

Early Vancouver

Volume Six

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Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1940-1945.

Supplemental to volumes one, two, three, four and five collected in 1931, 1932, 1934, 1939 and 1944.

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HOW THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY STEAMER *BEAVER* WAS WRECKED. TRUE, OR UNTRUE; HERE WAS WHAT WAS SAID.

Memo of conversation with Mr. A.W. LePage, 3538 Dunbar Street, this afternoon, 5 February 1941, as we went to the elevator, City Hall. He had called at the City Archives to give me a gold-plated medallion of the *Beaver's* copper to send to Miss Margaret F. McNeil, first white child born in Vancouver, 115 N.W. 15th Avenue, Portland, Oregon, who intends to present it to the British War Relief Society, Portland, to sell or raffle to raise funds. Mr. LePage is acting for the estate of C.W. McCain, who dismantled the *Beaver*.

S.S. *BEAVER*. CAPT. MARCHANT. A.W. LEPAGE.

Mr. LePage said: "Do you know how the *Beaver* came to go ashore. Doesn't it seem queer to you that she should have actually passed out of the Narrows, and went ashore outside Prospect Point?"

"Well, old Captain Marchant, I knew him better than I know you; he told me himself. I used to meet him every day almost. What he said was the passengers on the boat were going back" (to the logging dump) "and some of them were pretty well 'lit up,' and they had forgotten the liquor—call it 'booze' if you want to—and they wanted him to turn back to Vancouver so that they could get a supply.

"So he turned back, and in turning around he ran ashore. Anyway, that's what he told me, Captain Marchant himself."

J.S. Matthews.

5 February 1941.

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH ORMOND LEE CHARLTON, 11 FEBRUARY 1941.

Pioneer (13 September 1886), Celista, north shore Shuswap Lake, down for the winter, and now staying with his daughter, Mrs. Norman Bennett, 2227 Pine Street (she has four sons; her husband is in the Marine Dept., R.C.A.F., Sergeant, supply boat.)

Mr. Charlton said: "I came to Vancouver from St. Martin's, New Brunswick, C.P.R. and arrived here 13th September 1886. I was born at St. Martin's. My father was the school teacher; his name Andrew Charlton, and Mother was Elizabeth Charlton; she was a Miss Elizabeth Fowler, daughter of James Moorehouse Fowler, who was United Empire Loyalist, who was farming in Upham, King's County, and incidentally one of the Uphams, George Fred Upham, is now living in Vancouver. Father was a school teacher; he died in February 1868, when I was only two and a half years old. I was born August 19th 1865, and was one of a family of two. My sister, Mrs. William Wood, Alice now of San Francisco, 204 Hugo Street. She has three children.

"Well, as I said, I came to Vancouver, 13th September 1886; just a young fellow, 21, and looking for adventure. No idea of what I was going to do. The first job was in the Brunette Sawmill at Sapperton, labourer, and then afterwards I came back to Vancouver and at the time of the clearing of the 'West End' of Vancouver, that is, west of Burrard Street, I was employed as bookkeeper for Harry Berry, and Barnes and McLellan, feed and flour, who had a place of business on Carrall Street, between Cordova and Water Street."

"CHINESE" JOHN MCDUGALL.

"At that time all of Vancouver west of Burrard Street was stumps; it had been logged pretty well, but there were still a great number of trees standing, but all the good large timber had been taken out. The owners of the property had combined to let the contract for clearing, and the white labourers had agitated that the contract be given to white labour only. Then the contractors let the contract to John McDougall, who saw that the contract did not specify that he must employ white labour, and so he imported twenty-four Chinese from Victoria."

THE VANCOUVER CHESTNUT. "SIEGE OF VANCOUVER."

"But before I tell you any more, I ought to say that the sheet *The Vancouver Chestnut*, this which you have here, was got out by" (Dr.) "Bob' Mathison, the printer, on Hastings Street, and in it you will see a

'Speech of Roycroft' at the 'Siege of Vancouver' was written by myself; it is a parody on Shakespeare on the 'Siege of Harfleur.' It ends, 'Hurrah for China, and the Rice Brigade.'

"But to get back to the 'West End' clearing. The Chinese were camped in buildings on the shore of Coal Harbour, Burrard Inlet, somewhere near where the Hotel Elysium, where there was a creek from which they got their water; there was a bit of a clearing there, and there was an unoccupied shack there; not very big; a small one. I think there were some tents, but most of them were housed in a wooden building."

CHINESE RIOTS, 1887.

