

Early Vancouver

Volume Six

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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 MR. W.A. ROEDDE, PIONEER, OF G.A. ROEDDE, LTD., BOOKBINDERS, ETC., HOMER STREET, WHO VERY KINDLY CALLED AT THE CITY ARCHIVES THIS MORNING TO DISCUSS BOOKBINDING MATTERS, AND SUBSEQUENTLY INDULGED IN OUR RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY VANCOUVER TOGETHER, 3 AUGUST 1943.

KITSILANO BEACH. YEW STREET. BEARS.

Mr. Roedde: (looking at the photograph of Vancouver from the air, a well-known photo taken by the Royal Canadian Air Force about 1931, and of which thousands have been printed in various forms, and at this moment, we are preparing coloured and framed copies for Lord Granville, and on the 26th July—a week ago—other copies were presented at the Mansion House, London, by W.A. McAdam, Agent-General for B.C. to the Rt. Hon. the Lord Mayor [Sir Samuel Joseph] who in turn presented them, by request, to Sir Gerald Burrard, and Lord Bennett replied) “There, right down in the corner of Greer’s Beach” (Kitsilano Beach) “at the foot of Yew Street, that was where I shot my first bear.”

WEST END. NICOLA STREET. WILD DUCKS.

(Pointing to West End) “And there I shot ducks, right in the wet below Nicola Street, among the willows. That would be about forty-four years ago; I’m 53 now, and then I was nine or ten.”

Major Matthews: How did you come to be with a gun at that age? (As boy of nine, Major Matthews had a gun—in New Zealand.)

COAL HARBOUR. WILD DUCKS. RON MAITLAND. LOST LAGOON.

Mr. Roedde: “Well. We lived at 1415 Barclay Street; the house was built, I think, in 1891; I’m not sure, I think it was 1891; and I was always fond of guns; there was a gun hanging in the kitchen. It was an old double-barrelled muzzle loader which had been given me. I used to shoot ducks in Coal Harbour with Ron Maitland; he’s brother to R.L. Maitland, the Attorney-General, now. Here’s something that’s interesting about ducks, wild ducks. We used to shoot them down in Coal Harbour, and very frequently we used to go on the old Coal Harbour wooden pile bridge and shoot the ‘night flight.’ The birds used to fly over in the evening at what is now Lost Lagoon, and the interesting part is that if you go to the magnificent Causeway which has replaced the old wooden bridge, you can see the same night flight of wild ducks despite all the civilisation.”

Major Matthews: Why, even the wild ducks in False Creek are tame now; I used to shoot them at the foot of Ash Street, shot them off the cottage verandah. And today when the street cars cross the old Kitsilano trestle bridge, and rattle over with much noise, the wild ducks are just below, and don’t take any notice. In the old days you could not get within two hundred yards of them.

Mr. Roedde: “I used to do my market shooting...”

Major Matthews: What do you mean by market shooting?

WILD DUCKS. WESTHAM ISLAND. GEORGE REIFEL. DUCK SANCTUARY.

Mr. Roedde: “I did a lot of shooting at the mouth of the Fraser River—I still do, but not for the market, just for sport now—and in those early days there was no limit” (on the bag.) “You could shoot as many as you could pack home. Well, as I was going to say, I still shoot at that place; it is the mouth of the main river, south side, near Westham Island; a lot of that area has been reclaimed by George Reifel” (1920 Southwest Marine Drive.) “He has made a duck sanctuary out there. Those birds are just as wild as you know them when you were a boy. But outside the sanctuary” (they are wild.) “George used to feed them. Well, inside the sanctuary, those wild birds will come and land at your feet; they know they are safe in there; no one shooting at them. Some time you ought to get George to give you something on that sanctuary he has built there; he has spent thousands of dollars on it. It is a wonderful sight to see all those wild ducks that you couldn’t get within two hundred feet of outside the sanctuary—two hundred feet is about as near as you can shoot—but the ducks inside will land right down within ten or twelve feet of you.”

BEAVER LAKE. "THE STANLEY PARK LAKE." INDIAN CANOE. BEAVERS AND BEAVER DAMS.

"I used to have an Indian canoe hidden in the Stanley Park Lake." (Note: unnamed in those days, now Beaver Lake, First Narrows.) "They call it Beaver Lake now. I had it hidden in the tall grass and bushes, and I had my decoys hidden there too. The Park Commissioners did not know, or they would not have 'stood for it,' even in those days."

Major Matthews: Ever see any beaver there?

Mr. Roedde: "Oh, yes. Have seen them right at your feet; if you kept quiet and still, they would come right up to three or four feet of you, and nibble a piece of wood. If you made the slightest movement, would just dive off into the water."

RON MAITLAND. BEAVER DAMS.

Major Matthews: How many were there?

Mr. Roedde: "Oh, I would say there would be three or four beaver there. I haven't been there for years, but I have seen the lake plugged up with their dams, and all the marsh at the back flooded. But remember, even in those days it was illegal to shoot them. Ron Maitland used to go there with me to shoot ducks."

HON. F.L. CARTER-COTTON.

"Talking about early newspapers. Father" (G.A. Roedde) "was a partner with Carter-Cotton once, away back in 1888; it was only about a year. The partnership did not last long; both men too dominant in their character."

PETER PLANTE. DEDICATION, 1889, AND REDEDICATION, 1943, OF STANLEY PARK.

Memo of conversation, 4 August 1943, with Frank Plante, of Clarke Road, R.R. No. 2, New Westminster, (Clarke Road is on the way from New Westminster to Port Moody), where he resides with his sister, Mrs. (Captain) George Mayers. He called at the City Archives this afternoon, as he must have read in the newspapers of the proposed rededication of Stanley Park by Lord Stanley in 1889, which rededication is to take place near the Lumberman's Arch on 25 August 1943, in the afternoon.

STANLEY PARK, DEDICATION, 1889. HIS EXCELLENCY LORD STANLEY. HIS WORSHIP DAVID OPPENHEIMER. CHAYTHOOS (END OF PIPE LINE ROAD.)

Mr. Plante: "About the proposed ceremony soon in Stanley Park. The rededication of it. I drove Lord Stanley and Mayor Oppenheimer to the dedication in 1889, in a two-horse hack; the only hack in town then."

Major Matthews: How interesting. I'm glad you came in. Tell me about it. Who was in the carriage, the hack.

Mr. Plante: "Well, there was Lord Stanley, and Mayor Oppenheimer, and there were two other men. I think one was the City clerk" (Thos. F. McGuigan) "and the other may have been an alderman; I think he was Thomas Dunn, but I'm not sure. I had the two-horse hack, and we started at the old Hotel Vancouver. Mine was the only hack in town, but there were other little carriages went out there with us.

"We drove off down Georgia Street to the Park, and then around the park to the platform out at the end, and Lord Stanley and Mayor Oppenheimer were on the platform. There were ladies there, too. Von Volkenburg" (sic) "the butcher had a four-horse butcher wagon all decorated up, and took out a crowd in it; John Murray of Port Moody, he's dead now, was driving."

Major Matthews: Was it raining?

Mr. Plante: "It was raining a little that day."

STANLEY PARK CHRISTENED. WINE.

"When we got out there they had a bottle of wine on the stand, or platform I suppose you would call it. I know I had the bottle in the hack, and after we got there someone came and got it from me. Afterwards I