LEGACY OF TREES





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To all who visit Stanley Park, tread softly.

And may you enjoy and love this park as much as I do.



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Foreword



IN ALL MY years working for the Vancouver Park Board, my favourite days have been those spent in Stanley Park. It is a place in which to move around, with rewards and surprises around every corner at each passing season. I will never grow tired of the powerful life force that emanates from its coastal rainforest heart. It spreads in finger-like extensions through ornamental and exotic plant collections, sports fields, and beaches, until eventually it hits the concrete wall that is Vancouver's West End. Travelling in the opposite direction, we leave the world of responsibilities and artificial constructs to melt into its natural sights, sounds, and smells, to stabilize our brain chemicals, and to bathe in serenity and beauty until our inner nature can be touched.

When Nina Shoroplova came to me with her new manuscript *Legacy of Trees*, I had the rare treat of starting a read by an author previously unknown to me; she was writing about a place that has been a central theme in my life. Books about Vancouver and books about trees fill my shelves, but not one evokes memories as this one does—memories of wandering through Stanley Park.

What *Legacy of Trees* accomplishes is a wedding of passage through time and passage through space. It pulls into time and space the works of people like Vancouver's early archivist Major James Matthews, who spent his lifetime chronicling events during the city's formative years. His work in the early twentieth century explored

its long story through conversations with August Jack Khahtsahlano, and continued through its occasionally dark colonial establishment period. Many of the trees Major Matthews wrote about are still here in some form or another.

Legacy of Trees teaches us how to watch for the subtle hints of traditional usage while we walk in the forest. With that information, it is possible to walk with eyes open to the centuries of pre-colonization and traditional land use. We learn about the townsites that were present on this peninsula since time immemorial. And there are more recent stories to learn. Until reading this book, I never knew the disturbing tale behind the grove of trees where I conduct my annual springtime cherry blossom tour, the very trees the Uyeda family donated to the Park Board shortly before being sent to a Japanese internment camp during the Second World War.

This book is also scientifically literate. Whether exploring the timber uses of the forest in the early days, the natural history of rhododendrons, or the mystery of the fungal mycelial mats connecting trees into neural networks, one cannot help but learn new things as one turns the pages.

Here's how I suggest you use this book. Read it first in a leisurely manner at home, and internalize the park's history since its dedication in 1888. Then tuck it into your backpack and take it with you as a companion on your park wanderings. Take it on your smartphone or tablet as an ebook. Follow its maps, and use a maps app to enter the latitude/longitude coordinates of your place of interest for the day. Re-read its tales in the presence of the very trees about which it speaks, time travel with them, and return to the city with a richer sense of the connections between the trees of this great park and its human and animal actors. Then repeat... This book will entertain you through many wanderings.

I highly recommend Legacy of Trees to anyone who loves Stanley Park, and to anyone who loves trees. It is written with scientific integrity and historical accuracy, but also with a flow that allows for easy and enjoyable reading. It can become your companion on many happy sojourns in the world's greatest urban park. Through Legacy of Trees, we have a snapshot of Stanley Park's first 130-plus years as told through its trees. Perhaps most importantly, we have an informative historical chapter to remember as we turn the corner and enter a process of reconciliation between the region's Indigenous Peoples and the Vancouver Park Board, a process aimed at creating a deeper and better vision of how the park will move forward into the future.

Bill Stephen,

SUPERINTENDENT OF URBAN FORESTRY (RETIRED),
VANCOUVER BOARD OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Introduction

Purposeful Wandering

IN THE GORGEOUSLY colourful fall of 2017, I had a sudden thought: "I live next to Stanley Park, one of the world's most beloved and best parks. How have I not noticed?" Of course I had *noticed*, but I hadn't taken that awareness deep inside. I barely *knew* the park. I have lived beside this park for twenty-five years. I first saw the crescent beach of English Bay and the storytelling totems in the park in 1961, fifty-nine years ago. Have I been asleep? Can I wake up? Is it time?

