

Hollow tree has been one of city's most photographed landmarks since 1890s

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Vancouver's most-elected mayor, Louis Denison Taylor, posed in front of the famous tree more than once in the 1910s, both in his capacity as a civic official and as owner of the *Vancouver Daily World*, together with other newspaper editors. Another Vancouver mayor, Frederick Buscombe, posed with Canada's governor general Earl Grey and his family during their September 1906 visit to the city. The dignitaries are seated in an automobile driven by William Stark, who later gained fame as one of Canada's first aviators.

Some had their photos taken before they became local celebrities. Tosca Trasolini was just a tot when her family posed in a horse-drawn buggy in front of the hollow tree around 1910. In November 1936 Trasolini made history as one of the Flying Seven, a group of female pilots who staged a "dawn to dusk" flight at the airport on Sea Island, each woman taking off just before the previous pilot landed her plane.

The earliest photographs in front of the hollow tree date to the 1890s, when a bench was set up inside the giant cedar. Most visitors to the park were content to sit on the bench and have their photos taken, but around 1891 a group of six pioneers dressed the hollow tree up as a saloon. They hung up a sign that read "Stanley Park Hotel, A. McCallum, proprietor, drinks, cigars, two bits" and set up a folding table, liquor bottles and glasses. Sam Brighouse, one of the city's earliest pioneers, appears in the photo.



Decades later, the Filippone brothers, owners of the Penthouse Nightclub, parked their car in front of the hollow tree and lined up bottles on the car's roof for a photograph. The image can be seen at www.penthouseclub.com/hollow_tree.htm.

A number of Vancouver's commercial photographers made a steady income snapping pictures at the hollow tree. Photographers George Schenck, George Christian Fricke and G.A. King operated a concession there under the name The

Stanley Park Photographers. During the first two decades of the 20th century they captured hundreds of locals and visitors. People posed on horseback in front of the hollow tree, or with their bicycles. They backed their horse-drawn carriages into the trunk's interior in summer (and their horse-drawn sleighs in winter) or clustered around it in family groups, some climbing onto the trunk for a better vantage point.

Athletic clubs like the YMCA Harriers posed at the tree. So too did the Seattle Mo-



Above, 14 soldiers from Fiji posed in front of the hollow tree with a white officer en route to the fighting in France sometime between 1914 and 1918. Large touring cars like the one on the left were a bonus for photographers who could sell a print to each of the passengers. photos City of Vancouver Archives Mil P56 (above)/CVA 677-153 (left)

torcycle Club, whose members included a circuit of the park on their June 1911 run.

In 1916, with what was then known as the Great War in full swing, the parks board had second thoughts about renewing its lease to take photos at the hollow tree to German photographers. The parks board instead awarded the lease to Frank Gowen, writes Meg Stanley in her publication *Stanley Park's Big Hollow Tree*.

Gowen was granted the exclusive right to take photos at several famous trees in the park, as well as at Prospect Point and Brockton Point. He held the lease until 1941. During his tenure, the Gowen Sutton Company published both the Chief White Elk postcard and a postcard of a sightseeing car, jammed with more than a dozen people, backed into the hollow tree in the 1920s.

Others who snapped photos at the hollow tree included

Charles S. Bailey, Norman Caple (famous for his "lantern slide entertainments" at the YMCA), Richard Henry Trueman (best known for his landscapes), Hamilton George Neelands, Don Coltman of Steffens-Colmer Studios, the Rosetti Photograph Studios, and Stuart Thomson (Vancouver's most prolific photographer, who captured more than 50,000 images of the city).

Photographers like Philip Timms and the Edwards Brothers shot stereoscopic images, which, when viewed through a special device, seemed to pop out in three dimensions. Other photographers produced booklets of "scenic views" of the park for the tourist trade.

Some of the city's earliest automobiles were captured on film in front of the tree. A 1904 photo shows the "steamer" owned by William D. Haywood, proprietor of the Commercial Hotel. The

automobile, with driver Hugh E. Campbell, was available for hire at \$5 a ride for tours of the city and park.

Sightseeing carriages—both horse-drawn and motorized—made a point of stopping in front of the hollow tree. The result was a windfall for a photographer, who could sell the same print to each of the dozen or so people on board. One 1909 ad by Archie Walker urges tourists to see Vancouver on the "big red car," a motorized vehicle capable of holding around 20 people that called at all of the leading hotels before making its round of the city. Tickets were \$1 each. Walker also offered for sale both postcards and Indian baskets and curios "all genuine and bought direct from the Indians."

During the First World War, soldiers in uniform posed in front of the tree. The most unusual group comprised 14

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