"It was February, about the 25th" (1887.) "One evening a mass meeting was held in the then new City Hall on Powell Street, upstairs. The meeting was addressed by several speakers, but no action taken, no resolutions passed; it was a very ordinary meeting; nothing of especial significance, just an ordinary meeting. After the adjournment, several people were talking in different groups through the hall, and someone at the rear called out, 'Let's pay our respects to John tonight.' There had been talk of tarring and feathering the contractor, John McDougall, and I thought that was what was meant by the remark, but the men, who subsequently rioted, proceeded to the camp up Water Street, and a trail through the clearing, stumbling over logs and sticks. I don't know who led them, if anyone did. There was a little snow on the ground, and of course it was dark; the crowd were so far ahead of me that I do not know if they stopped at the saloons to get a little encouragement as they went. They were so far ahead that I did not see that part of it. I stopped in conversation with restaurant people, and we heard shouts from the west. Of course, in those days, at night, Burrard Inlet was very still and quiet, and a shout could be heard a long way."

CHIEF OF POLICE STEWART.

"I followed the second crowd, and arrived on the scene just before Chief Jack Stewart and Superintendent Roycroft, and saw one Chinaman in the salt water up to his neck, and stopped another one from going in. Just at that time the Chief Police, Chief Stewart, and Superintendent Roycroft arrived. Superintendent Roycroft slipped on the snow as he passed me, and I helped him to his feet.

"Then Chief Stewart ordered the crowd to disperse. There were small fires, apparently of bedding and Chinese goods, and the Chinamen, among the tents and old buildings were apparently trying to hide themselves.

"The rioters refused to disperse on the Chief's order, and threatened him with bodily violence, but nothing was done by the rioters to hurt anyone, not even the Chinamen, but one or two of the rioters said, 'Let's finish this thing up,' and remarks of that nature, but they did nothing and soon dispersed, and went back to Water Street and town."

TOM GREER, MILKMAN.

"The next day John Frauley was arrested; he was a logger. He claimed to be home in bed when it happened. On Saturday morning, Tom Greer, brother of Sam Greer of Greer's Beach, was distributing his milk, and was met by Sergeant McLaren, with a warrant for his arrest. He asked, 'What am I to do about my milk?' The Sergeant told him to 'Go on, deliver your milk, and then come up to the City Hall.' Just after lunch on Saturday, I was walking down street when the sergeant stepped beside me, and walked down to where I was employed, and waited until we were inside before he presented a warrant to me, and I was arrested. Being Saturday afternoon, the police court had been held for the day, and the police magistrate, Black, refused to reconvene it, and said that under no circumstances would he accept bail. Although \$10,000 cash was offered by different citizens, quite a number of them agreed to put up the \$10,000 among them, but he would not accept it."

CITY HALL, POWELL STREET. COURT HOUSE.

"On hearing this, I sent for Mr. Blake, of Blake and Muir, barristers, and Mr. Muir came up to the City Hall lockup, and after some little talk he stated that J.J. Blake, his partner, was stipendiary magistrate, and could accept bail. This was done and each of the prisoners were released on three thousand dollars bail; \$1,000 each and two sureties of \$1,000 each. And we were free until the Monday."

RIOTS, 1887. SUSPENSION OF CHARTER.

“The case came up on Monday morning before Magistrate Black; the court was held in the upstairs, City Hall, Powell Street, and adjourned, I think until the next day; anyway, it finally came up on Thursday. Thursday morning we were tried; all three together, not singly. Mayor M.A. MacLean, R.H. Alexander, and Mr. Black were on the bench. Evidence was presented by Chief Stewart, his son Hector, and Mr. Glover, afterwards of the B.C. Electric Railway, but nothing to connect either of the prisoners with the riots was produced, and we were discharged without having to bring even our own witnesses. I think they just arrested us to save their face.”

“THE KEYS OF VANCOUVER.”

“The thing which I am most interested in is that we were tried twice for the same ‘crime,’ which I understand is contrary to British procedure. As the trial proceeded, the *Princess Louise* was entering the harbour with a force of special policemen on board; came in silently, no one heard her whistle if she did blow it. We left the Court House” (City Hall) “and went to different places, but the police knew where to find us. Superintendent Roycroft’s force landed on the C.P.R. dock, and marched up to the City Hall; about thirty-eight of them, uniforms, and arms” (revolvers and batons), “blue serge uniforms; it had taken two or three days in Victoria to outfit them, and Smith and Weston five-shooters. Notwithstanding the fact that Vancouver was in a state of ‘riot,’ the superintendent demanded of Mayor MacLean the ‘keys of the city,’ and the Mayor said, ‘Where is your authority?’ The authority was in the hands of another gentleman who was not present, but who had come from Victoria on the boat.” (It may have been a Mr. Hall.) “He had to be found, which of course was not a very big task in a city the size of Vancouver at that time. When he presented his credentials, Superintendent Roycroft asked for the prisoners, and was told that the prisoners had been tried and discharged. He insisted the city had no right to try them, the city charter having been suspended several days previously by an act of Legislature, passed through three readings in one day. The Mayor handed over the ‘keys of Vancouver’—I don’t know just what keys; probably the key of the lock-up—and the city police knew where we three were and rounded us up, and asked our permission to be tried again, to which we agreed. So we three appeared at the City Hall, upstairs, in court, and were tried again by Judge Vowell; he was gold commissioner for the Cariboo, and he happened to be in the city at the time.

