

Early Vancouver

Volume Seven

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

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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Concealed beneath this Union Jack lies a huge boulder weighing three tons, and upon it has been affixed a slab of bronze bearing the inscription:

“HADDEN PARK WAS GIVEN TO THE CITIZENS OF VANCOUVER FOR THEIR USE AND ENJOYMENT BY HARVEY HADDEN, 1928.”

The stone and the bronze are in themselves almost valueless, but, as symbols, together they constitute a memorial which will serve as a reminder to refresh the memories of all who pass by, perhaps to generations as yet unborn, of a good man and his good deed. I now expose it to your gaze.

EXCERPT, LETTER, COL. THE HON. ERIC W. HAMBER, C.M.G., LL.D. TO MAJOR J.S. MATTHEWS.

(About) 15 March 1952.

JOHN HENDRY PARK. TROUT LAKE. D.L. 195.

“Mr. Tisdall, who was on the Parks Board, approached me to buy it, and I told him that if it was intended for the Parks Board and if they named it JOHN HENDRY PARK that I would deed the property to them. This they undertook to do. I have it in writing. The land was given to them in the consideration that it be named John Hendry Park. You have the right understanding of the whole matter.”

MRS. MARY RITER HAMILTON, VANCOUVER, 1952.

Exhibit of her paintings at the Vancouver Art Gallery, 1145 West Georgia Street, by the Women's Auxiliary of the Vancouver Art Gallery, on Tuesday, 4 March 1952, at 2:30 p.m. Exhibit opened by Major J.S. Matthews, V.D., City Archivist.

Major Matthews:

Madam Chairman, Mrs. Hamilton and Ladies:

By request, I declare this exhibit open. My gratitude to the ladies of the Auxiliary is offered for the opportunity to do so. I am convinced that the people of Vancouver, with especial emphasis on the men of the Canadian Legion, the War Amps, and particularly the veterans of 1914-1918, applaud you for what is being done this afternoon towards one for whom they have respect and admiration, and whom is held as one of their own.

We are assembled here to pay tribute to a gracious and gallant lady, Mrs. Hamilton. The tradition of our land is limited to the very few, and even midst the most eminent it is a very deep footprint in the sand which the next tide does not wash away. It is fitting and proper that those who bring lustre to our land should receive the plaudits of their fellows, that others may see and emulate their good example.

Recently I asked a young man if he remembered the name of the general who commanded the Canadian troops in the first Great War. He replied, “No, sir.” Then I asked if he knew who wrote the history of that war, and again he replied, “No, sir.” I presume that if I had asked about Mrs. Hamilton he would have replied, “No, sir.” Yet, thirty years ago all three names were on every tongue. General Currie fought the battles, John Buchan wrote about them, and while Lord Tweedsmuir was writing, Mrs. Hamilton was painting the battle scenes about which he wrote. That holocaust cost Canada 50,000 killed and a quarter of a million maimed. Our part cannot be fully understood without mention of the achievements of all three names. There are among our ex-soldiers those who have an admiration, almost amounting to reverence, for the gentle lady who had the courage, the fortitude and the perception to enter that hellfire corner called Ypres, or that muck heap called the Somme, in the wild and freezing winter of 1919, and make a pictorial record of what could be seen before the green growth of the following spring had concealed much of the devastation spread about in all its naked horror. She must have been the first woman in history to do such a thing. She must have been fully qualified or she would not have been allowed

there. As a woman she could not fight so she did the next best thing, she portrayed the deeds of those who had, the one thing the soldiers could not do themselves.

What Mrs. Hamilton depicted is true to life. I saw her "Cemetery at St. Eloi." I saw her "Sadness of the Somme." I sat in that sewer called "Voormezele." I heard the ping as the shells struck the iron boilers of the ruined "Sugar Refinery," and, in my curiosity, I explored the inside of her "Abandoned Tank."

Today we accept the British Commonwealth, the greatest structure for political good the world has ever know, as we accept the free air, unmindful and forgetful of the sources of our good fortune. Mrs. Hamilton is Canadian born, third generation U.E.L. There might never have been a Canada as we know it had it not been for the blood from which she is sprung, the United Empire Loyalists of 150 years ago.

Mrs. Hamilton was not obscure before the First War. She was not local—her work was international. She had painted in Germany, Italy, Holland, Spain, and hung in the salons of France. She had painted the lieutenant governors of B.C. for the British Columbia government. Her works were possessed by the eminent of Canada, even Royalty. In 1923 more than one hundred of her paintings were exhibited in a gallery near Trafalgar Square, London, and she has exhibited in almost every great city throughout the Dominion. Today, many are cherished treasures of the Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa.

To you, Mrs. Hamilton, may I be privileged to say that the secret of happiness in mature years is the contemplation of one's own work and to see that it is good. You must be a very happy woman. The only weakness might be that you appear to have been indulging in the enjoyment of too many summers.

Ladies of the Auxiliary and Mr. Morris, our Curator, will you please accept our congratulations and our thanks for your astute wisdom in arranging this reminder of great events, great men and great deeds. We must not and will not forget. Now, let us go and gaze upon the handiwork of an accomplished lady, one who honours us with her presence, who is seated among us, and whose name must, forever, remain upon the roll of those who have brought fame to our country.

J.S.M.

At Vancouver Art Gallery,
Tuesday, 4 March 1952, at 3:00 p.m.

VANCOUVER RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB.

Conversation (over the telephone) with A.P. Horne, Esq., pioneer, now of 4025 Granville Street South, 30 October 1947.

RUGBY FOOTBALL. BROCKTON POINT GROUNDS. VANCOUVER RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB. CRICKET.

Mr. Horne: "You are quite right in saying that had it not been for the rugby footballers, and the cricketers, Brockton Point Grounds would not have been developed so early as they were. I think we played more rugby in those days when we of Vancouver were few than we do now that we are many. I am speaking of 1889, 1890, 1891 and 1892. One reason why there was so strong an interest was that many, perhaps most, of the players were young men newly arrived from the colleges and universities of the British Isles."

FOOTBALL AT HASTINGS. "GEORGE BLACK'S." C.P.R. "FOOTBALL EXPRESS."

"Before Brockton Point was cleared and made ready for play, I think about May or June 1890, we played at George Black's, at Hastings—football, cricket, lacrosse, bicycle racing, etc.—in the field opposite George Black's Brighton Hotel, a field between the C.P.R. track and the water of the inlet."

(See photo C.V. Sp. N. 101, P. 256-7; G.N. 552-566.)

"The way we got from Vancouver to Hastings for the matches was that the club chartered a C.P.R. train—fare twenty-five cents return. The railway put the train on a siding at Hastings and it waited until the match was over to take us back. The football club never lost any money by the train, nor did we ever make more