

Early Vancouver

Volume Three

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Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1933-1934.

Supplemental to Volumes One and Two collected in 1931-1932.

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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CONVERSATION WITH MR. (AND MRS.) DUKE MCKENZIE, 1154 BURNABY STREET, VANCOUVER, B.C.

DRIVING THE LAST SPIKE, CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY.

"What's this you say? The Last Spike? A gold spike, set in diamonds? Read it in the paper. What part? Must have been in the funnies. What yarns these historians do invent. The next thing they'll have Sir Donald" (Lord Strathcona) "driving the last spike in a helmet and plume, a coat of mail, and a band playing 'Springtime in the Rockies.'"

Then Mr. Duke McKenzie, who lives on Burnaby Street now, but who actually saw the last spike driven at Craigellachie in '85, laughed heartily.

"What really happened was this. I was there, and saw. We were on the work train which ran ahead of Sir Donald A. Smith's special train carrying the rails, ties, etc., for closing the gap. A bit of a gap between the two ends from the east and the west had been left open for the official closing, and we had the material for doing this on our work train.

"Then we laid the rails down, and Sir Donald, surrounded by officials and the train crews, drove the last spike, and the official train passed over the gap, and the work train followed and went to Sicamous.

"After Sir Donald had driven the last spike, he chucked the sledge hammer on the ground beside the track and walked off to board his train again. Mike Sullivan, who was a sort of superintendent around here, picked the sledge hammer up, ran after him, and handed the hammer to Sir Donald, who took it, smiled and climbed on board his train with the sledge hammer in his hand. Mike got a nice cheque afterwards as a gift.

"But about this 'last spike' and the diamonds," and again Mr. McKenzie smiled, "there must be 'millions' of last spikes in existence. People were getting 'last spikes' away from there for weeks afterwards."

(From *Province*, 7 December 1933, by J.S. Matthews.)

LOGGING TRAILS. WEST END.

Mr. and Mrs. Duke McKenzie went to live at 1156 Burnaby Street—now 1154 and 1156—in October 1898; at that time all that part of the "West End" was "in the rough"; they picked blackberries around in the stumps; the maple trees on Burnaby Street in front of their home—big trees now—he got "out in the clearing," and planted them himself. A two-plank sidewalk led to their home; the old log trail came down from northeast, passed about 1143 Burnaby Street, and under their home at 1156 Burnaby Street, and continued on down to the water; it had once been used to haul the logs out of the "West End" forest. The first house on Burnaby Street was Martin's, now 1143 Burnaby Street. They have no children.

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH OTWAY JOHN JAMES WILKIE OF NEW WESTMINSTER, 26 MAY 1934.

Mr. Wilkie served for many years on the Provincial Police Force, served in the Boer War, 1899-1902. (Photograph No. ? taken in 1884.)

THE COMING OF THE RAILWAY.

"The survey part surveying the lines of the C.P.R. from Port Moody to Granville, finished the line on Christmas Day, 1884, in a heavy snow storm. It had been snowing hard all day, but we were anxious to finish up; we were told that haste was necessary. At the conclusion of our day's labour, just as it was getting dark, we reached a bluff of land about half a mile or more east of George Black's Brighton Hotel at Hastings; this was the boundary of the city limits." (See amplification, next page.)

"We all got into our boat, a large clinker-built boat about 20 feet long and capable of carrying twelve or fourteen men, no masts, just cars, which was on the beach, and made our way to Black's at Hastings, where the celebrated our Christmas dinner. Among the jolly party was Major Rogers" (Rogers Pass), "in charge of the survey, who was staying at the hotel, and Jack Fannin, afterwards curator of the Provincial Museum at Victoria.