

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

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THE OUTBREAK OF WAR, VANCOUVER, 4 AUGUST 1914.

The command of the contingent from the 6th Regiment, D.C.O.R., Vancouver's premier regiment, devolved on Major W. Hart-McHarg, second in command of the 6th Regiment.

In a subsequent conversation with Capt. W.H. Forrest, paymaster of the 6th, and a close friend of Major McHarg's he told me that Major McHarg had said to him, "I cannot understand Hulme" (Lieutenant-Colonel H.D. Hulme, commanding, 6th D.C.O.R.) "Here he has got the chance of a lifetime; why doesn't he take it. But with me" (McHarg) "it is different. I have only a couple of years to live in any case." Major McHarg had for years suffered from sort of stomach ailment (indigestion, I think) and once told me that about all he ate was "biscuits and milk." He was a man of five foot ten or eleven inches, big frame, but weighed one hundred and forty-five pounds only; his large head belied that his legs were thin and slender; it was when he sat down in front of me, on the interurban car going to the Richmond rifle range, that I noticed how his trousers covered slender limbs.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL W. HART-MCHARG.

Concerning his youthful days in Winnipeg, he once said to me: "I cannot fathom the young man of today" (about 1912.) "When I was in Winnipeg" (law student) "all I got was \$25 a month, and lived on it, but today a young man gets pretty much what he wants and spends it; I don't know how they manage it."

How did you live (on \$25 a month)? I queried.

"Well, I walked to the office, wore celluloid collars, and washed them; and as for going to a theatre, why, that was beyond my wildest dreams," he answered, and continued, "I was a ward in chancery, and was known at one time as the 'Hart-McHarg child.'" (His papers are in the City Museum.)

Capt. John McMillan, quartermaster of both 6th D.C.O.R. before the war, and the 7th Battalion, C.E.F. when organised, told me that Major McHarg sat up all night awaiting word of the outbreak of war, and, to use Capt. McMillan's words, was "bleary eyed" when, next morning, about 10 a.m., a few of the officers of the 6th D.C.O.R. assembled at the Drill Hall. There was present Col. Hulme, O.C., Capt. Gardiner, Adjutant, Capt. McMillan, quartermaster, Major Hart-McHarg, and a few others.

LIEUT.-COL. H.D. HULME.

But, in relinquishing the command of the first troops to leave Vancouver, Colonel Hulme, commanding the Sixth, was actually self-sacrificing, and logical. Major McHarg had had war experience in South Africa as a sergeant; Colonel Hulme had no war service at all, and at that time, and to soldiers especially, war service was considered far more essential to command than, later, when all manner of business men rose to high military station and rank. Major McHarg was without ties of business or family; he was unmarried; had a business partner of repute to whom he could leave the firm's responsibilities to its (legal) clients. Colonel Hulme was married with three children approaching their 'teens, and his business affairs included trusteeships, etc., which he could not drop at a moment's notice without injury to others. To let Major McHarg take the first body of men to the front was proper to a logical mind. But it brought unkind thought, and some criticism from the less thoughtful.

Colonel Hulme afterwards commanded the 62nd Overseas Battalion, the third battalion to leave Vancouver.

J.S. Matthews
Captain.
6th Regiment, D.C.O.R.

LIEUT.-COL. H.D. HULME, BURIED WITH MILITARY HONOURS TODAY, 4 DECEMBER 1937.

Col. Hulme was great companionship; always funny; amusing and good humoured; always had a funny incident to relate and keep things sweet and wholesome. Here is one he told me one day.

"Matthews!" he said in his cheery way, "You remember those street cars, Robson street cars, before they put doors on them, how they used to crowd on going to the park?"

"I forget what it was; something at the park; some ceremony, crowds going out there, hanging onto the car steps, and I had to be in the park, but the" (horse-drawn) "cab was late; couldn't wait; had to do something, so I jumped on one of those cars; full dress uniform and all."

(Note: the full dress uniform of the 6th Regiment, "The Duke of Connaught's Own Rifles," of which he was either senior or junior major.)

"Well, I offered the conductor five cents but he waved it away, saying, 'Oh, we never charge *the band*.'"

And the beloved man chuckled, and shook all over.

JSM

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH MR. FRANK HUMPHREY, 2984 TURNER STREET, VANCOUVER, 17 FEBRUARY 1937.

Who kindly called at the City Archives to explain the details of an old photo taken about 1892 by G.J. Cave, photographer (shown as rooming at 520 Seymour Street, directory, 1892) of four nurses and an hospital orderly (one nurse in dark dress and white cap, three nurses in white aprons, orderly in apron.)

VANCOUVER CITY HOSPITAL. BEATTY STREET, WOOD BUILDING.

Mr. Humphrey said: "This photograph was taken of the staff, the entire staff except the cook and night nurse, of the Vancouver City Hospital by Mr. Cave, who at that time was a patient of the hospital. I judge it was the summer of 1892.

"The photo was taken in front of a passageway between the two buildings of the hospital, and, as you see, shows the covered passageway to be open on the near side, and closed with windows on the other; it leads from the" (old public ward) "nurses' quarters in the old wooden hospital building on Beatty Street to the newer brick hospital on Cambie Street.

"In 1889, I was ill with typhoid, and entered the hospital a couple of days before Miss Crickmay, who was matron, left." (Note by City Archivist: Board of Health records show that she returned, 10 August 1889, but perhaps she left 9 September at the end of one month's notice.) "I think I entered the hospital about September 9th 1889, and remained there until about the end of November; about three months.

"The nurses in the photograph are:

1. Miss Swan, matron, wearing a dark dress and white cap. She went back to Collingwood, Ontario. She resigned.
2. Miss Watmough, the head nurse, who died about five years ago as the wife of Harry Newton. She is shown standing, her head beside passageway post, and wearing a dark dress, with white cap and apron.
3. Miss Bushby, who lived up in Fairview, near Jonathan Miller's home. She is standing, wearing light dress, cap and apron. I don't know what became of her.
4. Miss May, seated between myself and Miss Swan. I don't know anything as to what became of her.
5. Frank Humphrey, or myself.

HUGHES, HOSPITAL ORDERLY.

"As I said, I went into the Beatty Street Hospital in September 1889, and remained until about November 15 as a patient. Then the porter, not Hughes, but some other man, had a disagreement with Miss Swan, and left, and as I was not in a condition to leave the hospital, they said, 'You had better stop and take his job,' and so I did, and remained ten years, until March 1900, by which time we were in the new brick building on Cambie Street."