

Early Vancouver

Volume Seven

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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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CONVERSATION WITH ALDERMAN FRANK WOODSIDE, OVER THE PHONE, AT HIS OFFICE IN THE B.C. AND YUKON CHAMBER OF MINES, HOWE AND DUNSMUIR, 10 OCTOBER 1953.

Alderman Woodside is a very old Hastings Townsite pioneer—over fifty years residence there—and was the first alderman from Hastings Townsite after that part of Vancouver was annexed to Vancouver about 1911.

STREET NAMES IN AND ABOUT HASTINGS TOWNSITE. YALE STREET. TRINITY STREET. ETON STREET.

Major Matthews: Mr. Woodside, how did those streets out in Hastings Townsite get their names?

Mr. Woodside: "Yale, Trinity, Eton, all those college names? The Provincial Government men gave them to them before annexation. The old Douglas Road curved around George Black's hotel, and then the streets start Yale, Trinity, McGill, Eton, and so on.

"I went out there in 1903, and in 1908 built the first two-storey house. There were only seven or eight houses—seven, I think—at the north end of Hastings Townsite then, and there were one or two at the south end, in the bush. All the rest of the land was in 40-acre blocks, and was bought by speculators."

VANCOUVER HEIGHTS. BEACON HILL.

Major Matthews: Was your house on Vancouver Heights? East of the park?

Alderman Woodside: "Well, yes, but we called it Beacon Hill then. Gilley Bros. had a logging camp just east of Hastings Park."

MORE STREET NAMES.

Major Matthews: Well, what about the street names lying north and south. That is Renfrew, Clinton, and so on.

Alderman Woodside: "The Provincial Government named them after mining districts—Clinton, Lillooet, Rupert, Cassiar."

EXPLANATION.

Alderman Woodside is a miner—interested in mines—and on a previous occasion he told me he got them to name Le Roi Street after the Le Roi Mine. It has always been understood that Westminster Avenue "started it." After streets began to be opened up, north and south, the next was Victoria Road—then Nanaimo Road, and that gave them the idea of Kamloops, Clinton, Kaslo, and so on, mining districts as also cities.

SHEA LOCOMOTIVE.

Major Matthews: I've got a photograph here of a "shay" engine. How do you spell it?

Alderman Woodside: "Spell it S-H-E-A. A man named Shea invented it—all the power on a shaft working along the wheels on one side of the locomotive. That engine was on a little railway which ran from Rossland to the Hientze Smelter—Le Roi Mine—almost exactly where the Consolidated Mining plant is now at Trail."

SHELL OIL COMPANY. FIRST DELIVERY OF BULK GASOLINE.

Conversation with Mr. Robert G. Woolsey, 6009 Kitchener Street, North Burnaby, B.C., who kindly called at the City Archives this morning, 28 January 1954, in connection with the birth certificates of his son Wilfred and daughter Vera.

SHELL OIL COMPANY, 1913.

Mr. Woolsey: "I delivered the first bulk gasoline, by tank wagon—two-horse team—to Vancouver service stations, 24th June 1913. The storage tanks were on the Great Northern Railway tracks at the corner of Fifth Avenue East and Carolina. The gasoline came in by tank car from Seattle. I also helped to erect the storage tanks—there were only two at that time—perpendicular 10,000 gallon tanks. Mr. McKnight was the manager. Between the two of us we pumped the bulk gasoline by man power—four men on the pumps, two on each handle. And pump against a seventy-five foot head—it took more than two hours to pump a 6,000 gallon tank car."

RUSSELL MOTOR CO.

"We had a 324 gallon tank wagon, divided into two compartments. We used that only for a couple of days, then another wagon arrived with five hundred gallons and we kept on going until, by September that year, we had four wagons going. The first delivery I made was to the Russell Motor Company down on Pender Street, close to Burrard Street. Mr. McKnight was salesman for them before he got into the Shell Oil. Mr. William McKnight was the first manager. He died with meningitis or something. He died in the General Hospital, isolation department—we were not allowed to see him. That was not so very long after the First War ended, somewhere about 1920.

"In 1914 the Shell Oil put on their first automobile truck, one thousand gallon. It was driven by Johnnie Watson, but we kept one tank wagon and horses. The others were discarded. In the fall of 1915, they laid the horse-drawn wagon off and kept the one auto truck. It was during the war and the sale of gasoline was restricted. We were allowed to deliver no more than 1,200 gallons a day.

"We also handled coal oil and lubricating oil, but it was all in drums and imported from Seattle. January 1915 was a bad month on account of the snow. The old horse-drawn wagons were still in the yard, so we put them to work again. We left the wheels on. We had no sleigh equipment, but we used horse-drawn wagons until the snow melted. The Company paid me \$85.00 a month wages. The horses were mine and I fed and looked after them and got \$85.00 for that. So that the total cost of their tank wagon gasoline delivery was \$170.00 a month. I had a stable at Sixth Avenue and Caroline—rented.

"In 1916, about February, I lost my contract. In 1916 they built storage tanks out at Barnet, and I started to work there in June 1916. They used to bring in the gasoline from California—one cargo came from Borneo, high test stuff—in tankers. We used to ship it from there to the Carolina Street plant by tank car.

In 1932 they built the new refinery. I was still working for them. I was Superintendent of the Barnet plant for sixteen years, that is, from 1916 to 1932. In 1932 they moved everything from Barnet to Shellburn. And, at the same time they closed the Carolina Street plant, and, after that the tank trucks loaded at Shellburn.

"I left the Shell in 1936. At the time I was in charge of the waterfront—loading cars, the dock and shipping, unloading the tankers, etc.

"George McKinnon, manager, Main Office, Marine Building, is the only man who knows anything about the past of the Shell Oil now."

Read and approved,
"R.G. Woolsey"
28 January 1954.