

Early Vancouver

Volume Six

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

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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.

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Contact Information

City of Vancouver Archives
1150 Chestnut Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 3J9
604.736.8561
archives@vancouver.ca
vancouver.ca/archives



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

saw it on the platform; no, not on a table; I don't remember a table on the platform, and as far as I could see from my high perch on the seat of the hack, which I had taken a short distance—a few yards—out of the way, the wine was used to christen Stanley Park by pouring it on the ground.”

SPEECHES.

“Then there was a speech by Lord Stanley, and the Mayor had made a speech, and the ceremony lasted about half an hour, and then, the same day, I had my photo taken by Harry Devine, who was in the photograph business then; I was dressed just as I am now, and my ordinary clothes on. I'll let you have the photograph to make a copy of.”

LORD STANLEY. NEW PARK ROAD.

“After the ceremony, which lasted half an hour, we drove right back to the Hotel Vancouver; we did not stop anywhere; the Park Road was new and in good shape, and white; it was covered with white clam shells from the Indian midden at what is now Lumberman's Arch.”

Major Matthews: How was the vice-regal party dressed?

Mr. Plante: “Lord Stanley was dressed with a top hat and frock coat, and Mayor Oppenheimer the same. No one was in uniform that I can think of. And the ladies were in old style dresses with long skirts and” (laughing) “a great big bustle.” (And then he laughed again.) “Do you remember Mr. Matthews, manager of the Hotel” (Vancouver); “he was manager then.”

HARRY (H.A.) BERRY. BOB RUTHERFORD. THE FIRST C.P. TRANSFER CO. MAYOR OPPENHEIMER. POST OFFICE, HASTINGS MILL. POST OFFICE, CARRALL STREET. GREAT FIRE, 13 JUNE. ALDERMAN ROBERT BALFOUR. BALMORAL HOTEL.

“When we got back to the Hotel, Mayor Oppenheimer gave me a five dollar tip. Mayor Oppenheimer was all right; he was a good mayor.

“Before that I used to drive for Harry Berry and Bob Rutherford of the C.P. Transfer, the first transfer company in town, and I drove for the mail and express to and from Hastings Mill where the boats used to land at the mill wharf, and take the mail and express up to the Post Office on Carrall Street—before the Fire.” (13 June 1886.) “On the day of the fire I was picking up people at the Fire and driving them to the False Creek Bridge.” (Westminster Avenue, now Main Street.) “I also drove for Martin and Balfour of the ‘Balmoral’ on the corner of Cordova and Carrall streets.”

GENEALOGY OF PLANTE. PETER PLANTE. ADA YOUNG. FRANK PLANTE. FIRST MARRIAGE ON BURRARD INLET. FRENCH JOHN.

“I was born at Moodyville, 13th April 1868. My father was Peter Plante; my mother was Ada Young.”

Major Matthews: Was she half Indian?

Mr. Plante: “Her name was something, I cannot pronounce it properly, but it was something like ‘Deguin’” (daughter of Supplien Guinne, or “French John,” of what is now Marpole); “she was always called Young; we always called it John Young; her father was my granddad. He had been with the Hudson's Bay Company, and came with them from Three Rivers, Québec. So did my father, Peter Plante. And landed at old Fort Langley.”

SUPLIEN GUINNE. BROCKTON POINT CEMETERY.

“The eldest child was myself, born 13th April 1868. Then next was my sister Lizzie, or Mrs. Ross. The third was my brother Jesse, who is dead; he died four years ago, about. The next was my sister Delia, now Mrs. Buck, of Monroe” (sic), “state of Washington, and the next was Peter, the boy, and my sister Zoe. Zoe and Peter are buried on Brockton Point by the Nine O'Clock Gun. The last of all is my sister, Lena, now Mrs. Captain George Mayers of New Westminster, so that altogether there were three boys and four girls. Jimmie Ross, my oldest sister's son, lives in Vancouver, 12th and Collingwood, I think; he runs the Arctic Club, a restaurant downtown on West Pender Street. I was up the Cariboo when Father and Mother died, and I do not know where they are buried.”

