

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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FLINT AND FEATHER.

In which "Lost Lagoon," the poem, appears, states that the first edition was published in 1912. The poem mentions "seaweed," "gulls," and "firs"; also canoes.

It is obvious that, if Miss Johnson was not here in 1909, but was here in 1910 before June (when the directory was published), and was slowly dying before September 1911, then her canoe trips on Coal Harbour must have been in the summer of 1910 or 1911.

DAILY NEWS-ADVERTISER.

Sunday, 16 March 1913. (Nine days after her demise on 7th.)

"The Spectator," by A. Buckley, M.A.

The "Lost Lagoon" she called Coal Harbor, and perhaps some day the City will change an ugly name for beautiful one "in memory of Pauline Johnson."

"I have always resented that jarring, unattractive name," she writes, "for years ago, when I first plied paddle across the gunwale of a light canoe, and idled about the margin, I named the sheltered little cove the 'Lost Lagoon.' This was just to please my own fancy, for, as that perfect summer month drifted on, the ever restless tides left the harbor devoid of water at my favorite canoeing hour, and my pet idling place was lost for many days—hence my fancy to call it the 'Lost Lagoon.' I trust some day there will be no other name."

We have all [*continues "The Spectator"*] seen Coal Harbor, but who has seen it as Pauline Johnson did. And, who could have told us in words like these.

Note: "For years ago" seems to imply some visit earlier than 1910, for the difference between 1913, when she died, and 1910 when she "took up residence in Vancouver" does not appear sufficiently long a period to warrant the expression "for years ago."

11 December 1950. J.S. Matthews.

City Archives,
City Hall
Vancouver

THE NAMING OF "LOST LAGOON."

Stock Exchange Building
VANCOUVER, B.C.

December 13 1950.

Major J.S. Matthews,
City Archives,
City Hall,
Vancouver, B.C.

Dear Major:

I was delighted to hear from you again and was particularly interested in the manifestations of your assiduous endeavor, and the interesting note, which throws definite light on the fact that Pauline Johnson had the upper end of Coal Harbour in mind when she wrote her beautiful lines to the Lost Lagoon.

In 1923, when the Gyro Club held its potlatch, she had long since written "Lost Lagoon." The name, up to that time, had never been applied by anyone other than her to these waters. The Gyro held its Potlatch right on the Causeway. We called it "Tillicum Trail," and I suggested that we name the actual body of water and call it "Lost Lagoon," the name being suggested by Pauline Johnson's verse, which seemed most applicable. Pauline wrote her verse prior to the building of

the Causeway, and the lagoon actually becoming "Lost Lagoon," a bottled-up lagoon, a hidden lagoon, if you like, once lagoon. The Causeway made a lake of what once had been a lagoon.

These things which are interesting to us now will be doubly interesting when the hundred years roll away. I don't think the undependable public, however, will ever change this name as they succeeded in changing "Little Mountain Park."

Taking this opportunity of wishing you a fine quiet and contemplative, but not too quiet, old English Christmas and the best of wishes for the New Year, I remain

Yours sincerely

Rowe

R. Rowe Holland

RRH:LS

Comment by J.S.M.: "The Spectator," a column written by A. Buckley, M.C., published *News-Advertiser*, Vancouver, Sunday, 16 March 1913 (nine days after Miss Johnson's death on the 7th March), states that Miss Johnson writes that she named it because the tide went out and left her favourite canoeing place a dry bank of sea bottom; thus her lagoon was lost to her.

J.S.M.

D.L. 190, PORT MOODY. PIGEON COVE.

Letter, 30 December 1949, from J.J. Lye, City Clerk, Port Moody, to Major Matthews, City Archivist:

"Pigeon Cove is situated on the waterfront near the head of Burrard Inlet, on District Lot 190. It derives its name from the number of wild pigeons roosting in the trees, and is a favorite haunt for hunters when the season (for shooting) opens."

THE UNVEILING OF THE STATUE TO SENATOR THE HONOURABLE GERALD GRATTAN McGEER, K.C. AT THE CITY HALL, IN STRATHCONA PARK, VANCOUVER, MONDAY, 18 OCTOBER 1948, AT 3:00 P.M.

REMARKS BY MAJOR MATTHEWS, CITY ARCHIVIST.

Your Worship, Dean Swanson, Ladies and Gentlemen:

In the chronicle of human endeavour, regardless of time or place, history records no finer achievement of a people than the creation of the metropolis and port of Vancouver; a community spreading twenty miles wide by ten miles deep, of two hundred churches, one hundred fifty parks, one hundred fifty schools, and perhaps fifteen hundred miles of streets, of monumental buildings, luxurious offices and busy factories, of beautiful homes and green lawns, which, in the short span of less than a single life, rose, like a magic thing, out of a wilderness of forest and swamp; the happy home of an enlightened and benevolent people.

Who were "The Builders." They were young men and women of British and Canadian blood and bone—there were no grey hairs in early Vancouver—with energy, courage and vision, with the power of justice and the patience of strength; they built, not a fort, but a garden on the shore. No sword was drawn; no bugle sounded; there is no blood on our escutcheon; they were men and women of peace. Their motto might have been "Not we from kings, but kings from us."

Among the countless pioneers of Canada, Australia, and elsewhere, to whom we owe the greatest structure for political good the world has ever known, the British Commonwealth, was a young man and a young woman, James and Emily McGeer, father and mother of an irrepressible boy; "Gerry" when he was good; Gerald when he was naughty. Their humble home in the stumps of the clearing was in the hollow below this magnificent City Hall. Here, all about us, their son