

Early Vancouver

Volume One

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

2011 Edition (Originally Published 1932)

Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1931-1932.

*A Collection of Historical Data, Maps, and Plans Made with the Assistance of
Pioneers of Vancouver Between March and December 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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At a Canadian Club luncheon to Lord Northcliffe held in the old hall, upstairs at the southwest corner of Howe and Pender streets about 1910 or 1911, Colonel McHarg acted as president. I sat on the opposite side of the table, facing them. The following titbit was overheard:

Colonel McHarg: "How many newspapers have you now?"

Lord Northcliffe: "Thirty-four."

Colonel McHarg: "What policy do you adopt with your opponents?"

Lord Northcliffe: "Never mention them. You see, no matter what you say there is always someone who disagrees with you, and then you have helped your opponent. If you even mention his name you have given him a certain amount of advertisement."

J.S. Matthews

At the time of this conversation, Lord Northcliffe owned the *London Times*.

28 NOVEMBER 1931 - THE CANADIAN ANTHEM, "O CANADA."

Mr. J.R.V. Dunlop (Jim Dunlop) who has now been secretary of the Vancouver Canadian Club for approximately twenty-two years—almost since its inception about 1908—told me some time ago that "O Canada" (Buchan version) was composed by General Larry Buchan in the berth of a Canadian Pacific Railway sleeping coach during a sleepless night. General Buchan was returning east after a visit to his brother (manager of the Bank of Hamilton on the corner of Hastings and Hamilton streets) in Vancouver. Ewing Buchan, the brother, was one of the first presidents of the Vancouver Canadian Club.

Mr. Dunlop said that during General Buchan's visit to Vancouver the suitability of the wording of previous versions had come up, and General Buchan, being troubled with sleeplessness, took advantage of the first night after leaving Vancouver on the train to compose a new version. The manuscript was kept by him until he reached the east, and then returned to his brother who, together with one or more others, made some slight alterations, and returned the manuscript to General Buchan. The corrected manuscript soon afterwards appeared in printed form on cards before each guest or member at a Vancouver Canadian Club luncheon. It was first sung at a Canadian Club luncheon in Vancouver by three gentlemen— Captain James Sclater of the 6th Regiment D.C.O.R., Captain W. Hart-McHarg of the same regiment, and a third member of the club whose name I do not recall—this being the method of introducing it. This was the first occasion upon which it was publicly sung in Canada.

I distinctly remember the cards at the luncheon to Lord Northcliffe, afterwards, or then, proprietor of the *London Times*, held in the old hall upstairs at the corner of Howe and Pender Street West. This would be about 1910 or 1911, but it was sung long before this, because the first time I attended, I was a stranger and sat at a lower table with a friend, but when Lord Northcliffe lunched, I sat across the table, in front of Lord Northcliffe and Colonel McHarg who I think was vice-president and acting for Ewing Buchan, president, but absent.

J.S. Matthews

NOTE ADDED LATER:

O Canada

I am almost sure the third gentleman was a Mr. Milne, and I thought his name was James, but perhaps it was Andrew. Andrew Milne, who died about 7 October 1943, was a vocalist who came to Vancouver in 1907, and was for 34 years organist of St. John's (Presbyterian) Church. Captain James Sclater was very Scottish, too, and a first class vocalist. Captain Sclater and Captain McHarg were fellow officers in the old 6th Regiment

D.C.O.R. and he sang well too. It may be that it was that three vocalists, all well and closely associated, were the three gentlemen.

Anyway, I know, positively, of two, i.e. Captain Hart-McHarg and Captain James Sclater, for I was an officer, too, of the old 6th, and so keenly interested in the doings of my seniors—I was a lieutenant.

It may be that it was Andrew Milne. His daughter, Mrs. Brunt, told me her father, Andrew Milne, was always very prone to sing “O Canada” whenever he saw an opportunity, and always used the Buchan version. She did not know the words of the weir’(d) version” but could repeat those of the Buchan version “off by heart.”

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