

Early Vancouver

Volume Two

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Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1932.

Supplemental to volume one collected in 1931.

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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to Canada. He handed over his command to Major General Thompson, proceeded to Baghdad, and thence via Basrah to India, arriving 11 January 1919.

LIEUT. COL. W.S. LATTA, D.S.O. AND TWO BARS.

Lieut. Col. W.S. Latta, D.S.O. and two bars, of the 29th (Vancouver) Battalion, was born at Ayr, Scotland, 14 April 1879, and joined the old 6th Regiment, The Duke of Connaught's Own Rifles, Vancouver, as a private on 5 January 1900, promoted corporal February 1903, sergeant March 1903, and then was offered a commission in his regiment in the spring of 1909.

It was the unwritten law of the officers of the old Sixth that officers of the regiment must come from the sergeants or lower ranks of the regiment. At the time of the outbreak of the Great War, all the officers of the regiment save one or two of those on the staff, and one or two other exceptions, had at some time or other been in the ranks of the regiment or some other regiment. Further, notwithstanding that it was contrary to military procedure, the officers of the regiment voted on the candidature of suggested officers; the procedure was for the name of the intended officer to be mentioned at one monthly officers' meeting, and secretly voted on at the next meeting; three nays disqualified the candidate, and although it was the commanding officer's prerogative to ignore such a vote, he rarely did so, and in a number of years there were but two instances where he overruled the decision by secret ballot of his thirty or thirty-five officers.

Sergeant Latta's name was submitted to the officers of the regiment for a commission, a secret vote was taken, and the decision was adverse. But the commanding officer, Lt. Col. F.W. Boulton, overruled the decision, and exercised his prerogative, thereby saving from oblivion a soldier who subsequently attained much distinction.

As captain, he joined the 29th Vancouver Battalion on 1 November 1914 and went overseas in May 1915 as captain in command of "C" Company. Promoted Lieut. Col. and assumed command 21 July 1917; took an active part in all engagements from September 1915 to August 1918 and was present at Kemmel, St. Eloi Craters, Ypres, Somme, Courcelette, Vimy, Arleux, Lens, Hill 70, Passchendaele and Amiens. Wounded, Battle of Amiens, 9 August 1918. D.S.O. June 1917, bar January 1918, second bar, August 1918.

Subsequent to the war he was with the Land Department of the B.C. government until September 1931 when he was transferred to another department.

A splendid rifle shoot, and winner of the British Columbia Rifle Association's Grand Aggregate Gold Medal in 1913.

He was one of three brothers who were the first to climb the "Lions," Labour Day, 5 September 1903.

CAPTAIN AND QUARTERMASTER FRANK KENNEDY. 6TH REGIMENT, THE DUKE OF CONNAUGHT'S OWN RIFLES.

The old 6th Regiment "The Duke of Connaught's Own Rifles" was a really splendid regiment in which nearly every officer was a man of note in some respect. About 1911 His Excellency the Governor-General, H.R.H. The Duke of Connaught, K.G., visited Vancouver for the first time in his capacity of Governor-General, and was accorded a wonderful welcome. One of the features of the visit was his first dinner with the officers of this regiment, of which he was Honorary Colonel, and during this dinner he made a speech in which he made the following remark (he was speaking of rifle shooting), "And I hope that in this respect, you will long continue to set an example to the other regiments of Canada."

At this time, and for many years previously, fifteen or more, the regimental quarter master sergeant was Q.M. Sgt. F. Kennedy, afterwards, during the war, Captain and Q.M. of the regiment. In conversation today, 2 March 1933, he said, re surrender of Indian chief, Riel Rebellion, 1885:

"Poundmaker came riding up to us on a horse surrounded with his staff of twenty or more, and the priest; it was the priest who did all the talking. I was Colour Sergeant Kennedy of the Queen's Own Rifles; Captain Hughes was a son of some wealthy business man in Toronto. As Poundmaker rode up to us—there were just two of us, Capt. Hughes and myself—he looked one of the most imposing sights I have

ever seen; his face was set and stern like a stone image, and he sat his horse like a dignified statue. They came up under a little white flag. He had with him a little hunchback, the blackest little fellow I ever saw for an Indian, and he walked up to me, and stuck out his hand, and exclaimed, 'Hello, Jack'; I think they were the only two words in English he knew. He was full of cordiality, but I had never seen him before.

"We put Poundmaker in a buggy and sent him over to the brigade where he surrendered again. Poundmaker complained that he had been fired on while coming in under white flag; well, I suppose he was; how were we to tell, he was a long way off.

"We got a wagon load of arms from them. Then afterwards in camp I started to get some food, some grub, for Poundmaker, and was making it in a pot. I offered the food to him. After the food was cooked, I offered him the pot with the food in it, but he waved it away, and remarked with a gesture of disgust that he wanted it on a plate. He said he was not going to eat out of a pot. I said to him, 'Oh, well, all right then, you needn't, this is not my work to prepare food for you; I thought you wanted to eat; it's not my business to provide plates for you.' I was a colour sergeant, not a cook. I told him, 'I'm just helping you out.'

"I went over by and by and asked General Otter what we were to do about food for him. General Otter replied, 'Oh, just draw rations for him like the rest.'

"The next day I went out alone, and saw some Indians away off. I waved my arm for them to come towards me, and a fellow, a chief, Piapot, came over on a buck board and surrendered to me. He was not much of a fellow.

"Two or three days afterwards they told Poundmaker that I was going away; I had to go off on another duty. Poundmaker told them he was sorry, and when he saw me going, came over and shook hands."

Query: What became of him?

"Oh, he died in jail. He told them they might just as well kill him at once and be done with it, that he would die anyhow if they confine him."