

Early Vancouver

Volume Six

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

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Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1940-1945.

Supplemental to volumes one, two, three, four and five collected in 1931, 1932, 1934, 1939 and 1944.

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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Mr. Woodside: "Yes, know him very well indeed; have known him all my life.

"You see, people were beginning to get interested in airplanes; they were coming up here once in a while, oh, once a year, and there was no place where they could land, and I got an idea about an airport, that they ought to have a place in Vancouver where airplanes could land. I was on the Council at the time; it was in the early twenties. Major D.R. McLaren—he's an official of Trans-Canada Airlines now back east—he was out here, and I talked it over with him, and I took it up in the Council; you'll find it in the records.

"So I went out on Lulu Island, and tramped up and down for days trying to find a piece of land which I could show Major McLaren and ask if that would do. And by and by, I took him out there and showed him a piece of land; it was all peat and muskeg, but we thought it might be drained, but they sent a man out from Ottawa, and he said it was no good, so we gave that up.

"Then we got an idea that we could make something of the flat land at the mouth of the Seymour Creek, Second Narrows, but that turned out no use, too.

"So the end was we got a piece of land on the north side of, and adjoining, the Lansdowne race track; it belonged to someone, I forget his name" (note: it may have been Mr. Virtue) "but we took a lease on it. That was a couple of years or so after I started hunting for a site for the airport."

Note: excepting only 1920 and 1923, Alderman Woodside was on Council from 1912-1928, both years inclusive, so that it is hard, without examining records, to say what year the above refers to.

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH MR. DAN MATHESON OF 777 IRWINTON APARTMENTS, AND OF MAYO, YUKON, WHO VERY KINDLY CALLED AT THE CITY ARCHIVES, 24 JULY 1941.

DAN MATHESON. CORDOVA STREET. VOLUNTEER FIRE BRIGADE.

Mr. Matheson said: "Cordova Street, we planked it with two by ten planks, all the way from Powell Street to Cambie Street; it was very wet along there. Well, of course, we had no fire department here at that time, so there were three places where we sank wells, ten feet square by twelve feet deep, and these wells were underneath the wood planking, and there was a man hole cut through the plank to get the fire suction hose. We had an old fire pump; I don't know where it came from; it had steam, and we dropped the suction hose into the well; then, when we pumped one well dry, we had to go to the next well."

WATER FROM WELLS. RATS.

Major Matthews: Where did the water come from?

Mr. Matheson: "Seepage! Lots of rats before the fire, but the fire killed all the rats."

SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD. DUNCAN MCPHERSON. "C.P.R. HOTEL."

"About the first through train over the C.P.R. to Port Moody; Sir John A. Macdonald and members of his cabinet came along with him, and the steamer *Yosemite*, side wheeler, went up to Port Moody, and brought the party to Vancouver, and landed them at the Hastings Sawmill wharf which was the only wharf here then. Everybody in town, naturally, went down to meet the boat. Amongst them was an old Scotchman named Duncan MacPherson, who had a hotel on Hastings Street called the 'C.P.R. Hotel.' Evidently, he was an old boyhood friend of Sir John, and, of course, down on the wharf, there was a space lined off to keep the people away from the gang plank. Old Duncan persisted in elbowing his way through the cordon of police, and two police caught old Duncan and sent him back, and Sir John was standing on the front of the boat which was not quite alongside of the wharf. He recognised old MacPherson, and Sir John hallooed out, 'Helloooo, Dunc.' And Dunc. hallooed back, 'Helloooo, Old Socks.' Sir John was coming down the gang plank by this time, and old Dunc. kept on hollering, and when Sir John got up to him he gave him a very cordial handshake, and the people were rather dumbfounded to see the great friendship of old Dunc. MacPherson and the Prime Minister of Canada. You can imagine how the police released their grip on him when he called Sir John 'Old Socks.'"