

Early Vancouver

Volume Seven

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2011 Edition (Originally Published 1956)

Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected between 1931-1956.

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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disappointed because it was not a Union Jack; I wanted a Union Jack. I was just over fourteen at the time.”

Mrs. Ernest Silvester Smith, née Miss Bennett, when speaking to Major Matthews, City Archives, 28 July 1950.

Mrs. Smith presented the two flags to Major Matthews. They are of paper, and about twelve inches square—attached together with the original twine. JSM.

COMMEMORATING THE DEDICATION OF STANLEY PARK, 1889 AND HONORING THE PIONEERS OF VANCOUVER, CANADA, 1949.

Banquet, tendered by the Board of Park Commissioners, at “The Pavilion,” Stanley Park, on Tuesday, 1 November 1949, at 6:00 p.m.

Remarks by City Archivist:

The first European to see Stanley Park was the Spanish navigator Narvaez. He named it Point Bodega, the oldest name in our city. He was also the first white man to see the western mainland shore of Canada. A year later, 1792, Captain George Vancouver discovered that behind Stanley Park was a narrow entrance which we call our First Narrows, leading to a spacious harbour beyond. Last year twenty-seven thousand ships, great and small, followed where he led.

Vancouver was accorded a cordial welcome—the first ever given here to a distinguished visitor. A flotilla of Squamish canoes put out from the now-vanished village of Whoi-Whoi in Stanley Park, and escorted his small boat as it passed inwards. They showered him and his men with handfuls of white down feathers plucked from the breasts of wild fowl which they threw as we throw confetti over a bride. The gentle summer zephyrs wafted the fluffy white down into the air, whence it fell, as a myriad of white specks, upon the placid surface of the waters. A palisade of huge green trees towering to the heavens stood like pillars on both shores as Vancouver passed through the narrow marine corridor.

For sixty years Stanley Park lay silent and still as it had done since the dawn of time. Then the Royal Engineers, sent here in 1858 to establish civil government in the wilderness which Queen Victoria, the Good, had named “British Columbia,” set our park aside, together with the Indian Reserve on the opposite shore, as a defence from attack in the rear of New Westminster, capital of the new crown colony.

A few more years pass and then, in 1886, Vancouver was incorporated as a city—a city on paper, for all else was forest. The first City Council met in a primitive building of board and batten above the Water Street beach. They had no money but the first resolution passed at the first meeting was to petition the Canadian government to give us the naval reserve as a park. At that time access to Stanley Park was by a huge log which had drifted in, and spanned, from bank to bank, the narrow channel at Lost Lagoon. Across it pioneers scrambled with care lest they slip and fall into the waters beneath. Filled in with earth it is now the beautiful “Causeway,” entrance to the park.

Two years later, in 1888, after minor improvements, the Park was formally opened by Mayor David Oppenheimer. Next year, 1889, on October 29th, sixty years ago, Lord Stanley, Governor General, in his carriage drawn by four white horses, passed through the forest then standing on our now populous “West End,” and on to Chaythoos, a grassy spot, formerly the site of an Indian village near Prospect Point. There, upon a tiny platform, with arms upraised as though embracing the whole primeval solitude, he dedicated it,

“To the use and enjoyment of peoples of all colours, creeds, and customs, for all time.”

Then, as he poured the sparkling wine upon the virgin earth, he solemnly declared,

“I name thee ‘Stanley Park.’”