“The witnesses were the same, with the exception of Mr. Glover, who did not appear, and the case was again dismissed for lack of evidence.”

NORTH VANCOUVER CATHOLIC CHURCH. INDIAN BAND.

“I am not just sure of the date, but it was 1887 or 1888, and the place was the Squamish Indian Mission at North Vancouver, and the chief performers were the Indian Band; I am not sure if it was the only band on the inlet at the time; it might have been. Some thousands of Indians were gathered at the Mission from all up and down the coast to meet a large number of Roman Catholic Church dignitaries. The place was a mass of tents and other shelters, pitched in the rough clearing between the stumps. In front of the Indian Church was four small cannons, muzzle loaders.

“A large flotilla of canoes had proceeded to Vancouver and met the Archbishop and Bishop and lesser clergy at Andy Linton’s boathouse at the foot of Carrall Street, adjoining Water Street.” (See photos C.V. P. In. 10, 12, C.V. N. In. 2.)

ANDY LINTON’S BOATHOUSE.

“As the flotilla was ready to leave Linton’s float of logs, ‘Squamish Joe,’ he was a prominent Indian from that North Vancouver Reserve; he was a longshoreman at Moodyville—not the same man as Chief Capilano Joe—gave the signal to the band to play, and to the canoe men to move out; the bandmen were all in the canoes. To illustrate the quietness of Vancouver Harbour at that time, I was in a boat about fifty yards off shore in front of the Mission Church at the Reserve, north shore, and heard, quite distinctly, Joe’s order, ‘Let her go.’ And the band played, I’ll bet you couldn’t guess—‘Yankee Doodle.’”

(Note: it is said that as the Bishop reached the Indian Reserve across the inlet and proceeded up the beach, this same band played “Johnny comes marching home.”)

EARLY CANNON.

"Well, as the ecclesiastical party was going over in the boats and canoes, the guns in front of the Mission Church were booming out welcome in great puffs of white smoke at about minute intervals. I forget the name of the Indian who was in charge, I think his name was Moses, but he would exclaim in stentorian tones, and measured ejaculation, 'One—two—three—four—five,' and at five the cannon was touched off with a fire brand."

SHIP HINDUSTAN. S.S. SKIDEGATE. CANNON.

"Another funny incident. The ship *Hindustan*, Capt. Walsh, carrying timber between Burrard Inlet and Chilean ports, loaded at Moodyville with a cargo of lumber, and pulled out to anchor waiting for tugs to take her to Royal Roads. She had several Chilenos" (Chileans in Spanish) "in her crew, and the porter of the Moodyville store was a fellow countryman, Pedro de la Flores, commonly called 'Pete.' Pete thought that he should fire a salute to the *Hindustan* on her departure, so he loaded up an old muzzle loader, presumably from the gunboat *Sparrowhawk*. He used as wad a gunnysack and as the tugboat started to move the *Hindustan* down the harbour, he discharged the cannon. The tugboat *Skidegate* saw the gunnysack wrapped around his topmast, and the language he used to poor Pete about firing on a British ship was something scandalous. That's the end of that story.

"After about three years in Vancouver, I went back to St. Martin's, New Brunswick, and was wandering around for a while, Boston, Massachusetts, went to see what Ontario looked like, worked on the lake steamers, and on a farm in the Muskoka district, and the street railway in St. Catharines, came west on a harvest excursion, and on through to Vancouver again in the fall of 1896.

"Then I worked in the sawmill at Ruskin, and I had about a dozen different jobs, but I met my wife at Ruskin; she went there as a visitor to the Rev. B.H. West, who was then a shoemaker at the mill; he had been their next door neighbour in Victoria. I worked at Ruskin for a while, then moved to Port Moody, and worked in the Canadian Pacific Lumber Co.; didn't like Port Moody climate, and moved to Victoria; worked in the Taylor Mill in Victoria, and later with Walsh Bros. truckmen, and Baker and Sons, flour and feed store, and then went into the honey bottling business on my own. Worked up a good reputation for nectar brand honey, and handled a number of other household specialties; bottling machine oil, cedar mop oil and things of that kind. The Great War, 1914-1918, 'killed' the honey business. British Columbia did not produce nearly enough honey, and a large amount of my supplies had to come from the United States, Australia, and Honolulu; the latter sources were cut off by the lack of shipping space, and the United States source was cut off by an embargo placed on the export of honey in order to have enough for the United States troops. Struggled along for a while, but finally gave it up, and took to buying fruit on the trees, taking it off, packing it and selling it in Vancouver and New Westminster. That was only a part-time job, so I went up to Celista in 1926.

