

Early Vancouver

Volume Three

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

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Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1933-1934.

Supplemental to Volumes One and Two collected in 1931-1932.

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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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH JOHN INNES, CELEBRATED PAINTER OF HISTORICAL SCENES OF CANADA, AT HIS OFFICE, 602 PROVINCE BUILDING, VANCOUVER, 30 DECEMBER 1933.

CITY COUNCIL, FIRST MEETING.

Mr. Innes sat smoking his pipe. We had been discussing what size the proposed painting of the first meeting of the first City Council of Vancouver—which I have been trying to get painted—should be; we decided it should be sixty-six inches by ninety. I was looking at his painting of the H.B. steamer *Beaver* in some narrow channel of sea, high mountains beyond, two totem poles and an Indian hut on right, and white traders offering blankets to Indians. I pointed to the painting and said, Is that a real scene?

Mr. Innes: "No. None of my paintings are real scenes; nature seldom makes a picture; you cannot get all of it in; the eye cannot catch it all; but what difference does it make? Why, you know that picture of the Fraser Canyon, the one where the men are passing around a wall on a hanging bridge. Well, old Jason Allard, you know him, old Jason, before he died, used to come in here and declare he knew the spot well; had been there many times, but" (chuckling) "Jason never saw that place; no one ever saw it; it does not exist. The old man was perfectly sincere; he thought he had. The reason is that the picture is an *epitome* of the Fraser Canyon, that's all."

I said I was going over to New Westminster to see Hugh Murray, who came as a child on the *Thames City*.

Mr. Innes, smiling: "I used to sneak over there sometimes and go and sit in the old Holy Trinity Church, sit in a little pew; just sit there and think. You can get a good many old memories back just sitting there; wonderful place to sit. I was leader of the choir there one time, so I just went over to sit in a pew by myself; nobody else in the church; no one knew who I was. I did not know the rector; did not want to."

FATHER PAT.

"Old Father Pat used to be over there—we were great pals; and Bishop Sillitoe; fine man; fine men. Old Father Pat and I used to sit together and talk, in the See House, and smoke the Bishop's cigars and drink his whisky. Father Pat was a wonderful man;" (with emphasis) "a real he-man, if you like."

"Opposite was the Roman Catholic Church. One day, Father Pat said to me, 'Peter's down.' They had got him down off the top of the R.C. Church, and Peter was lying on the sidewalk, waiting to be repainted; he had a brass crown."

"A day or so after I went to see Father Pat and opened the door, and Father Pat was in convulsions laughing. 'Well,' he laughed, 'Peter's up again,'" (pause) "then he ejaculated, 'D'you know how they got him there? Hauled him up with a rope, and' (slyly) 'with a rope around his neck.'"

CONVERSATION WITH LIEUTENANT COLONEL HULME, V.D., BARRISTER, PACIFIC BUILDING, VANCOUVER.

Who raised and commanded the Dawson Rifles of Canada, Dawson, Yukon Territory, the 62nd Overseas Battalion, C.E.F., and commanded the 6th Regiment D.C.O.R. at the outbreak of the Great War, and until 1915, when he raised the 62nd Overseas Battalion at Hastings Park.

DAWSON RIFLES OF CANADA. LIEUTENANT COLONEL HERBERT D. HULME, V.D.

"The organisation of the Dawson Rifles of Canada, officially known as the Dawson Rifle Company, came about in this way."

"I went to Dawson in August 1898 from Toronto, where I had been a captain in the 2nd Regiment Queen's Own Rifles. The Klondike Gold Rush was then at its height. Adventurers from all over the world had been pouring into the Yukon, and in 1899 the Yukon Field Force, a special force of regular or permanent force soldiers fifty strong, was sent in to preserve law and order in support of the North West Mounted Police which was not numerically strong enough. Their commander was Lieutenant Colonel T.D.B. Evans; the second in command was the present Major General Harry Burstall, and the present Major General Thacker, one of the officers. They came down to Dawson in winter outfit. After their arrival they carried on

some of the duties of the North West Mounted Police; guards on banks—we had two banks—and so on. Later—about a year—the Yukon Field Force was withdrawn, and I received a letter from the late Colonel Josiah G. Holmes, then District Officer Commanding, M.D. No. 11 at Victoria, asking me to organise a company of volunteer infantry; he knew that I was up there and was senior officer. I indented on Ottawa for uniforms, arms and equipment, and I shall not forget what happened when they came in. I was told that I should lose every article of clothing and equipment; men going off with them. I had every piece numbered and marked, and the remarkable thing was that not a single article was missing when the uniforms, etc., were finally called in four years later. We were organised in 1900 and disbanded in 1904.

“At the end of the fall training, Colonel Holmes detailed Inspector Z.T. Wood of the N.W.M.P. to inspect us. We were fifty strong and spick and span. No. 1 Section was entirely of members of the staff of the Canadian Bank of Commerce; today I suppose every one of them are bank managers or retired bank managers. I had half a dozen ex-constables of the N.W.M.P. as non-commissioned officers. The officers were:

“Captain (local Major) H.D. Hulme;

“Lieutenant W.M. McKay, now Stipendiary Magistrate of Vancouver;

“Lieutenant Richard L. Cowen, of the Canadian Bank of Commerce, Dawson, and now of Toronto.

“I forget the names of the N.C.O.s, but the sergeant major was an ex-sergeant of the N.W.M.P.

