

Early Vancouver

Volume Two

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2011 Edition (Originally Published 1933)

Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1932.

Supplemental to volume one collected in 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 125th anniversary of the City's founding. The project was made possible by funding from the Vancouver Historical Society.

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Footnote or Endnote Reference:

Major James Skitt Matthews, *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 2 (Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 2011), 33.

Bibliographic Entry:

Matthews, Major James Skitt. *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 2. Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 2011.

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CAPILANO RESERVE.

On an old linen drawing—an original—marked “Plan No. 1, Skwawmish Indian Reserves,” with a footnote, “surveyed by W.S. Jemmett, 1880,” in the possession of Andrew Paull, who says “the Indian Affairs Office have been unable to find a copy of it in their possession,” the word is spelled “Kahpillahno.” The map shows “Beaver dams” in West Vancouver, and old trails in Gastown and Kitsilano Beach.

Corporal Turner’s original field notes of the survey of Burrard’s Inlet in February and March 1863 are in the Court House, Vancouver. They show “Coal Peninsula” (Stanley Park) and the “Brickmaker’s Claim” (West End) and are complete in detail. He surveyed the mouth of Homulcheson Creek (Capilano River) but does not name it, although he places a square to indicate a house or settlement.

“I have always understood,” writes Noel Robinson, editor of the Vancouver newspaper *Star*, and a close friend of the Capilano family, “from Mrs. Mary Capilano or her son Chief Matthias, that Mrs. Capilano was directly descended from the brother of that first Chief Capilano of whom we know—the one who met Captain Vancouver—and that she married Chief Joe, who was not then chief of the Squamish, but a very prominent and leading Indian of the tribe, and that, as you indicate, he then took the name ‘Capilano.’”

“Chief Matthias is quite clear about this.”

The answer to this is that Chief Joe never was chief of the Squamish tribe, but was chief of the Capilano band of the Squamish tribe. There is not, and apparently never was, a “chief of the Squamish tribe.” As to his meeting Captain Vancouver in 1792, and assuming that he died in 1875—this needs investigation—and that he was 100 years old when he died, then, having been born in 1775, he could not possibly have been chief when Captain Vancouver arrived in 1792, seventeen years later. “Old Chief” Capilano is remembered by several Indians now living whose ages cannot be over 80, and more likely about 70.

Further, Ayatak says the “Old Chief” told him that he was “a big boy, ‘bout five feet high” when Fraser came down the river in 1808. Further, what would he be doing at Whoi-Whoi or Capilano River (Homulcheson) in 1792; he was born in Mahly, according to Ayatak.

QOITCHETAHL (ANDREW PAULL).

Conversation with Andrew Paull, secretary, Squamish Indian Council since 1911 and still, 1933, acting, North Vancouver, 15 December 1932.

THE ARRIVAL OF CAPTAIN VANCOUVER.

It was the duty of the more responsible Indians,” said Mr. Quitchetahl, “to see that the history and traditions of our race were properly handed down to posterity; a knowledge of our history and legends was of similar importance as an education is regarded today among whitemen; those who possessed it were regarded as aristocrats; those who were indifferent, whether adults or children, were rascals. Being without means of transmitting it into writing, much time was spent by the aristocrats in imparting this knowledge to the youth; it was the responsible duty of responsible elders.

“When I was a youth, my father took me fishing with him. I was young and strong, and pulled the canoe while he fished, and as we passed along the shore—you know progress when one is rowing is very slow—it gave him ample time as we passed a given point for him to explain to me all about the various matters of interest of that location, which it was his delight to do. It was in this manner that the history of our people was preserved in the past; it was a duty for elders to attend to equally as important as the schooling of our children is today. Then again, in 1920, all was arranged for me to go to Ottawa to impart some historical information to some historical department there—I never went—but in preparation for it I went especially to Squamish to see the daughter of the ‘real’ ‘Old Chief’ Capilano, a sister to Frank Charlie, or Ayatak Capilano” (Ayatak) “of Musqueam.”

Note: some mistake here; must mean granddaughter. Frank Charlie is grandson.

“It seems that it was a tradition among the Indians of early days that a calamity of some sort would befall them every seven years; once it was a flood, on another occasion a disease wiped out Whoi-Whoi, again it was a snow storm which lasted for three months. The wise men had long prophesied a visitation from a