

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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A Verse Synchronized
to Calixa Lavalee's
Inspiring Air

“O Canada”

O Canada, our heritage, our love,
Thy worth we praise all other lands above.
From sea to sea, throughout thy length,
from pole to borderland,
At Britain's side, whate'er betide, unflinch-
ingly we'll stand.
And as we sing, “God Save the King,”
“Guide Thou the Empire wide,” do we
implore,
“And prosper Canada from shore to shore,”

*The above verse arranged by the late Brigadier-
General Buchan, is intended to convey Imperial as
well as Canadian patriotism.*

“O Canada”, Vancouver, 9th Feb. 1910. This card was found in 1953 among the papers of F.C. Wade Esq., first president, Canadian Club, Vancouver. It is the only known copy, and was used at the first public singing of “O Canada” in Vancouver. On 9th Feb. 1910, about fifty members assembled for luncheon in a small hall, the “Pender Hall”, south west corner Pender and Howe streets. J.S. Matthews, a young member, relates:- “I took my seat. Beside my plate was a printed card we had not used previously. The “Maple Leaf Forever”, customarily sung, was on one side, and, turning it over was surprised to see a verse on the other side. It read “O Canada”. We had never heard of it; did not know tune nor words. The meal finished, the chairman announced something unusual; there was to be song. Two fellow officers of mine in the 6th D.C.O.R., Captain W. Hart-M'Harq and Lieutenant James Selater got up, and were joined by Mr. James Milne, of St. John's Presbyterian Church; all had splendid voices. We listened attentively; the new tune was very good; then we applauded. The address by Professor Meaney, of Seattle, upon the explorations of Captain Vancouver. We left the little cards beside our plates, and went back to our offices all unconscious of the historic significance of the occasion, and leaving behind the memento of it; the cards, we might have taken to be cherished as relics.”

The late Mr. Wade's papers were presented to the City Archives, Vancouver, by his daughter, Mrs. Margety Wade, 1035 Cad-
bero St. For complete information see pamphlet “O Canada”, published by City Archives, 1947. City Archives, C.S.M. 53

Item # EarlyVan_v7_062

[illustration annotation:]

"O Canada," Vancouver, 9th Feb. 1910. This card was found in 1953 among the papers of F.C. Wade, Esq., first president, Canadian Club, Vancouver. It is the only known copy, and was used at the first public singing of "O Canada" in Vancouver. On 9th Feb. 1910, about fifty members assembled for luncheon in a small hall, the "Pender Hall," south west corner Pender and Howe streets. J.S. Matthews, a young member, relates: - "I took my seat. Beside my plate was a printed card we had not used previously. The "Maple Leaf Forever," customarily sung, was on one side, and, turning it over, was surprised to see a verse on the other side. It read "O Canada." We had never heard of it; did not know tune nor words. The meal finished, the chairman announced something unusual; there was to be song. Two fellow officers of mine in the 6th D.C.O.R., Captain W. Hart-McHarg and Lieutenant James Sclater got up, and were joined by Andrew Milne, of St. John's Presbyterian Church; all had splendid voices. We listened attentively; the new tune was very good; then we applauded. The address by Professor Meaney, of Seattle, upon the explorations of Captain Vancouver. We left the little cards beside our plates, and went back to our offices all unconscious of the historic significance of the occasion, and leaving behind the memento of it, the cards, we might have taken to be cherished as relics."

The late Mr. Wade's papers were presented to the City Archives, Vancouver, by his daughter, Mrs. Margery Wade, 1035 Cardero St. For complete information, see pamphlet "O Canada," published by City Archives, 1947. City Archives. J.S.M. 53

"O CANADA." BUCHAN.

Copy of a statement on British Columbia Electric Railway Co. Ltd. letterhead (where Mr. Buchan's son is engaged).

The first singing of "O Canada" in Vancouver is recorded in an article on page 11 of the "Daily News-Advertiser," Vancouver, British Columbia, Thursday, February 10th 1910. The article is headed "Pacific Coast Exploration," and contains the account of the proceedings of a luncheon meeting of the VANCOUVER CANADIAN CLUB on Wednesday, 9th February 1910.

