

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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ARCHIBALD, CITY CLERK. FIRST STORE, WEST VANCOUVER.

“Behind John Lawson is a small white building not wholly visible—before you come to the store. It was a real estate office belonging to Archibald, afterwards City Clerk at North Vancouver. Further back, the high building on the corner of Marine Drive and Lawson Avenue is the first store in West Vancouver; the building belonged to John Lawson, and the store was run by Ferguson, of the Ferguson Transfer, now in Vancouver; he was proprietor, and ran it, and had to move out when John Lawson moved the post office in there, and he was pretty annoyed about that, too.”

“NAVY JACK.” FIRST MUNICIPAL HALL IN TENT, 1912. FIRST MUNICIPAL HALL. WEST VANCOUVER INCORPORATION.

“The orchard is on ‘Navy Jack’s’ property, the original settler, whose property John Lawson acquired in some way, and on the extreme left of the photo is the original ‘Navy Jack’ house, improved by John Lawson. John Lawson had good horses, and the building behind his house, one with a window in the gable, and a chimney in ridge, was his stable and barn. Over my office can be seen a tent; that is the first ‘Municipal Hall,’ used in the summer time, and until the first Hall was built. They used the tent in the summer of 1912. The big building—touching the lamp—is the new Municipal Hall, probably just finished. After West Vancouver became incorporated, their first Municipal Office was in the basement of the Trustee Building, on the southeast corner of Homer Street and Cordova.”

GEORGE HAY OF WEST VANCOUVER. J.B. MATHER OF WEST VANCOUVER.

“George Hay, in those days a very prominent man in West Vancouver, and J.B. Mather, were partners, and they owned the Trustee Building. I worked in the basement. I went over to North Vancouver City Hall, and transcribed the tax roll of West Vancouver district of North Vancouver—which extended from all the way to Point Atkinson—and then, when they were incorporated, I told them I wanted to be Municipal Clerk, but Charles Nelson was reeve, and Charlie told me they were all ‘green’ at civic affairs, and to have a green city clerk would be worse still. Nelson told me they had secured a thoroughly competent man, George Peit” (sic) “for Comptroller, from South Vancouver Municipality, but they had no sooner got him in office than they wished they did not have him. I was appointed assistant clerk, April 1915.” (Something wrong here.)

MEMO OF CONVERSATION, OVER THE PHONE FROM HIS OFFICE AT OAKALLA PRISON FARM TO THE CITY ARCHIVES, WITH WALTER OWEN, ESQ., WARDEN, OAKALLA PRISON FARM, 4 OCTOBER 1938.

STANLEY PARK. BURIED TREASURE.

(Note: in the early part of 1922, the Union Bank, at Ladner’s, was held up by three international robbers, and \$83,500 of negotiable bonds stolen. Two years later, “Smiling Johnnie” Reid, one of the robbers who had been captured, and who, in various places, had been responsible for the theft of one million or more dollars, confessed, and offered to show the police where much of the loot was hidden. Accompanied by Assistant Superintendent Owen of the B.C. Police, he journeyed to Stanley Park and dug up eighty thousand dollars worth of securities near the entrance.)

(See *The Shoulder Strap*, Vol. 1, p. 19, published by B.C. Provincial Police, September 1938.)

Mr. Owen said: “The small grip or valise was buried at a point beside a forked cedar tree of very deformed shape, which grew approximately one hundred yards west of the end of Nelson Street; there was a lot of very heavy timber thereabouts at that time; the bag was down about eighteen inches in soft, damp, muck earth. When the valise was lifted, the bottom of it tore away, and a four pound jam tin, one of those cans with tight lid, rolled out into the bottom of the hole; it contained. The can was about the width of the bonds, and the bonds were neatly rolled up, and fitted nicely inside the can. They were quite dry, clean and unsoiled; the Ladner bank stamps were clearly legible. I saw the valise dug up. At first, he could not locate it, but finally struck it.”