

## **Early Vancouver**

### **Volume One**

**By: Major J.S. Matthews, V.D.**

**2011 Edition (Originally Published 1932)**

*Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1931-1932.*

*A Collection of Historical Data, Maps, and Plans Made with the Assistance of  
Pioneers of Vancouver Between March and December 1931.*

### **About the 2011 Edition**

The 2011 edition is a transcription of the original work collected and published by Major Matthews. Handwritten marginalia and corrections Matthews made to his text over the years have been incorporated and some typographical errors have been corrected, but no other editorial work has been undertaken. The edition and its online presentation was produced by the City of Vancouver Archives to celebrate the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the City's founding. The project was made possible by funding from the Vancouver Historical Society.

### **Copyright Statement**

© 2011 City of Vancouver. Any or all of *Early Vancouver* may be used without restriction as to the nature or purpose of the use, even if that use is for commercial purposes. You may copy, distribute, adapt and transmit the work. It is required that a link or attribution be made to the City of Vancouver.

### **Reproductions**

High resolution versions of any graphic items in *Early Vancouver* are available. A fee may apply.

### **Citing Information**

When referencing the 2011 edition of *Early Vancouver*, please cite the page number that appears at the bottom of the page in the PDF version only, not the page number indicated by your PDF reader. Here are samples of how to cite this source:

Footnote or Endnote Reference:

Major James Skitt Matthews, *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 1 (Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 2011), 33.

Bibliographic Entry:

Matthews, Major James Skitt. *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 1. Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 2011.

### **Contact Information**

City of Vancouver Archives  
1150 Chestnut Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 3J9  
604.736.8561  
archives@vancouver.ca  
vancouver.ca/archives



early simplicity of his first home, he remarked with emotion, "It certainly was a beautiful place twenty years ago."

Today the original "Hollyburn" is somewhat the worse for wear, the fences down, the tennis court a patchwork of dried grass and dust holes in which children play with sand, a plentiful scattering of cigarette boxes, empty, lunch papers, and other debris of picnics.

### **NAVY JACK'S HOUSE.**

Mr. Lawson then invited me to accompany him to view the original site of the house. We went down 17<sup>th</sup> Street to Argyll Street, then a little west along a narrow macadam road perhaps fifty yards, until we stood between a house numbered 1768 Argyll Street, and the old, now disused, Pacific Great Eastern Railway tracks. Here, among the cherry and walnut trees, was a clear space, quite small, the original site of the house that Navy Jack built. It has been moved slightly to the west, and a little nearer the shore, and is now occupied by a Mrs. Hookham. It has been much altered, both inside and out, but much of the original remains, and in places the old-time square-cut nails show up in the lumber. The house has been raised to form a basement; the front has now stucco-covered posts. The interior still shows the narrow, perhaps three-inch, V-jointed lining, with a very deep V, and it is the old-time one inch, not the so-called one inch—actually three-quarters—of modern dimensions. The whole is now quite remodelled, and not recognisable from a photo of the first Navy Jack's. The little creek runs to the east side of the house; formerly, it was on the west.

It is evident that one of the reasons which governed Navy Jack in the location of his first shack was this creek; the old story of all our early houses, shacks, camps, etc., they were all built near water—springs or creeks.

"This is Navy Jack's actual house, the one in which he lived; one can hardly say worked, for he left most of that to his women. Perhaps he did have a sort of shack prior to this house; I don't know," said Mr. Lawson.

Mr. Lawson afterwards showed me a photograph of the house. "It is identically the same here as it was when I first saw it, save for the addition of the two chimneys and the gable roof in front, which I added." The picture shows it to be about twenty feet wide with door in centre, and two large windows of four panes each, one on each side of the door. Four turned and ornamented verandah posts with peculiar batten and board roof, slightly concave, to verandah. The house roof is shingle, and the whole of one half, including the gable end, faces the shore. The two chimneys, one at each end of the house, pass through the ridge. Before the house stands the two famous holly trees, one partly hidden behind an old-style motor car; the occasion is that of the wedding of their eldest daughter about 1910, the first "church" wedding in West Vancouver. Otherwise, it is exactly as Navy Jack left it.

Note: refer to "Jim" Smith's (J.A. Smith) story of the rooster crowing one 24<sup>th</sup> May (Queen's Birthday) and guiding a shipload of excursion from Victoria through the fog to the Narrows, 1888 or 1890.

### **12 AUGUST 1931 - HOLLYBURN AND THE FAMOUS HOLLY TREES.**

The photo shows two small holly trees in front of the house. As they grew too large, they were subsequently removed, and are now on the west side of 17<sup>th</sup> Street, near the shore and picnic ground. Representations since made to the Reeve of West Vancouver have secured a promise that these trees will be protected from vandals, and a promise that he hopes to have them removed to the front of the Municipal Hall when additions are made to that structure. It is from these two holly trees that Hollyburn takes most of its name.

"I was working for the C.P.R. and one day in 1907 I took two holly trees, which were growing in my garden at 1023 Pacific Street, over to our new estate, and planted them. On my trips back and forth on the trains, I used to lie awake in my berth in the caboose trying to think of a suitable