

From the Vancouver Oral History Project Interview Transcript No. 50

Interview with Mr. Hercules Lamoureux

This excerpt has been edited for clarity

Cheryl Pierson: Can you remember, in the twenties, how Maillardville was developing, as far as buildings or what was still unsettled and what was still bush? Can you remember that?

Mr. Hercules Lamoureux: Well, yes ... the twenties ... Rochester wasn't there then. I think it must've been about 1926 something like that they started opening Rochester a short distance. Quite a little, but north and from Millside school to Boot's farm there was no house in there then. It was all farming land and from the middle of Maillardville from Lourdes Church to Blue Mountain Road was ... very few houses and there was just a very few houses on Pitt River Road and couple of houses where Alderson is today. Alderson wasn't there, but there used to be a few farmers and they used to have small orchards then. There was a person by the name of Pickerin ... they used to live up the Mountain Road and when they started making Blue Mountain Road, Mr. Pickerin got one of the first houses there and that house is still up there today. And then north of Pitt River Road, there was no house at all, just right in the center of Maillardville ... there's apartments on there now ... that was the extent of Maillardville.

Miss Pierson: Can you tell me what you remember about the method of putting out fires in those days, until they got gasoline trucks?

Mr. Lamoureux: Yes, in those days, the people used to help volunteer, but you didn't have to be a volunteer because if there was a fire some place, everybody pitched in. They used to have little houses three or four little houses in Maillardville with fighting equipment after they put the hydrants system in. Before that used to be the fire buckets, but when they put the hydrants in, they had no fire engine yet, they just had wheels with hoses on it. The first man that heard the church bell ... the church bell was the alarm ... they had a bell on the municipal hall, but it didn't compare. The people were so used to the church bells. When the church bell rang at different hours, they used to know that this was the signal that somebody was in trouble and the people used to rush out and everybody used to pitch in and help with buckets. And then, later on, modernization came in and they got themselves a beautiful fire truck. The Chief of Police, Mr. Pare ... then he was chief of everything pretty near ... he used to look after the jail in those days. He was the Chief of Police and Chief of Fire Department. I think most of the people were all volunteers.