If I am going to get to know this park—this Stanley Park—and call it "my park," I will have to wander it purposefully, path by path, plaque by plaque, monument by monument, rock by rock, tree by tree, trail by trail, blossom by flowering blossom, through every season, and allow its layers of history to seep into me as though it were a living, breathing being.

Actually, it is.

The Trees in My Life

Whatever place I have called home during each stage of my life, that place and time has been associated with a specific tree or trees. I only came to realize that recently. Maybe it's the same for you. What are the trees you can see from your window? In your backyard? Which is your favourite tree in your nearest park?

Growing up in Wales, I was a Brownie (seven- and eight-year-old girls on the path to becoming Girl Guides). My Brownie leader—the Brown Owl—taught me about the common English oak trees growing in Roath Park beside our local library in Penylan, Cardiff. I learned to recognize the oak trees' acorns and their five- to seven-lobed leaves.

When I entered high school in Llandaff, aged eleven, I chatted with my girlfriends in the playground under the shelter of several massive horse chestnut trees. Their shiny brown conkers were appealing to the touch and decidedly collectible.

When I first married and lived at Douglas Lake Ranch in the province of British Columbia-having by then immigrated to Canada-my home was surrounded by tall black cottonwoods. This member of the poplar family has a habit of constantly dropping bits of itself: yellow-green pollen that aggravated family allergies, red blooms that stained the front path, cotton-covered seeds that made it look as though it had snowed, little branches, big branches, and finally leaves, millions and millions of leaves. These cottonwoods also spread out their roots to ensure they gained all possible goodness from the soil; it was difficult to grow anything much in that garden.

Living in Australia during the first half of the 1980s, I fell in love with the "gum trees" the eucalyptus trees—with all of them. These flowering evergreens express their individuality through their twisted, irregular shapes, peeling barks, variety of colourful blossoms, and aromatic resin. They absolutely called to my soul. I also loved the many weeping willows that hugged the banks of a tiny stream below our house on our sheep and cattle property.

When I returned to Canada, my parents immigrated to BC too, to Victoria, BC's capital city on Vancouver Island. Victoria is one of the few places in Canada where the arbutus tree grows really well. Although eucalyptus trees and arbutus trees belong to two different families (Myrtaceae and Ericaceae), they have many common features, at least in this high school botanist's eye, such as an irregularly shaped trunk and peeling bark. So, naturally, I also fell in love with the arbutus trees during the three years Victoria was my home.

In the grounds of my home in Vernon, in the Okanagan Valley, grew a mature *Ginkgo biloba* tree, a unique holdover genus from 270 million years ago—that is, *before* the days of the dinosaurs. Unmistakable fan-shaped leaves grow closely around each branch, tracing its shape; some call them butterfly leaves. One fall, every yellowed leaf on our ginkgo fell to the ground overnight, and the next day we took our family Christmas card photograph standing on a yellow carpet provided by nature.

For a while, the place I called home was shifting, and I don't remember any particu-

lar trees. Perhaps it is the trees that tell me I am home and it's time to spread my roots down and my branches out and up.

Now living in Vancouver's West End many decades later, I identify with a full range of trees. The myriad of maples planted along the city's sidewalks are glorious in their fall colours, with leaves ranging from the size of a loonie (one of the Japanese cultivars) to that of a large dinner plate (the native bigleaf maples). The magnificent Caucasian wingnut on the corner of Comox and Chilco Streets is well over a hundred years old. The giant red oak in Alexandra Park, overlooking English Bay from the corner of Beach Avenue and Bidwell Street, is a West End icon. Witch hazel trees, with their constantly changing summer and fall palette, their early spring brightness, and their intoxicating scent, are among my favourites. Black locust trees, with their brilliant vellow fall colour and their big seed pods, are proud against the sky. And the enormous weeping willows at Second Beach invite one to relax.

