

## **Early Vancouver**

### **Volume Six**

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

**2011 Edition (Originally Published 1945)**

*Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1940-1945.*

*Supplemental to volumes one, two, three, four and five collected in 1931, 1932, 1934, 1939 and 1944.*

### **About the 2011 Edition**

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**MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH MRS. JONATHAN ROGERS, NÉE HUGHES, 2050 NELSON STREET, VANCOUVER, WHO VERY KINDLY CALLED AT THE CITY ARCHIVES TODAY, 27 AUGUST 1940, BRINGING WITH HER A SOUVENIR PROGRAMME OF THE ROYAL VISIT, 30 SEPTEMBER 1901, AND A GROUP PHOTOGRAPH OF LORD STRATHCONA'S VISIT TO THE VANCOUVER GENERAL HOSPITAL, 31 AUGUST 1909.**

**Y.M.C.A. MRS. JONATHAN ROGERS.**

Mrs. Rogers said: "I was married in England, and came to Vancouver in 1902." (Note: this clarifies the "Lake Beautiful" naming matter; Mrs. Rogers arrived in 1902.)

"Mr. Rogers is very feeble; it is terrible to see him lying there. I must tell him what you tell me of the story of the three thousand dollars" (and she smiled.)

"It was the same with the Y.M.C.A. You know, they started a Y.M.C.A. down on Hastings Street" (Astoria Hotel) "and they gave a note, and the note came due, and there were a number of backers, but the only one worth anything was Mr. Rogers. So when the blue papers began to come to our house, I said to Mr. Rogers that the only thing to do was to pay it; I told him it was interfering with his peace of mind, and that even if the others would not do their share, it was worth something to have peace of mind, and the only thing to do was to pay it; so he paid it.

"I told him to get those who backed the note together, ask how much each could put up, even if it was only two dollars, and to pay the balance himself. He had a meeting; some put up \$10, others \$25, and then he went to the mortgagors—I think it was McPhillips, the lawyer—and made the best bargain he could. He did that, and they were very reasonable, and he paid the money. I forget the amount, but it was quite a lot."

**MUSSOLINI.**

I remarked, as Mrs. Rogers looked at a framed picture of herself on the wall, inscribed that she had been decorated by Italy, and, asked if (in view of the war) she were now proud of her decoration. Mrs. Rogers replied:

"I visited Mussolini in his office. It was a great big room fifty feet long; I entered at one end; he was seated at the other end at his desk. I walked stiffly across the carpet towards him; he looked at me, and I looked at him—we glared at each other like a couple of animals—I understand that is the way he receives, the way he sizes you up."

Major Matthews: What did you think of him?

Mrs. Rogers: "He has the most charming smile of any man I ever met; he has not that great big jaw you see in the pictures; he only puts that on when he is addressing a host of people; he is a little man; not as big as you are." (180 lbs is my weight, 5' 8½".) "He could not speak English, so we spoke in French. And that evening I had a seat with him in his box at the theatre. He was surrounded by six detectives, two on each side of him, and one in front and behind. Even at the marriage of his daughter to Count Ciano, there were no women. And they kept the place of the marriage secret to the last moment; no one knew what church the wedding was to be in. Life like that is not worth it."

**ROGERS BUILDING.**

I asked how they were doing about the Rogers Building, corner [of] Granville and Pender Street, now that Mr. Rogers was so ill. "Oh," said Mrs. Rogers, "Macaulay, Nicolls and Maitland are looking after it for me; it is my building, not Mr. Rogers'; Mr. Bennett is manager, and Mr. Nicolls looks after things for me."

I escorted this charming, brilliantly clever lady to her waiting limousine.