

Early Vancouver

Volume Two

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

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Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1932.

Supplemental to volume one collected in 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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Lieut. Col. T. O. Townley, first commanding officer of militia in Vancouver 1894
and mayor of Vancouver in 1901



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from Fort Simpson in full tribal costume were met, and their chief presented an address and gift to H.R.H.—a headdress of eagle feathers if I remember aright. Then we drove down the incline to the wharf and I was invited on board and the Duke and Duchess presented me with individual autographed photographs; thanking me very heartily for the wonderful welcome they had received. The official reply to the address came later in a printed memorandum. At night the city and harbour were a blaze of illuminations, and the *Empress* pulled out in the wee sma' hours for Victoria, where a day was spent, and then the Royal Party turned East, and brought their transcontinental visit to an end.

This sketch may easily be enlarged upon by consulting the files of the local papers for the year 1901.

Yours faithfully,

T.O. Townley.

THE 6TH REGIMENT, "THE DUKE OF CONNAUGHT'S OWN RIFLES." OFFICERS' MESS. BEATTY STREET DRILL HALL.

Col. Townley writes that the Officers' Mess was curtained, carpeted and furnished—the building had just been completed—by the committee in charge of the Royal visit, and the furniture was afterwards presented to the regiment at his instance as Mayor. He was also a former commanding officer of the same unit before its change from artillery to rifles. The chairs used by Their Royal Highnesses—two of them—and the Royal luncheon table, were marked with small silver distinguishing plates and inscription by Major Matthews in 1932.

All trace of the despatch box, containing the papers, etc., etc., of the Royal visit, belonging to the reception committee, has been lost. Mr. E.R. Ricketts carefully treasured them until his death abroad; no information can be obtained as to what became of them. JSM.

THE 6TH REGIMENT, "THE DUKE OF CONNAUGHT'S OWN RIFLES." LIEUT. COL. H.D. HULME. VISIT OF HIS EXCELLENCY THE DUKE OF CONNAUGHT.

On his first visit to Vancouver in his capacity of His Excellency the Governor-General about 1911, the Duke of Connaught dined with his officers of the regiment of which he was honorary colonel. The dinner was held in the Hotel Vancouver, the new wing of which had recently been opened, the wing next Howe Street.

There were two or three meetings of the officers of the regiment to arrange for the dinner, and at the final one, Col. Hulme, then, I think, president of the Officers' Mess said from his chair at the head of the mess:

"Well, gentlemen, everything is all finished. You are to dine with His Royal Highness on" (I think) "Thursday night; there is to be Royal squab, and I don't know just what else, but the price will be seventeen dollars and fifty cents per plate," (\$17.50) "*which you will all pay.*" Then, without a second's hesitation, he continued, "Mr. Secretary, what's the next order of business?" The secretary stated something, and the meeting went on.

This story is recorded simply to show the wonderful esprit de corps which existed in the "Old Sixth," and the great confidence which the officers had in their seniors, and their splendid training. Added to this was Col. Hulme's wonderful personality; when he left to take over the command of the 62 Overseas Battalion, the officers presented him with a purse of gold one evening after drill. It was nearing midnight, but they sent a cab, I believe it was, down for his wife, got her out of bed, and brought her up to the Mess where they had a great bouquet of flowers for her, and walloping big cake for the colonel's children at home in bed. Hulme told me afterwards, "Say, Matthews, that's some experience to go through, my boy; I had hard work to keep from shedding a tear." But to return to the dinner.

The dinner took place. The band played soft music on the lawn of the Court House, surrounded by a huge crowd, brilliant lights, arches illuminated, etc., etc., and the crowd peering on tiptoe to get a glimpse of those within the hotel, which, by the movement, they could see were attending some function; actually the

dinner. About thirty-five officers of the regiment were in attendance, in full mess dress of black—the old style mess dress—and one guest, just one, Lt. Col. J. Edwards Leckie, commanding the 72nd Seaforth Highlanders, afterwards Major General Leckie. Major (Judge) Alex Henderson recited Tennyson's "The Revenge" in his inimitable style. The dinner was a very modest dinner, by no means a feast, very orderly, little talking, just a mess dinner despite its total cost of well over \$600. Then H.R.H. the Honorary Colonel rose, delivered a short speech, and retired. It was very evident to see that he was well pleased.

Earlier in the day the Royal party had been received on the steps of the Court House. It was a beautiful day and a gorgeous scene with the green grass, the tremendously tall flag pole in the centre with the Union Jack flying, the bunting, the decorations, the troops, Boy Scouts, legion of Frontiersmen, etc., etc., all drawn up. The dais was a huge affair constructed over the Court House steps, carpeted and chaired luxuriantly, and with the officers of the 6th Regiment D.C.O.R. drawn up in rear of the dais as a sort of background, "wallpaper," some jokester said. The writer was standing just behind Miss Pelly, a lady in waiting, and heard her whisper to Col. Bukely, A.D.C., "My, this is something like a show."

Vancouver did well that day for the son of the Great Queen, and brother of Edward the Peacemaker. JSM
March 1933.

THE STORY OF "A BRAVE SOLDIER AND GALLANT GENTLEMAN."

"Museum and Art Notes," Vancouver City Museum, 1929.

This painting in oils is preserved in the Officers' Mess at the Drill Hall. Its cost, \$500, was raised by collections made by Major J.S. Matthews from old officers and friends. It is said to be an excellent likeness; it lacks one ribbon, green, i.e. the Officers Long Services (Volunteer). Mrs. Hart-McHarg, his mother, handed all her husband's and son's papers, documents and trophies to Major Matthews for safekeeping. They are in the City Museum.