

Early Vancouver

Volume Five

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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

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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MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH ALFRED J. NYE, OF LYNN CREEK ROAD, LYNN VALLEY, NORTH VANCOUVER, WHO VERY KINDLY CALLED AT THE CITY ARCHIVES, CITY HALL, 19 JULY 1938.

FOREST FIRES. LOGGING OFF THE FOREST. INDIAN CUSTOMS. STANLEY PARK. PROSPECTORS.

Mr. Nye said: (remarking upon the frightful forest holocaust at Campbell River, etc., at this date) "It's all nonsense for people to say that the Indians set fire to forests to drive the game where they could kill it; or, as others aver, to drive evil spirits away with smoke, which the demons are said to dislike; we must give the Indians credit for having more sense than that.

"What I have heard is that prospectors set fire to the forest in the early days to clear off the mountain side, so that they could examine the ground more easily."

(Note: Andrew Paul, Indian, *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 2, says that it was a tradition that, every seventh year, a calamity, i.e., punishment, was visited upon Indians. August Jack Khaatsalano, *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 3, speaks of the "punishment" the Indians got when thunder [and lightning] set fire to the forests at Squamish, and the Indians suffered from a shortage of food in consequence.)

"An Indian who fells a tree—with a stone axe, of course—was a man of consequence amongst his fellows; at least, so I gathered from an old Indian who was about ninety years old at the time he showed me, with pride, the stump a tree his grandfather had felled; *his grandfather*, mind you—and the old man was ninety then—with stone tools. He was quite proud, apparently, of being the grandson of such a grandfather." (See "Chilaminst," and Paul, in *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 2.)

"I was in Stanley Park one day—near where the bowling green is now—and noticed that a tree stump on that location was without a spring board cuts, so I climbed up, oh, about twelve feet or so, and got on top of the stump. I found out, by the irregular cuts, that it had been cut down with a stone axe; Indian, of course. It interested me because I recalled being told that, prior to about 1875, or thereabouts, that pioneer loggers cut down all trees with axes; they had not the saw they have now."

EARLY SURVEYS. ROCHE POINT. BROCKTON POINT. *EGERIA* SURVEY MARK. COMPASS.

"Years ago, I talked with one of the Royal Engineers of 1859. He told me of cutting their way from New Westminster to Burrard Inlet; a narrow trail through the trees, for the first surveys of Burrard Inlet. He told me that they cut through to the inlet, then crossed to Roche Point, and climbed the mountain, taking with them a thick rod of copper, which they placed in the ground at some prominent point; I imagine it is there yet.

"Then, he said, they took a sight on Stanley Park—only it was not called Stanley Park then—and afterwards placed a survey mark on the spot sighted there. years and years after the *Egeria* survey ship placed a proper slab bench mark on that spot; it's there yet, at Brockton Point. I recall the old man telling me of a huge compass they carried; three feet across, nine feet in circumference; tremendous thing; anyway, that was what he said it was in size."

Alfred J. Nye, brother to Capt. Percy Nye (see *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 2, and file), sons of Arthur Dalton Nye, retired English coachbuilder, arrived Vancouver 1890, settled 1898 on an acre of land, now corner Sixth Street and Chesterfield Avenue, North Vancouver, purchased from North Vancouver Land and Improvement Co., 1898. A water course, or creek, ran through the property, and at first served for household water. Mr. Nye, senior, had seven children; three now deceased. Alfred J. Nye served in South African War with Vancouver contingent, and is a member of Original Garrison Artillery Association, Vancouver.

J.S.M.