One tree demands special attention, the weeping beech at the top end of the Shakespeare Garden in Stanley Park. When I first walked under its canopy of falling dark green drapery, tears came to my eyes. Somehow, the generosity of that tree, offering its shade and comfort to all who stand, walk, and drive underneath its south-facing leaves, opened my heart.

As a friend says, "Trees are divine beings."

That weeping beech reminded me of the moment in James Cameron's movie *Avatar* when the Na'vi princess Neytiri takes Jake Sully to *utraya mokri*—the Tree of Voices—so that he too might hear the prayers of the ancestors. Before James Cameron wrote what became the climactic love scene in *Avatar*, he must have visited Stanley Park's most special weeping beech, with its hanging green boughs.

I Set Myself a Challenge

I decided to write this book about the legacy trees of Stanley Park so I could wander purposefully, familiarize myself with the park, and learn that there is more to the park than the totem poles, lighthouses, seawall, shoreline, and views of Vancouver. I intended to learn about the world-famous temperate coastal rainforest that is teeming with western hemlocks, western redcedars, western yews (also called Pacific yews), Douglas-firs, Sitka spruce, vine maples, bigleaf maples, red alders, paper birches, black cottonwoods, cascaras, wild bitter cherry trees, and Pacific crabapple trees. I proposed to acquaint myself with the shrubs and herbs that create the varied understorey.

I have read that this old-growth forest provides a natural habitat for raccoons, skunks, moles, voles, beavers, bats, and squirrels (black and grey squirrels, northern



This almost-logged Douglas-fir hosts a bald eagle's aerie.

flying squirrels, and Douglas squirrels). Its woody debris (snags, nurse logs, and root wads) provides a home for birds and insects, mould and lichen. Its soil is teeming with life too small to see, as is the soil of every forest.

So, since September 6, 2017, I have been walking in the park two or three days a week, for an hour or two and more, getting to know the park and its trees. I realized I could hardly tell them apart. "What is that tree? Is that a ...?" I wanted to learn the names of the trees.

As I walked, I wondered how things used to be, how they could have grown into what I see now, how the park has changed into its present presence, and sometimes I walked to find something that will be there or might be there, or was once there and is no longer. When I arrived back home, I would research the plants I'd photographed, the plaques I'd uncovered, the history I'd surmised, and the people who are here no longer.

The overarching constant that influences the life of Stanley Park is that this park and its trees are constantly changing, adapting, restoring, recovering, and evolving. The history of this peninsula, including the time before it was a park, has been layered by interference from weather, flora, and fauna, especially humans. Gradually, I realized that the trees now growing in Stanley Park reflect the beliefs and values of the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation since Stanley Park was first

named in 1888. The history of the trees is also the history of the park as a whole. And the citizens of Vancouver influence those beliefs and values. As Vancouver changes, so does the park.

What is the park telling us Vancouverites about ourselves?

Let us stroll or cycle or drive from tree to tree in this world-famous park, which passed its 130th birthday on September 27, 2018. Let's discover its very special trees—special because they were planted to commemorate a specific event, or for no particular reason, or because they have been here all along, growing where their germinated seeds fell to the forest floor.

What can I say? I'm here for the trees.

How This Book Is Organized

I am more likely to tell you about the planting of a tree than about its original homeland, about its park history rather than its height, its influence rather than the measurement of its girth. I include a tree's Latin name where I could figure it out by using apps and asking those more knowledgeable than me; its latitude and longitude (with Google Maps, "latitude 49.2997 N | longitude 123.1339 W" can be entered as "49.2997, -123.1339"); and its best feature (as far as I'm concerned). If the tree is on a trail, I give you the name of the trail.

