge and rolled down the hill 100 feet Moses Mose was picking flot quarts there but saw the rock coming he got in the rong direction and stumbled agenst a tree and the rock roled on top of him and partly agenst the tree many of his ribs were broken I could hear him groan from the ticklish place I was in forty feet up on a shelf when I got there John Grant was laing down he ranched his back trying to lift the rock of Mose I got a pry and razed it so that Ireland was able to move—John Grant outlifted the strongest man in Quesnel—move Mose from under it I got two cans for Grant so he could walk i got on my hands and knees and Ireland put Mose on my back his waight 170 it did not trouble me a bit to pack him half a mile over rough ground to the boat (I wonder now how I did it) Capt Butler stemed the tug to Vancouver as quick as posable and Mr. Mores Mose in the care of docters he was in bed for six months.

We were used to the like of that in the early days

Another while I am at it it concerns my two good old friends that are dead many years Mr. (same) Mose Ireland and Mr. Frank Page. Mr. Page was gold commissioner in the Omineca plaser camp in the Peace river for many years in the seventys and early eightys and was in the habid of coming to Victoria every third year with his gold dust and boocks. Mr. Ireland was mining there then, in the fall of 1877 they prepared to come out Page sent the books and gold dust with Pinchback and Giens pack train of 75 horses that maid two trips a season form Williams Lake he and Ireland prepared to walk later on but happened to leve too late they were big strong men Page was six foot three and Ireland six and each weighed 200 they ment to walk from thirty to forty miles per day to Quesnel they did not have snow shows after the first day a very unexpected two feet of snow fell for that season of the year and instade of 30 or 40 they could make 5 and 6 miles per day and less when they ran out of food and the weather got cold down to 40 below it got to loock like starvation and but they put up the bravest fight that I ever heard of they were in the parsnip river valley they lost the pack trale on account of the deep snow in a few days without food or fire or a chance to slep when it was very cold thay could see in day time there way south in a few days they were too weak to walk in the deep snow and the way managed to keep alive for two days and keep from going on there last sleep was by pounding one at a time with fists and boots when one would drop off to sleep it was necessary to hurt to keep the spark of life alive. but they saw there doom when they were too weak to hurt, the evening of there life and day was geting very dark and bitter cold. they could see that the snow that triped them on there way was going to be there last bed thay shock hands thay felt that there blood was about to stop moving in there half frozen flesh Page moved a few feet away so that there would be a better chance of finding their bodies while doing so he felt hard snow it was a snow shoe track it put new life in him he told Mose that he found a hard snow shoe track it kindled the last dying spark he moved to the trail they could see the way the last track led and they crawled on there hands and knees they went but a short way when

mose told Page that he was too cold and stiff to go any further it was intensely cold and Page knew that he was not able to go much further and when about to lay down and die here his partner they heard a dog bark and in a few seconds a dog and an Indian was with them. but the Indian's huts were too far away for the two men to crawl to it their courage and life about to end. The Indian got his hand sleigh and he brought them one at a time to his hut the heat in the hut brought new life to them they felt as if they were born again this time from the womb of the frozen snow bound north the Indians laid them one on each side of the fire place on deer skins they were too feeble and sleepy to take food after a long sleep they were able to sip a little juice of the pot of deer meat that the Indian cooked for them in two days they were able to eat a little deer meat the Indian helped them to doctor their frozen fingers and toes with melted deer fat and salt. the Indians supply of food a little flour and smoked salmon and plenty deer meat when able to cook their food the Indian left on a three day tramp to his summer home and got a small supply of fish and flour As soon as their fingers healed they helped the Indian to build snow shoes at the end of 22 days with the Indian and dog that saved their lives they left with the Indian for an Indian settlement where they got enough food to take them to Quesnel when they got to Quesnel they were able to show their friends many marks on their shins arms and shoulders from the friendly kicks and blows that they presented to each other to prevent them going on their everlasting sleep in forty degrees below zero weather. They went from there to Victoria On their way back to the Peace river placer mining district they added an extra horse to Pinchback and Ligns pack train of seventy five horses at Williams Lake that made two trips in the summer season to the Omineca placer camp in the Peace river country. the extra horse was loaded with three hundred and fifty pounds of extra food and clothes for the Indian and his dog also one hundred dollars for his kind treatment and the saving of their lives.

Both were married in their fifties to smart middle aged women that helped to make their bachelor lives more happy Mrs. Ireland was a business woman and did well with a general store on an island north west of Vancouver Mr. Frank Page retired after living the mines and lived in his comfortable home at the first bend east on Fort Street Victoria where he had one of the finest gardens roses was his hobby he was very happy in the winter of 1885 and 1886 as one of his rose bushes was in full bloom in the open air every day At my many calls on them he would ask if I knew how his kind friend was getting on who saved his life with kicks and blows and Ireland would tell me the same when I met him. They were as friendly as twin brothers.

John McDougall

THE NAME OF VANCOUVER. COAL HARBOUR. SIR WILLIAM VAN HORNE.

Excerpt, page 10, *Romance of Vancouver*, published by Native Sons of B.C., 1926, "How Vancouver became a terminal," by B.A. McKelvie.

"Late in July Mr. Van Horne left the east for the West Coast, arriving in Victoria on August 4th 1884, where he had a long conference with Premier Smythe," "two days later he came to Burrard Inlet, he declared himself to be delighted with the advantages to be offered by Coal Harbour, and stated that he would change the name Granville to 'Vancouver.'

"This announcement met with instant opposition in Victoria; it was argued that confusion would result from the similarity of names of the new terminal and the island. To this Mr. Van Horne replied that 'Vancouver' was already associated with British Columbia. If the name Granville was retained, people would not know where it was, and if told that it was on the shore of Burrard Inlet would still have no idea of its whereabouts, but if the world was informed that Vancouver was the end of steel the public would at once associate the place with the province of British Columbia."

Excerpt from the magazine *West Shore*, published at Portland, Oregon, September 1884 (repeated 1884), Vol. 10, No. 9, page 304, article entitled "Coal Harbour."

"It is only once in a lifetime that the public have such a chance as at present, and we would recommend those who have money to invest to investigate the merits of Vancouver on Coal Harbour before making investments."