

**Early Vancouver**

**Volume Seven**

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

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

**About the 2011 Edition**

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**CONVERSATION (OVER THE PHONE) WITH SUB-INSPECTOR HENRY LARSEN, R.C.M.P., OF THE R.C.M.P. SCHOONER *St. Roch*, 5 JANUARY 1948.**

His address is that of Mrs. Larsen, 2440 Central Avenue, Victoria.

**R.C.M.P. SCHOONER *St. Roch*. NORTH WEST PASSAGE. SUB-INSPECTOR HENRY LARSEN.**

(Note: I was alone in the City Archives when the telephone rang; picked up the receiver—heard a voice but could not hear the name given. Inspector Larsen's voice and speech are very clear, but low, modulated and unhurried, but my hearing is none too good, and, at first, I could not hear the name of the speaker. J.S.M.)

Major Matthews: Who did you say? (Voice continues.)

Major Matthews: Cannot hear. What? Larsen? Larsen of North Vancouver? What?

Inspector Larsen: "*St. Roch*."

Major Matthews: Gracious. Where are you? In Vancouver? I heard you were coming out for Christmas. Where's the *St. Roch*? Cambridge Bay?

Inspector Larsen: "No. Herschel Island. Thank you very much for your Christmas cake. We didn't get it—not yet, but they will get it in a month or so. It got left behind by the plane."

Major Matthews: I packed it in a box lined with plenty of cotton wool, then put the small box inside a much larger one, and filled the space with prunes. I didn't think when I used prunes for packing that you probably get more prunes than you want; I should have used dates or figs. The idea of the prunes was to act as a buffer so that the ornamental sugar icing would not be broken.

Inspector Larsen: "Very kind of you. They'll get it in about a month."

Major Matthews: By dog team. Do the planes stop at Aklavik?

Inspector Larsen: "No. By plane all the way. They stop at Aklavik, of course, and then fly on to Herschel Island."

Major Matthews: I sent you an *Illustrated London News* of the Princess Elizabeth's wedding last 20 November. Did you get it? Nice thing; one dollar a copy, and the postage was plenty; eighty cents—nothing save airmail to Aklavik.

Inspector Larsen: "That's very kind of you; they'll get it all right."

Major Matthews: How long are you out for?

Inspector Larsen: "Cannot say for sure, but expect it will be several months."

Major Matthews: Where are you now; what's your address?

Inspector Larsen: "Down in the Federal Building, Vancouver, in the office. 2440 Central Avenue, Victoria. I came over this morning."

Major Matthews: Give my respects to Mrs. Larsen when you get home. And, don't forget, lunch is on the table here waiting for you. I haven't got that label on the piece of Australian gum wood you gave me from the *St. Roch*; must get it put on before you come up.

Inspector Larsen: "All right. Good bye." (Telephone receiver put back.)

It is hard to credit that I had been speaking to a man whose name must, for all time, interest all nations; the first man to take a ship from the Pacific to the Atlantic Ocean by the North West Passage, and the first man to make the return trip the same way, the first in 1940-1942; the second in 1944.

J.S. Matthews

### **MRS. HENRY LARSEN AND THE NORTH WEST PASSAGE, 1940-42 AND 1944.**

Conversation with Mrs. Daniel Hargreaves, 562 East 12<sup>th</sup>, who kindly called at the City Archives this afternoon, 28 January 1948.

We were amazed to ascertain from her that Inspector Henry Larsen, F.R.G.S., commander of the famous Arctic exploring ship of the R.C.M.P. is her son-in-law. Inspector Larsen was here to lunch yesterday.

Mrs. Hargreaves: "Mr. Hargreaves was a city employee, storekeeper at the Cambie Street yards, for twenty-seven years. He retired twelve years ago this coming March. He is not in the best of health.

"Mr. Hargreaves came from Burnley, Lancashire, where both he and I were born. His father died when he was very young—his name was Robert. His mother was Eliza Ann Hargreaves—both now deceased. He went to school in Burnley, and then when he was about 24—just before the Boer War broke out in 1899—he came to Canada by himself. We were not married then. At first he was in Winnipeg; did any kind of job, and then he came to Vancouver, how long before 1908 I am not sure, but I left England the last day of April 1908, and I reached Vancouver on the 15<sup>th</sup> May, 1908. We were married on the 23<sup>rd</sup> May at the home of some friends, the Rev. Mr. Westman" (sic.) "I think he was a Methodist clergyman. Then we went to live at the same place we are still living in, 562 East 12<sup>th</sup>, which Mr. Hargreaves built before I arrived, and had it all ready for occupancy. Had everything done—all I had to do was hang the curtains, and I brought those with me.

"My daughter, Mrs. Larsen, is Mary—just plain Mary. She was born at 562 East 12<sup>th</sup>, on the 16<sup>th</sup> September, and she will be 39 next September. Inspector Larsen and Mrs. Larsen now live at 2440 Central Avenue, Victoria, and they have three children: a girl, 12; the boy, 10 in July. The girl will be 13 next November. The baby will be three in July next. They are Doreen, Gordon and Beverley. They were married at the First Baptist Church on Burrard and Nelson Street—the Rev. Ebert Paul. They met at a party somewhere; the rest of it I do not know. It was a lovely wedding. They had the 'Mounties' there."

### **MOUNT PLEASANT. FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE SCHOOL.**

"When we went to Mount Pleasant there were not many houses around there. My daughter, Mary, went to Florence Nightingale School, just a block from our house. When I arrived here, he was working at some sawmill. Then, shortly after we were married, the sawmill closed and in October 1908 he started with the City. You see, the City was only small then, and he was down at the yards under the bridge. He stayed there until he retired. He was president, two years, of the City Employees union. He was yard foreman. He is 73 now and I am 71. He retired at 61. He got pneumonia, and it seemed he just simply could not get over it. He has a city pension.

"My father and mother were Mr. and Mrs. Sedgwick, Joseph and Margaret, of Burnley, Lancashire; both died since I left England. My dad was a joiner; he died about 15 years ago. Mother died just after the first war. She died on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1918, and both are buried at Burnley. I had three sisters and a brother—Gertrude, or Gertie, and Ethel and Ada, and my brother Ernest. They are all living in Burnley and all want me to go back 'home' for a trip. I'd go this year, but things are so bad in England.

"My husband's brothers were John and Harry. John is dead, but Harry is of the Hargreaves Real Estate, corner 10<sup>th</sup> and Main streets. Jack never married but Harry has two sons."