

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 MR. JAS. OLLASON, 103 29TH STREET, WEST VANCOUVER, FOR SIXTEEN YEARS, 1915-1930, MUNICIPAL CLERK, CORPORATION OF WEST VANCOUVER, AT CITY ARCHIVES, 19 JUNE 1937.

FIRST NARROWS BRIDGE. WEST VANCOUVER.

Mr. Ollason said: "I'll tell you this. If I had not been Municipal Clerk during the years 1925-1930, there would be no First Narrows bridge. It is possible that there may have been some mention of it before that time" (see A.P. Horne narrative; also G.G. Mackay) "but I never heard of it. I was the first to actually promote it, and to keep it going from January to December 1926, when the plebiscite killed it.

"What gave me the first idea was that we had so much tax sale lands which had come back on our hands." (Note: subsequent to the real estate boom, and the Great War.) "We got some eastern people to agree to take some two million dollars worth of tax sale lands in return for the bridge. Then David Morgan, he was reeve, went over and saw Mayor" (L.D.) "Taylor of Vancouver, and that was where Mayor Taylor first got his idea; he gets credit for promoting the bridge; it makes me laugh.

"Then, another thing. At the time the bridge *did* go through, and when they had the big meeting," (Reeve) "Leyland was up on the platform, and the crowd were clapping and cheering him, and he was saying wonderful things. Well. After the meeting was over, and we were all standing outside the entrance to the Hall, David Morgan put his hand on his" (Leyland's) "shoulder, and said, 'Leyland, you know it's a surprise to me that you'" (Leyland) "'could stand up there" (on the platform) "'and take all that applause, and never say a word about the one man" (Ollason) "'who did the most to get that bridge started and put it through.'"

J.S. Matthews.

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH MR. J. OLLASON, FORMER MUNICIPAL CLERK, WEST VANCOUVER, WHO KINDLY CALLED AT THE CITY ARCHIVES, 11 APRIL 1939.

HOLLYBURN, B.C. JOHN LAWSON. WEST VANCOUVER. WEST VANCOUVER FERRY CO. ELECTRIC LIGHT.

Mr. Ollason said: "The photograph which you have captioned, 'Looking up Lawson Avenue, Hollyburn, B.C.' is explained this way." (Photo No. P. Out. 207.)

"The plank wharf is at the foot of Seventeenth Avenue, and was the Dominion Government wharf, where the West Vancouver Ferry landed before it was moved to Ambleside. I forget the name of the first ferry boat; I think it was the *West Vancouver*, perhaps not, but the next was the *Sea Foam*. The West Vancouver Ferry Company was formed about 25th February 1910. Both boats were insufficiently powered, and when there was a good strong tide, had not the power to get out and in the Narrows, and used to lie in the shelter of Prospect Point awaiting a favourable opportunity. At the end of the wharf you see a lamp standard with a goose neck; that is a gasoline light—there was no electric light, and before we got any, we had to get the Dominion government inspector to threaten the B.C. Electric Co., and tell them that they could not export power to the United States at Sumas, etc., until local needs were supplied, so the B.C. Electric Railway Co. drew up a hard agreement which made the municipality responsible for the payment of all light bills. They thought they would lose money on account of insufficient demand, but it paid from the start after it was installed."

HOLLYBURN WHARF.

"On the right is a small floating wharf; that is the freight wharf; you can see bricks and barbed wire on the end of it, and the shed at the end is to put the freight in. To the right of the freight shed is a little cottage behind the piles—an old lady lived there, and it was a sort of tea room for summer visitors."

JOHN LAWSON'S OFFICE. J. OLLASON'S OFFICE.

"Lawson Avenue is 100 feet wide; the only 100 foot wide street in West Vancouver. On the west side of Lawson Avenue is a concrete sidewalk from the wharf to Marine Drive; John Lawson built that himself, and paid for it himself, and the building in the centre with two windows, and a door in the middle, is John Lawson's office. Across the street is my office; I was in the real estate business; I built that building, and it is still standing. I sold it."