

B. T. Rogers originally considered selling BC Sugar once the company became a going concern but later changed his mind after falling in love with the province's beauty. In 1904 he ordered a custom-built steam-powered 50-foot yacht, named the *Mow Ping*, from Hong Kong and joined the Royal Vancouver Yacht Club. In 1912 he purchased the more conspicuous 168-foot yacht *Aquilo*; the same year he became the commodore of the yacht club. With the outbreak of the First World War, the *Aquilo* patrolled the west coast looking for German submarines.

Early in 1905 B. T. Rogers decided to become a producer as well as a refiner of sugar by purchasing an ailing sugar cane plantation and mill in Fiji and founding the Vancouver-Fiji Sugar Company. Rogers's main objective of going into the sugar growing business was an attempt to beat out Hong Kong "coolie-refined" sugar. One of Rogers's ads read: "If you would rather buy sugar refined in Hong Kong by cheap coolie labor than sugar refined in British Columbia by well-paid white labor, then there is no further argument, but if you wish to build up your city and its prosperity, you will surely act differently and you will not allow any dealer to sell you sugar other than that which is refined right here in Vancouver." The sugar businessman was appealing to the city's loyalties to hometown workers, who, according to a stipulation contained in the original deal with the city, did not include Asians.

However, to say that workers in the BC Sugar Refinery were "well paid" may have been an overstatement. Rogers, who was able and energetic, ran his company autocratically and was fiercely anti-union. In 1917 the refinery's 206 male and 36 female workers went on strike, demanding a pay increase and better working conditions, especially for the women, who had to do their job—sewing up the sugar bags—standing on their feet for 10 hours every day. Probably mindful of his father's death, Rogers never went near the factory himself during the strike but sent his agents and spies, with whom he was in contact via radio from his yacht *Aquilo*. The bitter confrontation, during which management tried to keep the factory going with scab labour, lasted 92 days, and in the end Rogers agreed only to minimal concessions.

Rogers died suddenly on 17 June 1918 at the age of 52 from a cerebral haemorrhage before the family fully moved into their new home, Shannon. His widow and seven children lived there through the 1920s, but in 1936 she sold out to Austin C. Taylor.



A very well preserved cast iron and wood 19th century sugar cutter.

In Victorian times sugar used to come in cones that were two feet tall tapering from 9 inches at the bottom to 4 inches at the top. Sugar cutters were used for breaking it up in "lumps" or pieces. A person then used a mortar and pestle to crush the lumps into fine grains for use in the kitchen. Sugar cutters are considered very collectible.



Carnegie Library

INDUSTRIALIST AND PHILANTHROPIST Andrew Carnegie funded the construction of over 2,500 public libraries around the world. In 1901 the City of Vancouver approached Carnegie, at the time the second richest man in history after John D. Rockefeller, about donating money for a spacious library. He agreed to donate \$50,000 with the understanding that the city would offer support at the rate of \$5,000 a year. The new library was located immediately north of the original Vancouver City Hall and on the southwest corner of Westminster (Main) and Hastings Streets. Its site had earlier been the home of the City Auction Mart.

According to legend, school friends Carnegie and James Houston ran away together from their homes in Dunfermline (the ancient capital of Scotland) in the early 1850s. Andrew had been born poor, while Houston's parents were wealthy ship manufacturers, owning the White Star Shipping Line. Carnegie, upon his arrival in America, apprenticed to a Pennsylvania blacksmith and eventually built up a steel-works that brought him wealth and fortune. Houston, credited with making the first gold discoveries

on the Fraser River that resulted in the sudden influx of miners into the vast area later to become the Province of British Columbia, had married a First Nations woman and died relatively poor. His son learned in 1935 that the British Government was seeking out relatives of Lady Houston. Bruce A. McKelvie, a noted BC historian and reporter with the *Vancouver Sun*, wrote letters on the son's behalf, and word came back that his grandmother had left an estate of \$30,000,000 and that the hypocritical old gal, shortly before her death, had offered to outfit the British Royal Navy with a "Houston" fleet of ships that was to carry the Houston name. The government turned her offer down. Lady Houston's will did not include any inheritance for illegitimate children, and the son never received so much as a dime from the estate.

By a strange twist of fate Carnegie's life went from "rags to riches," while his rich school chum Houston lived out the remaining years of his life on his Fort Langley farm that included the Derby townsite, the proposed colonial capital of the mainland of the province.