

Early Vancouver

Volume Seven

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2011 Edition (Originally Published 1956)

Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected between 1931-1956.

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 MRS. L.B. THOMPSON, 1855 WEST 14TH AVENUE, NÉE ANNIE MAUD MCKAY, PIONEER, 1889, WHO KINDLY CALLED AT THE ARCHIVES THIS MORNING, 16 SEPTEMBER 1948, BRINGING WITH HER SEVERAL OLD SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPHS, ONE BEING OF THE OPPENHEIMER STREET SCHOOL, ANOTHER STRATHCONA SCHOOL; BOTH HAVE SINCE BEEN COPIED BY PHOTOGRAPHY.

GEORGE MCKAY. THE FIRST C.P.R. STATION.

Mrs. Thompson: "The first I recall of Vancouver was the little red C.P.R. station practically surrounded by water, and a little wood or coal stove in the centre of the waiting room. I was only about three years old. We had just arrived by train from Arnprior, Ontario, that is, Mother and my sister Lottie McKay. Father was here building a house to receive us. It was near the present No. 1 Fire Hall on the corner of Gore and Cordova Street. It was one storey and a half and it was on the corner of the alley on Gore Avenue. It shows on Dakin's Fire Map, sheet 12, as the only building in the block surrounded by Hastings, Cordova, Gore and Westminster Avenue. Father dug a well and we got our water from that. I forget how we got it up. It must have been by a pump, or else we dragged it up with a rope and a pail. After a couple of years we moved over to Keefer Street, to No. 245 I think, or about that, and then later we built a third—next door, and the number was 249 Keefer Street. Later on my mother got the little cottage at 253."

WATER FROM WELLS. EAST END.

"My father continued in the fuel business. He had horses and hauled wood from the forest—Kitsilano as it is called now. He had not to go far to get cordwood in those days. Then he went into the express business—express wagon—and continued until, at the age of 60, he died very suddenly, and was buried in Mountain View. That would be in 1906. Mother, left a widow, continued to reside in the old home and finally the Chinamen from Chinatown on Pender Street encroached so much about us that we moved away to Mount Pleasant. In 1889 that part of Vancouver east of Westminster Avenue was quite a high class residential district. Lots of the best people lived down there but as time went on it deteriorated and was not so nice a district as formerly. Our home in Mount Pleasant was on the corner of 10th and St. George Street. Mother died about 1940 or 1941 and is buried beside Father."

OPPENHEIMER STREET SCHOOL. STRATHCONA SCHOOL.

"I went to school, first, at the Oppenheimer Street school—Miss Fletcher, teacher. My sister, Lottie, was five years older than me. My brother, George, in the photo of the Oppenheimer Street school I am giving you, was born in the first house we lived in on Gore Avenue and was four years younger. He was killed in action at Hill 60 in the first World War while serving with Engineers. It was December 22nd, but what year I forget. He was never married. He was 29 when killed. Lottie married and is now Mrs. G.D. Weatherbie, 4411 East Pender. She has two married children, son and daughter, but they do not live in Vancouver. I was married in 1905 at our house, Rev. Mr. McLeod. We belonged to the Presbyterian Church. Lottie was married in the little old church below Westminster Avenue, on the lane corner on Cordova Street, afterwards called Knox Church. Her husband was Mr. L.B. Thompson, from Seaforth, Ontario. He is away visiting his relatives there now. I have one son, Lorne Beattie Thompson, now 34, living at 4575 West 15th. His wife was Miss Lillie Cox and they have one son, now three years, Lorne Charles Thompson."