

## **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**

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

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mouse scampered from beneath bedclothes or pillow, and she was trying frantically to slaughter it with the slipper, but with no success.

Bombardier McKay gallantly drew his long glistening bayonet and endeavoured earnestly to stab the poor little thing, but the mouse was too elusive, and won the unequal contest with slipper and bayonet, and escaped with his life. Bombardier McKay shamefacedly retreated; his training at Portsmouth Dockyard included bayonet fighting, but the training syllabus does not include mouse contests. Lady Eva went to bed. What happened to the mouse is not recorded.

## **MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH PIPE-MAJOR HECTOR MACKENZIE, 2074 WEST 6<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE, VANCOUVER, 6 OCTOBER 1939.**

Photo No. Port. 391, also *Province*, 31 December 1938, front page.

### **ORIGIN OF SEAFORTH HIGHLANDERS.**

Mr. MacKenzie, a tall soldierly figure with white moustache, carrying a military cane, and with most genial presence, said: "My name's Hector MacKenzie, Seaforth clan, and that's how the Scottish regiment in Vancouver came to be the Seaforth Highlanders.

"My father was Roderick, and my mother Isabel, née MacLean, of the MacLeans of Argyle, and I was born at Lochcarron, Rosshire, 1 October 1866; I had a birthday last Sunday. Father was a seafaring man, and they had seven children; four boys; all deceased now save three; my brother, D.M. MacKenzie, in business at 560 Granville Street, and one of my sisters, Mrs. Coughlan, and myself. I went to the parish school in Lochcarron; then, as a young man, went to Glasgow; was apprenticed to a large wholesale house; remained with them for years until I left to Canada in April 1902 on the Allan liner *Sarmation*; landed at Montréal; stayed a short time at Winnipeg, and came to Vancouver, September 1902. I came by myself; knew no one here.

"I got my training in playing pipes at my paternal home, and in Glasgow. I did not belong to a band, but I was properly trained, and I got a military training in the Volunteers in Scotland."

### **VANCOUVER PIPE BAND, 7 JANUARY 1904. VANCOUVER PIPERS' SOCIETY, 22 SEPTEMBER 1904.**

"When I got to Vancouver I found there was no one here who was playing the pipes; at least, none who had had any special training; there may have been one or two bagpipers."

Major Matthews: Were you the first pipe-major in Vancouver?

Mr. MacKenzie: "Yes. It soon got around that I could play the pipes; I had my own with me; have them yet, the same set; had them all through the war, in France and Belgium; was in the 1<sup>st</sup> Pioneers, C.E.F., and of course the Scottish people in Vancouver heard me playing, and I got an idea to form a pipe band in Vancouver; in fact, I think I was requested to do so. I formed the first pipe band, and later it was organised as the Vancouver Pipers' Society.

"Well. The end of it was I got twelve pipers and four drummers together; fine big young fellows, and we practiced down in a hall—we called it the 'Pipers' Hall'—in the 1100 block on Seymour Street, and finally we got our uniforms from Scotland. I ordered the uniforms, Royal Stewart" (a square of the original tartan, presented by Mr. MacKenzie, is in City Archives), "same as the pipers of the Scots Guards; and our first appearance was on a Sunday, when we piped the 6<sup>th</sup> Regiment, "The Duke of Connaught's Own Rifles" to church at Wesley Church on the corner of Georgia and Burrard streets. Col. J.C. Whyte was in command, Capt. J. Duff Stuart, adjutant, and Capt. the Rev. C.C. Owen, chaplain. The pipe band continued for a good many years, until about the advent of the Seaforth Highlanders. And I will tell you how they came to be 'Seaforths,' and not something else.

"There was a Colonel Davidson down at Ottawa; I knew him, and started writing to him; he was very helpful. He recognised the great deal of work I had done in originating the pipe band in Vancouver, and in attending the meetings which led to the formation of a highland regiment in Vancouver. There was a deal of correspondence between Colonel Davidson and myself, and it was done quietly; we did not want it known what was going on until the organisation was complete, and we had chosen those we preferred to be officers of the new regiment. John Hendry, father of Mrs. Hamber, and one of the Hastings Sawmill,

was wealthy—he did not make his money by ‘graft’—and we were going to ask him to defray the cost of raising the regiment.

“There was quite a colony of United Empire Loyalists living down by the Hastings Sawmill; he was one, and they took quite a pride in themselves; we were going to get John Hendry to raise the regiment, but there was a meeting about a forthcoming dance, and after the details of that were done with, the questions of organising the regiment came up, and Henry Bell-Irving—you know how important he thought himself—he took it upon himself, much to the disgust of many, to ‘steal the whole show,’ and, you know, he just ‘rode right over’; was very domineering. Well, the end was there were three Scottish battalions formed: the Camerons at Winnipeg, the Gordons in Victoria, and the Seaforths in Vancouver.

“The nucleus of the 72<sup>nd</sup> Seaforth Highlanders of Vancouver was the Vancouver Pipe Band of January 7<sup>th</sup> 1904, actually functioning in 1903, and formally organised into the Vancouver Pipers’ Society, 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1904, as you see by this printed constitution of the society.”

### **72<sup>ND</sup> REGIMENT, SEAFORTH HIGHLANDERS.**

Major Matthews: But why did they select the name “Seaforth” for the Vancouver regiment?

Mr. MacKenzie: “Because of MacKenzie, that’s me. I was the prime mover in getting the thing started. You see, there were a lot of Scotch people who did not know anything about the history of the clans, and highland regiments, and I used to teach them. The knowledge I had acquired in the Scottish Volunteers—I was in the Highland Artillery for fifteen or sixteen years—and that came in useful to me; and of course I could play the pipes.

“You see, in the Highlands, the chiefs have their followers, and when they became militarised, the government then granted each chief permission to raise his own regiment; the Earl of Seaforth was the head of the MacKenzie clan, and his regiment was called the Seaforth Highlanders, like the Gordon Highlanders were raised by the Duchess of Gordon. And Colonel Davidson, he knew I was a Mackenzie, and that’s how the Vancouver regiment became the Seaforth Highlanders.”

Note: so far as memory can be relied on, Mr. MacKenzie’s statement regarding the playing of the 6<sup>th</sup> Regiment D.C.O.R. to church is correct; I was a member of that regiment, and marched behind the pipe band. The brass and bugle bands of a rifle regiment play a quick step; the pipers played a longer, swinging step, and I recall that—it was the first time we had marched behind pipes—how it was remarked upon, and how easy and agreeable pipes were to march to. The pipers wore green coats. The whole thing was an innovation, and remarked upon.

J.S. Matthews.

Hector MacKenzie, 13 October, 1939.

### **COPIES OF LETTERS.**

His Worship M.A. MacLean, first Mayor of Vancouver, tendering thanks and gratitude to people of Moodyville for help to the distressed citizens of Vancouver following the Great Fire, 13 June 1886.

Vancouver, June 18<sup>th</sup>, 1886.

Mrs. Thain,  
Moodyville

Dear Madam:

As Mayor of the City of Vancouver I wish on behalf of its inhabitants to tender to yourself and the kind ladies of Moodyville, our sincere thanks for your liberal contributions of money and clothing in aid of the sufferers of the late fire here. Also allow me to express my sense of our deep obligation for the generous hospitality extended by the people of your village to our suffering citizens on the evening of Sunday last, and even up to the present time. The assistance thus afforded will, I assure you, be not soon forgotten but its memory will always remain with us side