The article states that the guest of honor was Professor Edmond L. Meany of the University of Washington, who addressed the Club on "CAPTAIN GEORGE VANCOUVER'S DISCOVERIES ON THE NORTH PACIFIC COAST."

In the absence of Mr. William Godfrey, president of the Vancouver Canadian Club, the head of the table was occupied by Mr. Ewing Buchan, vice-president, who introduced the guest speaker. The guests on Mr. Buchan's right were Professor Meany, and the Rev. Dr. Perry. On his left were Colonel West, United States Consul, and Mr. F.C. Wade, K.C. The reference to "O Canada" is quoted as follows:

A unique feature at the close of the luncheon was the singing by all present of the following inspiring stanza written by Brigadier General Buchan to music composed by Calixa Lavalee.

O Canada, our heritage, our love,
Thy worth we praise all other lands above.
From sea to sea throughout the length, from pole to borderland,
At Britain's side, whate'er betide, unflinchingly we stand.
And as we sing, "God Save the King,"
"Guide Thou the Empire Wide," do we implore,
"And prosper Canada from shore to shore."

P.H. BUCHAN.
10th Feb. 1947

The above sheet was prepared by Mr. Percy Halcro Buchan, son of Mr. Ewing Buchan, and nephew of General Buchan during the publication of the pamphlet "O CANADA" by Major J.S. Matthews. Major

Matthews had not had time to look up old newspapers, so Mr. Buchan volunteered to do it for him. Major Matthews adds a footnote:

Small, upstairs hall, Pender Hall, south west corner Howe and Pender streets. Capt. Hart-McHarg and Lieut. James Sclater, and a Mr. Milne sang. I was present.

J.S. Matthews.

[LETTER FROM P.H. BUCHAN.]

5762 Cypress St.
Vancouver, Canada

14 July 1947

Dear Major Matthews,

You have done a fine job, and Mr. Allen and I can well be proud to have had a hand in it.

The "O Canada" booklet shows good taste throughout. Justice has been done in a worthy cause, well deserved honor has been paid to the memory of my excellent father and history has been written in indelible ink. It has been by the hand of Providence that we, under your able guidance, have been the instruments whereby this work has been well and truly performed.

I personally am very happy and contented, the more so because of your thoughtfulness in presenting me with the first printed copy, and for your very kind remarks written therein.

Thank you!

Sincerely yours

P.M. [H.] Buchan

"O CANADA."

31st Aug. 1948.

Dear Mr. Henstridge:

Through the courtesy of Mr. C.A. Sutherland, Mayor's Secretary, I am privileged to read your article on "CANADA'S NATIONAL FLAG" in "The Municipal Review of Canada," July-Aug. 1948, page 12.

After reading it, it suggests itself to me that I should send you a pamphlet, prepared on this desk, on our national hymn, "O Canada," the words of the "Buchan version" having been written in Vancouver. (I had the pleasure of being present at the first public singing.) The pamphlet deals with facts, with facts alone—expresses no opinion. It is contrary to archival ethics to express opinions. Our duty is to furnish correct, full and all facts. You can rely, absolutely, upon the accuracy of the facts in this pamphlet. They are from original documents here.

Your article commences by saying that you have been interested in heraldry since 1921; it ends by saying that "by getting a flag that is acceptable to the majority of Canadians presenting it to Ottawa for acceptance."

I have extended you the courtesy of listening attentively to your written argument; it is not, I presume, too much to ask you to listen to mine. My representation is that it was an admission that you are a novice. Men spend their lives on heraldry, and at the end are not so sure they understand it fully. About 1921 I published "HONOURS OF THE EMPIRE AND WHAT THEY MEAN," but, gracious, what I don't know about heraldry would fill a library. In this great city of Vancouver, 400,000 people or more, I know of no qualified herald, but there are "millions" who think they are.