HASTINGS SAWMILL SCHOOL. FALSE CREEK BRIDGE. EARLY ATTEMPTED SUICIDE.

"I was at the Hastings School, here, this one in the photograph. And here, this old bridge, I remember that; the old False Creek bridge was rickety.

"I was driving south over it one day, and it was rickety, and I was watching, and just here, at the south end, I saw a girl coming along reading an open bible, and just when I got near her, she climbed on the rail, and with her bible open, jumped off into False Creek. But her skirts ballooned, and that kept her afloat. I shouted and hollered, and that man who kept the Bridge Hotel at the north end, he came; they got a boat, and saved her. It was her skirts full of air which saved her. I don't know who she was; never found out."

FURTHER CONVERSATION 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, 9 AUGUST 1943.

Mr. Plante said that he had been to W.J. Moore, 420 West Hastings Street, as requested by me, and had his photograph taken. He also brought me, for copying, a photo of himself taken by the late Harry T. Devine, pioneer photographer, on 29 October 1889, the day he, Frank Plante, drove Lord Stanley and Mayor Oppenheimer around the Stanley Park for the dedication ceremonies.

I also read to him my account of his conversation of 4 August 1943, which he approved of as correct, *except* that the portion referring to Alderman Robert Balfour, alderman on the first City Council, 1886, needed amplification. JSM.

ALDERMAN ROBERT BALFOUR. MARTIN AND BALFOUR. THE GREAT FIRE, 1886. BALMORAL HOTEL.

Mr. Plante said: (after reading his conversation of August 4th to him) "That's all right except here, where you have me saying: 'I also drove for Martin and Balfour of the Balmoral Hotel' at the corner of Cordova and Carrall." (Note: the original Balmoral Hotel was at the corner of Columbia and Hastings; the second was at the corner of Carrall and Cordova.)

Mr. Plante: "On the night of the fire, the same night, 13th June 1886, Sunday night, I drove the Martin family, the Balfour family, and the waitresses of the Balmoral Hotel, over to New Westminster in an express wagon. There were thirteen of them all told, all in the same express wagon."

INSLEY OF COLONIAL HOTEL. NEW WESTMINSTER.

"I took them to the Colonial Hotel, New Westminster; Insley was 'running' it. The only place they had to put them was in the parlour upstairs, so the whole thirteen of them slept on the parlour floor; it was the only place Insley had."

THE FIRST RUBBER TIRE IN BRITISH COLUMBIA. THE FIRST TRACTION ENGINE IN B.C.

On 11 August 1943, Calvert Simson, Esq., 1890 Barclay Street, Vancouver, formerly storekeeper (the second or third) at the Hastings Sawmill, and who came to Burrard Inlet about 1884, presented the City Archives with a piece of thick pure rubber, dark but not quite black, a cube roughly three and one half inches square, which he cut, himself, from one of the tires of the famous Cariboo Road traction engine, the traction engine which is well known in the histories of the Cariboo. It is in excellent state of preservation despite its age of approximately 75 years. The shape of a groove on it, which is one half of a hole cut through, evidently that of a bolt which at one time attached it to the tire, is sharp and distinct as though made last week.

This traction engine was used on the Cariboo Road during the Cariboo gold excitement, or soon after, but did not prove a success. It was afterwards purchased by Jeremiah Rogers of Jerry's Cove, or Jericho, English Bay, and was used to haul out logs by that early timber and logging contractor from the forests of Point Grey and Little Mountain and Fairview and Shaughnessy.

Another sample of this rubber was, some years ago, presented to the City Archives by August Jack Khahtsahlano (Kitsilano), who, as a boy, cut a piece of rubber from the original tire and shaped it with a