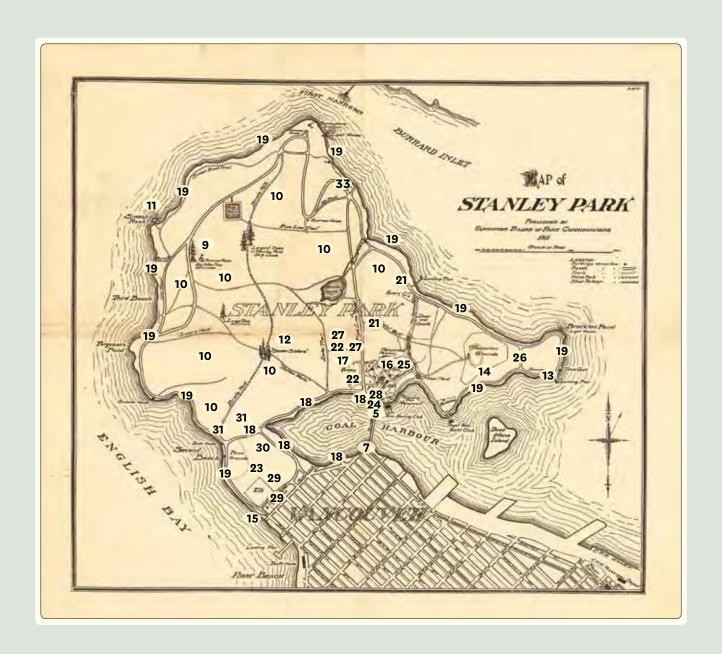
The trees described in *Legacy of Trees* are included because they:

- are remembered through historic interviews or photographs;
- were planted to commemorate an event, a person, or a date, and may or may not have a plaque to prove it;
- · were planted to add beauty and intrigue;
- · hold or held a record;
- · are special;
- · represent one stage of a tree's life;
- · represent a species.

I've separated the tree stories into three parts comprising a total of thirty-three chapters. The parts are arranged chronologically and geographically. Chapters 1 to 12 in Part I describe trees that were already growing on the peninsula headland that became the federal reserve and then became Stanley Park.

The chapters within Parts II and III are arranged chronologically according to tree planting dates. Chapters 13 to 27 in Part II describe the most strongly colonial and imperial years of the park, up until 1960. I became a teenager in the sixties and it seems the park did too, becoming more independent from its British parent and taking more of a responsible role within Canada. Chapters 28 to 33 of Part III cover the years of growing independence.

Most chapters relate to a specific date and place, but some provide general park information. Some describe trees that can only be read about or seen in old photographs from Vancouver's archives, yet I've



still included those chapter numbers in the facing map.¹ Chapter 6, "Fire!," takes place away from Stanley Park, but its events influence the park's story. Other chapters describe events taking place throughout the park whose effects are visible in multiple locations, especially on many of the trails; for example, the number 10 (for chapter 10, "Trail Trees") appears in several places on the map.

I used this map because I was intrigued by the contrast between the 1911 uses of the park (see the labels "Deer and Goats," "Landing Pier," "Summer House," and "Bath House") and today's uses. If you would prefer to look at up-to-date maps of the park, the City of Vancouver makes several available online.²

The list below tells you which parts of the park can be seen in one visit (with the corresponding chapters in order of the route), as you walk or cycle or rollerblade through the park. There are plenty of benches, picnic tables, public washrooms, cafés, and restaurants, so you can rest and refresh along the way—though not so much along the trails.

ROUTE A goes east via the Georgia Street entrance and the Promenade to the Stanley Park Pavilion (chapters 7, 5, 24, 28, 16) and takes one to two hours. Stop and have a drink or a meal at Stanley's Bar and Grill. Street entrance and the Promenade to the Salmon Stream Valley (chapters 7, 5, 24, 28, 25) and takes one to two hours. Visit the Vancouver Aquarium since you're so close.

ROUTE C goes east via the Georgia Street entrance, the Promenade, and the Salmon Stream Valley past the Japanese-Canadian war memorial to Lumberman's Arch (chapters 7, 5, 24, 28, 21). Give yourself more than two hours if it's summer and the children want to enjoy the Fox's Den Splash Park.

