

## Early Vancouver

### Volume Four

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*Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1935-1939.*

*Supplemental to Volumes One, Two and Three collected in 1931-1934.*

### 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 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the City's founding. The project was made possible by funding from the Vancouver Historical Society.

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## **MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH FRANK HARRIS, 16 MAY 1937.**

At the Water Works Cottage, end of Pipe Line Road, First Narrows, Vancouver, B.C., where, for nearly fifty years, since 1888, he has been caretaker of the water works interests on the Stanley Park shore, and today, 1937, has had unquestionably, longer service in public, semi-public or private capacity than any person, man or woman, in the city of Vancouver. (Actually retired, but continues to reside in the original house, and takes a lively, useful interest.)

Mr. Kenneth J. Waites, of the King Edward High School staff, together with Mrs. Waites and Mrs. Matthews, were driving around the park when we stopped in the evening for a momentary call. An archivist is never "off duty." We knocked at the door, and Mr. Harris soon opened it.

Major J.S. Matthews: My name is Matthews, you are Mr. Harris, I believe? May I come in?

Mr. Harris: (slowly and with emphasis) "Major Matthews!"

Major Matthews: Yes. I've been a long time coming; twenty years. This meeting awakens many recollections; fond recollections. I can see your son (Sid). It was a beautiful morning; things were "quiet," as we called it. They had stopped shelling us for some reason, and time was a bit monotonous on our hands. We were in support back of the "Craters" at Ypres, and I wanted to go along the trench, to the left, to see what was along there, so I asked Sid to come along with me for company. He was an outstanding man, and I liked to have him with me. We talked and smoked as we went along, and after twenty minutes or half an hour, came back again. It is not usual for majors to take privates with them as companions, but with Sid Harris it was different; if he had not been killed (in action) Sid would have risen. He might have come back from the war with almost any rank at all.

After we were seated.

### **FRANK HARRIS OF STANLEY PARK.**

Major Matthews: How long have you been here, Mr. Harris?

Mr. Harris: (cheerily, and with a smile) "I came out from England in 1884, from Devon. Born June 13th, will be 77 next June" (1937), "and look" (he danced around the floor a pace or two), "not so bad for an old one. I'll tell you the secret. Don't think ill of anyone; that's the way to keep young. See. I can dance a bit."

### **STANLEY PARK, OPENING. STANLEY PARK, DEDICATION. LORD STANLEY.**

Major Matthews: Were you here when the park was opened? When Lord Stanley came?

Mr. Harris: "Oppenheimer opened it in 1888; Lord Stanley dedicated it in 1889. We always said that Lord Stanley was here on the last day of October; actually we do not know the date." (Lord Stanley was there October 30<sup>th</sup>.) "He stood outside there, just where the curve is; he waved his arms a bit" (Mr. Harris extended his arms as though embracing the whole park between them) "and dedicated it; said a few words; that was all."

Major Matthews: What about the cairn?

Mr. Harris: (puzzled) "Cairn! Cairn! There was no cairn."

Major Matthews: Well, the newspaper says he laid the first stone in a cairn.

Mr. Harris: (still puzzled) "I don't remember any cairn. There is no cairn around there that I know of."

### **VANCOUVER WATERWORKS 1888.**

Mr. Harris: "You see, we had a flag pole." (See photo No. St. 35, of a wooden flagpole supported by three sticks, a boulder, at the curve of the road at First Narrows, and a single plank seat on the opposite side of the shell surfaced Park Road.)

"We put the flag pole up when they were building the water line across the Narrows. There was no telephone, so we had flags; we had several flags, which meant what we wanted. When we wanted the boat to come across we hoisted a flag; that must have been 1888 that we put up that flagpole. I wrote the story of the building of the water works twice, once for Mr. [blank]; he's dead now, and once for Mr. [blank].

"We used to have a peg to mark where that flagpole stood, but when they widened the old" (white) "shell road" (note: the shells were taken from the old Indian midden at Whoi-Whoi, or Lumberman's Arch) "they swung the old road, and our peg disappeared."

### **VANCOUVER CITY BAND. MAYOR OPPENHEIMER.**

[Mr. Harris:] "I joined the first band, and I've drunk David Oppenheimer's health in champagne. David Oppenheimer, Thos. Dunn, Gartney of the hardware store, [blank], [blank], and they got together" (i.e. subscribed the amount) "and sent to New York for the instruments, and when they came the band went around and serenaded them. We came up to the Hotel Vancouver, and Mayor Oppenheimer came out of the steps, and put up his glasses" (i.e. pince-nez); "he always wore his glasses on a little piece of black tape; he" (Mr. Harris imitated the gesture of throwing back his head, throwing out his chest, and peering through imaginary eyeglasses at something below him) "Mr. Oppenheimer came out of the Hotel and looked at us and said quickly, 'Come right in, come right in.' So we all went in, and everybody in the hotel drank champagne. I said to old Bill [blank], little bit of a fellow; he got us the cloth, and made the uniforms, 'How do you like this stuff,' and he replied, 'Rather have some beer or cider'; he came from the next county to me" (Cornwall.)

### **OAK TREES. KING GEORGE VI CORONATION. JONATHAN ROGERS. MRS. ALICE TOWNLEY.**

Mr. Harris: (continuing) "On Wednesday" (Coronation Day, 12 May 1937) "we planted two oaks just outside there. Jonathan Rogers" (i.e. Rogers Building, and for twenty years park commissioner) "planted one to mark the spot where Lord Stanley opened the park, and Mrs. Alice Townley, former park commissioner, planted the one to commemorate the coronation of King George and Queen Elizabeth. They are about ten feet high."

Little Mrs. Harris, sweet little lady, then came in, and Major Matthews again repeated his recollection of her gallant son, Capt. Sidney Harris (master mariner), who served as a private in his company in the 102<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Infantry battalion, but was killed in action whilst serving with the machine guns. As the ladies were waiting in the motor car and the evening was chilly, we left the cottage in its beautiful surroundings, and said goodbye for the present to a charming old couple.

Mrs. Harris died 31 October 1938.

### **MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH MR. AND MRS. FRANK HARRIS (OF THE STANLEY PARK PIPE LINE ROAD COTTAGE ON FIRST NARROWS), 16 JUNE 1937.**

On C.P.R. *Princess* Joan en route to Newcastle Island, for the Vancouver Pioneers Association picnic (217 pioneers present.)

### **HAY-TULK. "SUPPLEJACK" (INDIAN). HAATSALANO.**

Mr. Harris said: "Supplejack" was buried close to our cottage, in a little deadhouse just where the summerhouse stands, the little open shelter by the horse trough, just where Lord Stanley dedicated the park."