“Our uniform was a scarlet serge jacket, black trousers with narrow red piping, black boots (our own), a wedge cap (Field service cap), and great coat. The officers wore brown leather crossbelts with lion's head, chain and whistle, and a belt plate the same as the cap badge. The cap badge, which I designed and paid for myself, was made by ? in Toronto and was a gold maple leaf of rather large size in the centre of which was imposed a circular garter bearing the inscription ‘DAWSON RIFLES OF CANADA.’ The garter was surmounted by a crown. Within the garter was a miner's pan, and inside that crossed miner's pick and shovel with a few gold nuggets in the base. I wrote to half the universities of Montréal and Toronto to get a proper Latin motto implying the ‘Farthest North’; what we finally adopted was ‘Usque ad Boream’ (To the North). We had just the one uniform; no full dress.

“The Dawson Rifles were a highly efficient, though small, unit, and there were several things which contributed to this condition. We were isolated in the world in Dawson, and drills, etc. were a pleasant diversion in the monotony of a lone land with little connection with the outside; there was no radio then. Then we had the North West Mounted Police, exceptionally smart corps, to ‘buck,’ and we had N.C.O.s who were ex-N.W.M.P. and my own training in one of the smartest regiments in Canada, the 2nd Q.O.R. was not lost. I have never seen smarter men on parade than the Dawson Rifles. With the N.W.M.P. 8 o'clock was 8 o'clock, and the same with us. A man who came running at 8 o'clock was late; if he was not on parade at 8 o'clock, he was late, even if he was running.

“Then we had a rifle range of, what do you suppose, one target; and darn glad to get it; the rifle range was across the river, opposite Dawson.

“Then we had dances to attend. I remember the St. Andrew's Ball. I wore my bright scarlet mess uniform, with a whole row of little beads down the front of the waistcoat, and embroidered gold braid up to my elbow, and I was standing in the ballroom observed of all, and thinking myself a pretty fine officer, and proud too—as I had a right to be. The N.W.M.P. also wore red, red tunics. Some old miner waltzed up to me, and gave me an awful slap on the shoulder with his open palm, peered into my eyes, blearywise, and ejaculated, ‘Say, constable, we're having a hell of a time, aren't we?’ My self-esteem went down away below Arctic zero.

“The photograph by Gootzman was taken on the Queen's birthday, 1902, after we had paraded with the North West Mounted Police on the N.W.M.P. barrack square. All Dawson turned out to watch the show; the N.W.M.P. lined up on the right; the Dawson Rifles on the left. Of course, we fired the usual ‘feu de joie.’ Major Z.T. Wood was in command, and the rattle of blank firing came down the line of the N.W.M.P. well enough, but something went wrong with my Rifles, and about ten rifles went off with a bursting bank all at once, right over my head. I turned around to my company and what I said to them wouldn't be fit for you to put down, but there was hell, and the drinks to pay for when I got to the N.W.M.P.'s Officers Mess.

"But I got back at them. Next year," (Inspector) "Dann of the N.W.M.P. was in command, and his constables got the order for a feu de joie, and damned if about ten of them didn't do the same thing, and the drinks were on him." (Note: "feu de joie" is, soldiers in file fire rifles consecutively up one rank and down another.)

"The photo is taken in front of the N.W.M.P. Quartermaster Stores on the N.W.M.P. barrack square. Our armouries were the old Court House.

"I came down to Vancouver in August 1904, and the Dawson Rifles, the most northerly volunteer unit in the British Empire, was disbanded. Then as you know, I joined the 6th D.C.O.R., and you know the rest.

"The amusing incident of the old miner mistaking me in my 'glorious' uniform at the Dawson dance for a constable reminds me of a similar incident after I came to Vancouver. I was in full uniform and had to go to the Stanley Park one afternoon for some bang-up ceremony, and, for some reason, was without conveyance, so got on a street car. I was trying to put a street car ticket in the ticket box when the conductor said to me, 'Oh, that's all right; go on in; we never charge for the band.'"

THE B.C. REGIMENT, DUKE OF CONNAUGHT'S OWN RIFLES.

Conversation on returning from the funeral of the late Lieutenant Colonel F.W. Boulton, formerly commanding the 6th Regiment, "Duke of Connaught's Own Rifles," Vancouver, B.C. The perpetuating unit, The British Columbia Regiment, (Duke of Connaught's Own Rifles) with both bands were present at the obsequies at Christ Church Cathedral, 11 September 1933. (See photo of funeral.)

Three officers in the old full dress uniform of the 6th D.C.O.R. alight from a motor car at the entrance to the Drill Hall.

Major Scudamore: (continuing conversation) "You had better come to our anniversary celebration next month, October" (1933), "fiftieth anniversary."

Major Matthews: "You cannot do it."

Major Scudamore: "Oh, yes, we can; we've got a ruling from Ottawa."

Major Scudamore says good bye, and enters Drill Hall. Major Matthews and Major Melhuish enter motor car and drive off.

Major Melhuish: "What's he talking about?"

Major Matthews: "They're celebrating the 50th anniversary of the regiment."

Major Melhuish: "What regiment?"

Major Matthews: "Our regiment."

Major Melhuish: "Whaaaaaat?"

Major Matthews: "Fact. They've worked out some sort of an argument that they are descending from the old B.C. Provincial Regiment of 1883; I cannot see how they do it; what Westminster and Victoria are going to say about it I haven't heard. Fancy asking Ottawa for a ruling on a thing like that."

Major Melhuish: "Fancy Ottawa giving a ruling. Let them celebrate anything they want to; what I object to is contorted history."

Note: Majors Melhuish and Matthews both joined the 6th D.C.O.R. as privates, both rose to command the regiment; one served about 23 years, the other 30 years. One (Matthews) wrote, about 1907, the history of the regiment. Major Scudamore joined in 1911, and served, in all, less than four years. His historical memoirs usually include some incorrect statement.