

Early Vancouver

Volume One

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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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The speaker was Captain Pittendrigh's son, Mr. C.E. Pittendrigh, recently retired after twenty-one years on the New Westminster Police Force. His father, Captain Pittendrigh, was stipendiary magistrate in the early days at New Westminster, and also a commander of the British Columbia Brigade of Garrison Artillery there.

"'Little Lake' was the old name for 'Deer Lake,' near Oakalla prison. We used to go out on the stage going to Hastings, get off, shoot the deer, and have them on the roadside by the time the stage came back. It was cheap; they charged us 'two bits' only for taking the deer in to New Westminster.

"The grouse were very thick. I used to hunt with a dog. Some dogs were very good at locating a grouse. On one occasion I could not get my dog to stop barking, but search my best I could not find that grouse. Finally I gave up, but a chance glance showed me where he was; on the very topmost pinnacle of a big fir, almost too far for the gun to reach, and I had the best gun I could buy. But the dog knew he was there all the time."

MOODYVILLE. POST OFFICE.

"The mail used to go to Moodyville once a week by an Indian on horseback from Westminster. The Indian got five dollars for taking it from Westminster to Hastings, from whence it went by boat. The Indian used to deliver the mail all right, then he got his money, and for the next two or three days he was drunk."

KINGSWAY.

"The 'new' road to Vancouver from Westminster was very little used. Even after it was 'built' no one used it very much; they seemed to prefer the old Hastings Road, now Douglas Road."

RIFLE RANGES. PEELE BUTTS.

"If there ever was one, I do not recall any rifle range on the Brunette Road. I distinctly remember the old Peele Butts; they were not in a ravine, but on the level, at the back of the Provincial Asylum for the Insane."

INDIANS.

From Pittendrigh's remarks it was gathered that the deer, grouse, etc. were very plentiful, and more or less easily secured in the district around "Little Lake." His remarks on this point were illuminating as to the effort necessary, on the part of Indians, to secure food before the white men came.

ELK.

In reply to a query as to what he thought was the significance of the elk dung which Mr. William Hunt of Kitsilano found beneath an uprooted tree on Kitsilano Beach (Greer's Beach) in 1898, he replied, "There were, in the early days, many dried, weather-whitened antlers of elk lying on the ground around Little Lake; evidently they had been there for many years. I have done a great deal of hunting in the northern country, have never seen any elk in these parts, but I have found their horns, around Little Lake, near Oakalla, before 1887."

Mr. Pittendrigh was in the provincial police in the early days, then went to the "Upper Country," retired on 1 June 1931 after twenty-one years service, and was presented then with a very handsome travelling bag by his fellow policemen in the presence of a large number of friends and His Worship the Mayor of the city of New Westminster.