

Early Vancouver

Volume Six

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

2011 Edition (Originally Published 1945)

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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the bush, all the way from Granville to the Musqueam Indian Reserve, and we opened it up. We opened it up from the east to the west and paved it, that is, Marine Drive. And we paved Hudson Street from the river to 70th Avenue. And at the same time we paved 49th, and Arbutus from Kerrisdale to 16th Avenue, and we paved Heather Street from 16th Avenue to 22nd Avenue, and we paved 4th Avenue from Alma to Imperial Street, and that was all the pavements there were in Point Grey Municipality in my time.”

FIRE HALLS.

“In my time, that is, up to 1914, we just had two fire halls. One was at 38th Avenue, just east of Granville Street; that was the first one; there yet. And the other was out at West Point Grey in A.W. Cruise’s garage, on 11th Avenue not far from Imperial Street. Then it was moved from there into a store. We never had horse-drawn fire engines in Point Grey; they were all motor driven. At first we just had a hose and ladder, at the first station on 38th, and then afterwards they bought a big ladder and a pump, about 1914; the ladder was a long one. There was about five men in the Fire Department, and the first fire chief was” [blank]; “he was killed here, just a few months ago.

“Then, the end of it was that at amalgamation in 1929, the City of Vancouver took over the whole Fire Department.”

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH MR. GEORGE H. MILLER, OF HUGH M. FRASER AND CO., REAL ESTATE, FINANCE, ETC., WEST HASTINGS STREET, A MEMBER OF THE VANCOUVER PIONEERS ASSOCIATION, ETC., 10 JANUARY 1945.

I see the last recorded conversation I had with Mr. Miller was when he gave me a priceless lot of old directories, 19 June 1933. That lot of dirty old directories started what is now the best collection of directories on the mainland of British Columbia.

DOW ROAD, BURNABY. ALEXANDER DOW.

Major Matthews: Mr. Miller. Do you recall the time you gave me those old directories, and they were so dirty I carried them down the lane; at that time all I had was an old room in the tower of the Westminster Avenue City Hall; no light, no typewriter, no desk, or cabinets, and no shelves, and no salary; do you know that now we have one whole floor of the City Hall.

I was reading in the newspaper, and saw that a place was for sale on Down Road. At the same time that you gave me the old directories, I started a recording system of how streets and places got their names, first on the back of an old envelope. Well, things have changed since then, and now I have for an archives the whole of one floor in the new City Hall, and our directories are now the finest collection in Vancouver—started with yours—and I have a record system of at least three thousand street and place names, all in and about Vancouver. I used to be pleased when I had the record of one name; now if I find I have not got a record of a name, it annoys me.

How did Dow Road get its name; had it anything to do with Mr. Dow?

Mr. Miller: “It was named after Mr. Alexander Dow. It was Dow, Fraser and McTavish at first; then Dow, Fraser and Co.” (and now it is Hugh M. Fraser Co. Ltd.) “They are all dead now. But Mr. Dow, he had a little subdivision and a road was put through and called Dow Road. and he had a nice little home, square place, on the corner of Dow Road and the interurban railway tracks. His house was on the north side of the track, east corner; he had above five acres; the house is there yet.”