

Early Vancouver

Volume Four

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

2011 Edition (Originally Published 1944)

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

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through the ship. The amount of material in those days to build a dynamo would fill a big space in the engine room, laminations, plates of pure iron about the thickness of ordinary sheet tin, and I guess thousands of them laid together into big blocks of pure iron. Then we installed a 40 H.P. engine to run the dynamo, there was a gun boat load of material to it, what a difference today, eh!

Now Mr. Matthews, this talk does not answer your question at all, and it leaves us both to wonder if they got lights ashore in those days. How was it done? It can easily be done today alright by hooking on to a dynamo, and then having wire covered with water proof insulation to dip over board to lead to shore. They have lights attached to the divers' suits, sure, to let them work with lights below in water, but, in 1879, it is a question. None of the ships in those days had electric wiring, and we were first to have a search light in 1885. And the special class of torpedo men only attended to the running of it. At the first trial of it they were glad to shut it down and get away from it. So that is in days long gone by, sir.

CANDLES LIGHTED BY TALLOW DIPS.

Now the lamps on the mess deck were all hung to throw their light below the hammocks, where they were strung up to the beams overhead. These lamps were fitted with a spring socket that held the candle; when you entered a candle you compressed a spring, and a cap went on top of the socket, and a quarter turn held the candle and the spring down. As the candle burned, the spring would keep the flame at the top of the socket cap. The candles are about one and a quarter inches dia. and six inches long. These candles were all mould made, not dips. My grandfather, was a candle maker of the old type of candles called dips; when I was a little boy on a Saturday, being out of school, I used to go and see him making dips over a big tank of hot tallow, and over the tank was about twelve rods like broom handles, and they all hung apart about four feet above the hot tallow, then they would cut the wicks by allowing the length of wick to be long enough by doubling it over the rods to form an eye, then cut the parts to suit the length of the candle to be made. There is about four dozen wicks on each rod and the wicks about two inches apart. There is a small rope pulley for to lower and hoist the rods into the hot tallow and they dipped the rods in the tallow till it covered the wicks up to the eye on the rods. They made the candles to suit the sale of them. After they cool off from being dipped, they take on another coat of tallow until they get the weight of candle wanted to sell. So that is where in making they call them dips.

{Letter continues on H.M.S. Condor at bombardment of Alexandra, etc.}

I will remain obediently yours,

John C. Anderson.

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH GERALD ASHTHORPE, 8020 SHAUGHNESSY STREET, NOW AN EMPLOYEE OF THE IMPERIAL OIL LIMITED (PAINTER), VANCOUVER, 17 JANUARY 1939.

SHAUGHNESSY HEIGHTS. FAIRVIEW. DOUGLAS PARK. TROUT. DEER.

Mr. Ashtorpe said: "I was born in April 7th 1907, and came to Vancouver with my father in 1909, so that anything I say must be qualified by my age; I was just a 'little kid' when we went to live up in Fairview, on 19th Avenue, between Ash and Tupper Street."

D.L. 472 SCHOOL.

"I used to play around the school in a private house on the northeast corner of Ash Street and 19th Avenue; Miss H.M. Hesson was the teacher; she limped; it is now numbered 599 West Nineteenth Avenue; a bit of a one and a half storey cottage; we used to swing under the front steps; there was swing under the steps. Then I went to the old Shaughnessy School on the corner of Oak and 25th Avenue; you have photos of both the old schools on 18th and 19th, which were used before Shaughnessy School was built."

DOUGLAS PARK. CHINESE GARDENS.

“On a Saturday afternoon, we ‘kids’—I was just a little fellow—used to fish for trout, and caught them, twelve inches long, in the creek which started up in the swamp, and ran across 22nd Avenue, and wound its way about, and came out right behind the old Shaughnessy School on the corner of 25th Avenue and Oak. It ran past there, and crossed Oak Street, and we used to fish in it behind the Chinese Gardens, now Douglas Park, and catch trout; there was a big pool, and when we fished it out, we went over to the Capilano River and caught more, and brought them over in tin cans; we were going to restock our pool, but it never worked; it was just a boy’s dreams.”

WILD DUCKS. HEATHER STREET AND 33RD.

“There used to be a swamp east of Heather Street, and south of Thirty-third Avenue, and it was full of ducks; there used to be hundreds of them. I don’t know what year was the latest they were there, but I know it was as late as 1915.”

POST OFFICE. HEATHER STREET.

“There was a little Post Office, Barker’s, in those days at the corner of Heather and Sixteenth Avenue, on the southeast corner.”

HEATHER STREET AT 25TH. DEER. WILD ANIMALS.

“Tupper Street ran as far as 24th; so did Ash Street; behind was just a trail; in between, south of 24th, was a hollow full of bushes; green bushes and lots of them, thick together, and a pool. Twenty-fifth Avenue was on top, and south of that was a clearing.

“Between 24th and 25th was a tangle of logs; washed there in a pile by a flood; and there was a pool of water. We youngsters, of a Saturday afternoon, used to go up there and wait; very quiet, and watch the deer come out of the bushes and graze about the pool, or drink, or just walk about.”

EARLY AEROPLANES. CANADA AIRCRAFT. DOMINION AIRWAYS. YARROW AIRCRAFT.

“The plane which fell into English Bay and drowned young Mr.” (Brenton, I think was his name) “was afterwards hauled out to English Bay; I helped. We took it to the Dominion Airways, who had a bit of a place at the corner of Stephens and Fourth Avenue, and repaired it; it was all smashed up, but we fixed it up, and it is still out on Lulu Island, but I don’t think it flies now; it is too old. The Dominion Airways amalgamated with the Yarrow Aircraft people of Victoria, and then that firm went bankrupt, and that was the end.”

Read and approved by Mr. Ashthorpe.

18 January 1939.

J.S. Matthews.

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH WALTER V. BAINBRIDGE, 25 SEPTEMBER 1939.

Walter V. Bainbridge, of “Bainbridge’s” and Bainbridge Avenue, Burnaby, now of 4419 West Fourth Avenue, who very kindly called at the City Archives this afternoon. A most agreeable gentleman, of medium height and weight; his hair turning white, but quite active and alert.

WALTER V. BAINBRIDGE.

Mr. Bainbridge said: “I came to Vancouver in July 1898, from Newcastle-on-Tyne; came through the United States, New York, New Orleans, Texas and California, up the coast to Seattle, and Victoria; single then, and looking for adventure and pleasure. My father was Cuthbert, and mother was Margaret Bainbridge, of Newcastle-on-Tyne; both died when I was a child, and were buried at Newcastle-on-Tyne.

“I was born on 2nd January 1873, so I was about twenty-five when I reached Vancouver. I was eager to do some big game hunting—bear, etc.—that’s why I came to Vancouver. Then I went up to Chilliwack, and visited some of my old school fellows from the Leys School, Cambridge, and did some hunting on Harrison Lake; bear and so forth. Then I made three trips to England, and on my return someone told me about Burnaby Lake.”