Street entrance and the Promenade to the Totem Pole Interpretive Centre, Brockton Point, Lumberman's Arch, and Chaythoos, partly on the seawall (chapters 7, 5, 24, 19, 14, 26, 33). You have to climb above the seawall for the oak in chapter 14 and the trees in chapter 33. This route can take several hours depending on where you stop along the way. Legends of the Moon is an excellent gift shop at the Totem Pole Interpretive Centre.

ROUTE E continues counter-clockwise from Route D on **the seawall** (chapters 7, 5, 24, 19, 33, 19, 11, 19, 31, 19). This could take all day, stopping for a



A heavy snowfall in Stanley Park in November 2006.

meal at Prospect Point Bar & Grill, the Teahouse, or the concession stand at Second Beach. Alternatively, bring a picnic to share on one of the many picnic tables at, say, Prospect Point Picnic Area or Ceperley Field.

ROUTE F goes north via the Georgia Street entrance and the Promenade into the Shakespeare and Perennial Garden (chapters 7, 5, 24, 18, 17, 27). Allow over two hours to find all the trees. In the summer, you can also visit the Rose Garden, where something is always blooming.

ROUTE G is a seawall walk on the west side, around the Oppenheimer bust, past Second Beach and Third Beach, as far as Siwash Rock (chapters 15, 19, 31, 19, 11), and takes one to two hours.

ROUTE H is an easy walk around the Oppenheimer bust, through the Vancouver Park Board office grounds, and by the putting green in the southwest corner of the park (chapters 15, 29, 23). Give yourself several hours to identify all the trees.

ROUTE 1 combines the path around Lost Lagoon with the Ted and Mary Greig Rhododendron Garden (chapters 18, 30), a one- to two-hour walk at a leisurely pace.

ROUTE J can take as long as you want, combining trails as you please. Considering chapters 1 to 12 as you walk will evoke a strong feel for the early days of the park.

If you're visiting Stanley Park in the winter and hope to escape winter snow, you may get a shock. If you're visiting Stanley Park in the summer and think you might get too hot, realize that whereas you will cool off deep in the forest, you will also see many well-established palm trees (Chinese windmill palm, Trachycarpus fortunei) growing contentedly

along the English Bay Beach seawall. Vancouver has the best weather in all of Canada. Of course, I may be biased.

What Stanley Park's Legacy Trees Tell Us

Learning the histories of the legacy trees in Stanley Park deepens our knowledge of the people of Vancouver—our history, our origins, our values. These stories also show how we are maturing and evolving along with the forest, the landscaped areas, and the gardens of Stanley Park. We are shaking off the colonial identity that the park exhibited for so many decades and embracing the values of reconciliation with the first inhabitants of this land, the Squamish, Musqueam, and Tsleil-Waututh. We are also reclaiming what we can of the original nature of this land while honouring our communal history.

We differ from trees in our longevity, size, life cycle, procreation methods, protection from disease, and living and dying processes. Yet I believe we can learn much

from the trees around us. Trees are supportive yet ambitious, quiet yet communicative, flexible yet strong, adaptive yet true to type. Much is currently being written about flora, especially about trees' hidden ways of communicating and connecting with everything around them.

Legacy of Trees enhances our reasons for communicating and connecting with trees.

The more I talk about my love of trees with friends, the more I hear about others' love of trees. We all have our reasons to commune and be with the trees.

Share with me why you love trees at *Legacy of Trees* on my website.³ And if you have information you think should be in this book (correcting a tree species, for instance, or informing me about a latitude and longitude or an important tree I've missed), let me know. It has been a joy to write *Legacy of Trees* and to get to know the park's trees better. I hope reading this book does the same for you.

Lace up your hiking boots or runners—we're going for a walk in Stanley Park.



