

**Early Vancouver**

**Volume Five**

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

**2011 Edition (Originally Published 1945)**

*Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1936-1945.*

*Supplemental to volumes one, two, three and four collected in 1931, 1932 and 1934.*

**About the 2011 Edition**

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**CONVERSATION WITH MR. WILLIAM McINTOSH STARK, "BILLY STARK," 2454 CORNWALL STREET, SON OF JAMES STARK, PIONEER, OF "STARK'S GLASGOW HOUSE," CORDOVA STREET, WHO IS HERE ON A VISIT FROM CALIFORNIA, AND STAYING WITH HIS SISTER MARY, MRS. HARRY P. ARCHIBALD, 12 DECEMBER 1939.**

**FIRST AUTOMOBILE. THE "ROLLING PEANUT" OLDSMOBILE, 5 MAY 1902.**

Mr. Stark said: "I have been looking up Father's diary for 1902, and this is what I found: 'MONDAY, MAY 5<sup>th</sup> 1902. AUTOMOBILE ARRIVED,' and again, 'TUESDAY, MAY 6<sup>th</sup> 1902, WROTE DRY GOODS REVIEW, TORONTO, RE AUTO. "PROVINCE."' I went down to the *Province* office to look at their files, and there is a long article there, May 5<sup>th</sup> 1902, captioned, 'AN AUTOMOBILE DELIVERY VAN,' and 'FIRST MACHINE OF THE KIND ARRIVES FOR A LOCAL FIRM.'" (See photo C.V. Trans. P. 47.)

"The name 'Rolling Peanut' was applied to all Oldsmobile automobiles by George Ade, the American humorist. The Oldsmobile people sent out a little pamphlet of the humorous article written by Mr. Ade.

"Our car was not the first automobile in Vancouver, but it was the first internal combustion car; single cylinder, four and a half horsepower; under the seat; single tube rubber tires; no inner tube, no fender, no lights, no horn, but a bell on the dashboard which sounded when a foot button and ratchet were kicked. Originally, it was intended for a delivery van for 'Glasgow House' on Cordova Street, and had two seats in front and a box at the back which could be lifted off, but we put two seats at the back; then it held four; two back to back. The foot brake was on a ratchet on the back wheels.

"The car was manufactured by the Olds Motor Co., Detroit, Michigan, and was owned by James Stark and Sons; it cost about one thousand dollars landed in Vancouver. In this photos here" (C.V.P. Trans. 46, C.V.N. Trans. 23) "in the Hollow Tree, Park Road, Stanley Park, E.W. Stark, my brother, is with the Misses Wright, sisters to Frank Wright, grocer, now dead."

**FIRST GARAGE. VANCOUVER AUTO AND CYCLE CO. BEGG MOTOR CO.**

"The first garage in Vancouver was the Vancouver Auto and Cycle Co., 108 Hastings Street West; it had been an old livery barn. We handled bicycles, too; here are a number of photographs which you can have. My brother-in-law, F.R. Begg, bought out the Vancouver Auto and Cycle Co., and that was how the Begg Motor Company started; now a big firm."

**FIRE ENGINE, FIRST AUTOMOBILE. FIRE CHIEF J.H. CARLISLE.**

"I must tell you something I have often wondered about; just what a ride I gave Fire Chief J.H. Carlisle had to do with Vancouver getting its first automobile fire engines; I think Vancouver was the first city in North America to have an automobile fire engine department." (Not correct.)

"Well, one day, after we had moved from our old home at 1027 Robson Street, and we were living on Harwood Street near Bute Street, I was passing in the auto I was driving and saw Chief Carlisle running down his steps; of course, I knew that meant there was a fire alarm. The Chief had his headquarters at No. 2 Fire Hall, Seymour and Georgia, and when there was a fire, they sent a horse and buggy from the Fire Hall galloping to his home to get him, and he used to run towards the way he knew they were coming.

"This day there was no horse and buggy in sight, and I was passing in the car, so I beckoned to him to get in, he jumped in, and drove off to meet the horse and buggy; the fire was somewhere down in Chinatown. We met the horse and buggy galloping towards us. I asked the Chief, 'Shall I go on'; he replied, 'Yes, go on,' and as we passed the horse and buggy he beckoned the driver to follow, which he did; he was soon away behind. I said to Mr. Carlisle, 'Shall I drive fast; we're doing twenty-five miles now'; he said, 'Yes; go thirty-five if you like.'

"We got to the fire a long time, oh, a long time, before the horse and buggy, and I have often wondered just what that ride in my car had to do with Vancouver changing from horse-drawn fire engines to motor engines; it might have impressed the Chief with their superiority."