"At Celista and Magna Bay, that is the next bay on Shuswap Lake, I started a trucking business to Notch Hill, Salmon Arm, and got the mail contract, which before that had been carried by boat. After fulfilling my contract, another party outbid me for the mail contract, and the trucking business was not sufficient to pay the outlay.

"So I went to live on my son-in-law's farm, Mr. Walter Nelson; he had a 'stump' ranch."

GENEALOGY.

"I married Miss Hannah Chapman, daughter of Richard Chapman of Victoria, farmer, etc., at his home at Oaklands, Victoria, on October 4th 1899; the clergyman was" [blank.] "She was Methodist then; I was Anglican. Clergyman was Methodist. We were blessed with four children, one son and three daughters. She died, January 27th 1940, and is buried at Celista, Shuswap Lake. Our children were:

1. Catherine, born in Victoria, 8th December 1900, and now Mrs. Fred Henderson of 1546 Bank Street, Victoria; she has two daughters and one son.
2. Darwin Charlton, born in Victoria, 20th May 1902, unmarried and lives at Celista with me.
3. Gladys, born in Victoria, 27th January 1904, and now Mrs. Norman Bennett of 2227 Pine Street; as I told you, her husband is on the supply ship (sergeant), *Sekani*, Royal Canadian Air Force. She has four sons.

4. Eleanor, born in Victoria, and now Mrs. Walter Nelson, living at Scott's Creek, near Sorrento, Shuswap. Her husband is on the ferry boat on the lake. She has six children, three sons and three daughters.

"That makes thirteen grandchildren altogether."

THE RETURN OF GENERAL CURRIE TO VANCOUVER.

A CURSORY MEMO BY J.S. MATTHEWS.

Written following a letter, dated 13 February 1941, from Colonel Willis O'Connor, Office of the Principal Aide-de-Camp, Government House, Ottawa. (His Excellency the Earl of Athlone.) As Major O'Connor he was with General Currie the day he returned to Vancouver. Col. O'Connor's letter says in part: "*It's hard for a great man to be a hero in his own country. He played too straight a game.*"

My recollection is that, news being that General Currie would reach Vancouver in the morning—I think by C.P.R.—I arose earlier than usual and made my way downtown. I found portions of Granville Street roped off, lamppost to lamppost, with a thick rope, about one inch, from Hastings Street to the old Hotel Vancouver on Georgia Street. I waited, as I was too late to reach the station.

There were few people on the streets; fewer than usual. The ropes hung bare; none were near them; it seemed queer to see streets roped off for a crowd, and a few stragglers only on the sidewalks. It seemed ominous.

However, presently, the procession came up the street. I forget just what, but a few motor cars, and it hurried onwards; there was scarcely a cheer. I do not recall hearing one. I hurried on down to "The Arena," on Georgia Street West, at Denman, and walked in just as the procession arrived.

The inside of the "Arena," since burned down, was not especially prepossessing. It "sat" about 5,000, but was gaunt and bare; tier on tier of seats—bleachers—high up to the roof. All were empty; not a soul sat in them. The interior was poorly lighted in daytime, better at night, and this was daytime. In the centre of the large wooden floor was a platform, perhaps forty feet wide by twenty feet deep, and a lot of chairs ranged in rows.

As soon as the procession arrived, all those who entered seemed to go up on the platform and take seats; General Currie and others of his party, excepting Major O'Connor, among them. Major O'Connor stayed on the floor and I spoke to him. I had met him in Ottawa during the war. There were more people, it seemed, on the platform than on the floor as audience.

I whispered to Major O'Connor, "This is awful."

Major O'Connor replied, "Never mind; he's living it down."

Poor Currie; it was a terrible welcome; heartless, thoughtless, cruel, and undeserved. I was ashamed of Vancouver that day.

HERE IS PART OF COL. O'CONNOR'S LETTER, 13 FEBRUARY 1941.

I can remember the day that General Currie went to the old arena; it wasn't a very friendly reception. It is hard for a great man to be a hero in his own country. He played too straight a game for the politicians, and would not be under their thumbs.

Willis O'Connor.

J.S. Matthews.

18 February 1941.