

## **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 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the City's founding. The project was made possible by funding from the Vancouver Historical Society.

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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 7<sup>th</sup> 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

played or fished in the long vanished streams. He helped to build the second cabin on top of Grouse Mountain.

As I stand here beside his image in bronze, uncertain as to what is most appropriate to say, I can feel that youth's hand upon my shoulder, and his voice whispering in my ear, "Do honour to my father and my mother, that our days may be long in the land."

James McGeer, the father, had cows, and the milk from those cows gave material strength to our pioneer babies. He also had a pen. With that he gave them spiritual strength, for with it he wrote "An Irishman's Prayer." Please listen for what he prayed:

We kneel and thank Thee, God, because  
Our King and Emperor sees  
That only by Thine own just laws  
Can man-made empires live.  
'Tis ours to kneel and supplicate,  
'Tis Thine, O God, to give.

For Thou hast put into our hands  
A power for weal or woe;  
O'er seas, o'er peoples and o'er lands  
Thy victory is our lord the King.  
'Tis his to do Thy will on earth  
While we Thy praises sing.

O, grant us wisdom, foresight, fear;  
For fear of Thee is power.  
And make us steadfast to adhere  
To simple truth and simple love;  
That we may do Thy will on earth.  
Thou guide us from above.

Such was the atmosphere of the home from which Senator McGeer, an obscure Mount Pleasant lad, rose to be Senator McGeer, Mayor of Vancouver, and to end his days as an illustrious Canadian.

## **THE MAYOR'S ROBE**

Said to be the first mayoral robe in Canada.

First worn 20th August, 1936, by

**HIS WORSHIP GERALD GRATTAN McGEER, K.C., M.P.**

at the welcome of the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor, Sir Percy Vincent, Bart., Aldermen and civic dignitaries of London, England, who had been invited to our Golden Jubilee festivities, 1886-1936.

Prior to April 18th, 1936, Mayors of Vancouver did not wear robe, cocked hat, jabot or gloves. In anticipation of the ceremonious formalities of the Lord Mayor's visit, the Mayor's Gold Chain was taken out of storage, where it had been since 1912. Mayor McGeer donned his King's Counsel gown, and had his photograph taken. The dignity of a robe impressed him. He discarded his K.C. gown, and ordered a mayoral robe, defraying the cost, \$527.33, from his own purse.

After the death of Mayor McGeer, August 11th, 1947, the Mayoral Robe, together with this glass cabinet were presented to the City Archives. In May, 1950, the Mayor's widow, Mrs. G. G. McGeer, presented the King's Counsel gown. In October, 1947, the second robe was presented by Colonel the Honourable Eric W. Hamber, C.M.G., LL.D., and the ceremonial gloves were presented by Colonel the Honourable W. C. Woodward.

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