



LIḡWÍŁDAḡW RESEARCH CENTRE

We are continuing regular newsletter updates to share exciting history from the Archives with the communities. Some of you know all about this history while others do not, so it is my pleasure to introduce you to V.3, Edition four of *Tales from the Vault*.

Strathcona Park Stories



FIRST NATIONS GUIDES STEERING THE CANOE DURING THE 1910 EXPEDITION. INDIGENOUS GUIDES PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN SUCH EXPEDITIONS, SHARING KNOWLEDGE OF RIVERS, CAMPSITES, AND HIGH COUNTRY. MCR - 010098

Strathcona Park was established in 1911 as British Columbia's first provincial park, but the story of this place begins long before it ever appeared on a government map.

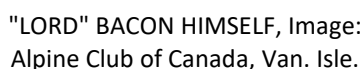
These mountains, rivers, and valleys are all part of the interwoven territories of Liḡwíłdaḡw, Mowachaht & Muchalaht, Hupacasath, Ahousaht, and K'ómoks. Our families moved through this landscape with the seasons, following well known routes between coast, river valleys, and mountain passes. These journeys were guided by arborglyphs (trail markers carved into trees), place names and generations of knowledge that shaped when and where people gathered food and medicines.

In the summer, berry gardens in the high country were visited and cared for year after year. Huckleberries were gathered in abundance, sometimes using wooden combs, then dried or prepared with salmon roe or eulachon grease.



By the late 1800s, logging had begun moving inland as coastal timber became harder to reach. Early camps followed shorelines and river systems, sometimes built on floating platforms so crews could shift locations easily. Over time, logging pushed further into the interior.

Indigenous guides and knowledge holders were central to this expedition. Their understanding of the terrain came from generations of lived experience in these territories, including travel routes, river crossings, seasonal conditions, and safe places to camp. This knowledge shaped how the expedition moved through the landscape and made it possible for them to navigate areas that would otherwise have been extremely difficult to traverse. Without it, the mapping and surveying work would not have been possible.



He lived for periods in a squatter's cabin on Buttle Lake and moved through the region trapping and prospecting, relying on the same established routes and knowledge networks already long in use in the area. He is said to have helped the 1910 expedition team navigate parts of the area.

Today, Strathcona Park holds many stories at once. It is a place of long-standing Indigenous presence and continuing connection, shaped over time by colonial survey work, logging expansion, and the early creation of the park. Learning its stories, including the ones that were left out of early maps, helps us to understand it more fully.