

## **Early Vancouver**

### **Volume Two**

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

**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 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the City's founding. The project was made possible by funding from the Vancouver Historical Society.

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1866, W.H. Rowlings, born 2 September 1867, all born at New Westminster, and Miss E.J. Rowlings, born on D.L. 258 after we went there, on 24 August 1874.”

#### **OLD TRAILS.**

“In those days, excursions were organized occasionally from New Westminster to Gastown, old Granville Townsite, down the Fraser River, around Point Grey, and into Burrard Inlet. The family went on those excursions on a number of occasions. At that time the means of communication from our home to either New Westminster or Gastown was by water. In the very early days there was a trail from New Westminster along the North Arm river bank to Musqueam; then there was a trail from George Black’s at Hastings to Gastown which would accommodate pedestrians only; of course, from Hastings to Westminster there was a road. Just where the trail from Gastown to Jericho ran I am not sure, but there was a trail, and I will tell you how I know; because it started at the south end of the old False Creek Bridge, now Main Street. At the south end of the old Westminster Avenue bridge a man we called ‘Crazy George’ lived in a shack, and I have heard tell that one day some young fellow going to Jericho logging camp took a big board as he went by George’s shack, slapped the side of the shack with all his might, let out a yell, and then ran. ‘Crazy George’ came out with a rifle, fired a few shots, and ran after the young fellow. There would be little in the yarn if it were not for the fact that they said he chased him all the way to Jericho.”

#### **TRAILS.**

Also see Canon Sovereign, St. Mark’s Church, Mrs. J.Z. Hall, etc. Also see Volume 3.

#### **NORTH VANCOUVER. MOODYVILLE. SPRATT’S OILERY. HERRINGS. BIG TREES.**

“In those days, there was nothing in North Vancouver excepting woods,” remarked Mr. Duncan McDonald of 446 6<sup>th</sup> Street West, North Vancouver, where he resides with his grandchildren, and who recalls Burrard Inlet in 1873, that is, earlier than any known person now living, for he came as a grown man; such as are known to have been living here then were mere little tots in 1873.

“I was born in the ‘Old Country’ in 1850, and when a young man of 21, that was in 1872, came to the Pacific Coast by way of the Union Pacific Railway to San Francisco, thence to Portland, Oregon by an old steamship, later wandered on to Bellingham, but finding that I was not yet on British Territory, struck off along the old telegraph trail through the forest and on foot by the only route to New Westminster. Ultimately, I reached Moodyville in 1873, and have lived on the north shore ever since. I have worked all my life at logging, many years for the Moodyville Sawmill. I am now 84, have nine grandchildren and fourteen great-grandchildren.

“I think the first settler in North Vancouver was Tom Turner; I know of no one here before him; don’t see how there could have been; he planted the orchard which stood in front of Pete Larson’s hotel on the Esplanade west of Lonsdale Avenue. Mr. Hugh Springer, manager of the Moodyville Sawmill, had a great liking for Tom. Tom was an Englishman and a great gardener. He lived in a log cabin which can be seen in that photograph you have taken in about 1890 of North Vancouver by Bailey Bros., with a flagpole beside it. The location is about what is now the southwest corner of Esplanade and Chesterfield Avenue. I don’t know who Tom was, but he used to go up to Moodyville two or three times a week, and call out, ‘any vegetables today.’ I went up to Mr. Springer one day and told Mr. Springer that Tom was sick” (ill.) “I recall it quite well, because Mr. Springer was smoking a cigar, and somehow the ash of the cigar got into the eye of his little son standing nearby. Mr. Springer hurried down, but Tom got worse and died.”

#### **D.L. 271, NORTH VANCOUVER.**

Memo of conversation with Calvert Simson, third storekeeper, Hastings Sawmill, at City Archives, City Hall, 22 September 1939.

“This statement here [in] *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 2, by Duncan McDonald of North Vancouver, that Tom Turner, he says, ‘I think the first settler at North Vancouver was Tom Turner’; that’s wrong; and he says, ‘Mr. Springer hurried down, but Tom got worse and died.’ I think that’s wrong too.

“Tom Turner was nephew to William Bridges,” (who preempted D.L. 271) “and William Bridges sent for him to come out from England, and the understanding was that when Mr. Bridges died, Tom Turner was

to get the property. Bridges did die, but the will could not be found, and finally a man named T.B. Spring, he was up at Port Moody and had a scow which he brought down to Vancouver and anchored it to the shore about the foot of Columbia Street and lived in it. He is said to have gone down to Seattle, or somewhere, and found the will—some say he forged it—anyway, Tom Turner got the property and sold it to Captain Power, who, they say, had put up the money to help him prove to the judge that he was entitled to it. Captain Power ran the Moodyville hotel. Turner sold the property for a 'song,' and with the proceeds went to Lancashire, England, where he had come from and started in the coal business; he had a coal yard and carts and horses. Tom Turner was delivering milk to us in 1884, so that William Bridges must have been dead then, I suppose."

Note: Duncan McDonald got to Burrard Inlet in 1873, and lived here until he died in North Vancouver, 1 March 1933. It is queer that he should have said Tom Turner got worse and died. Perhaps I misunderstood him. JSM. I wonder if he meant William Bridges.

### **HERRING IN BURRARD INLET.**

"In those days Vancouver Harbour was full of herring; that was what Spratt's Oilery, just east of the foot of Burrard Street, a few steps west of the Marine Building, was started for: to extract the oil. But after extracting the oil, they took the refuse and dumped it outside the Narrows, and they say that drove the herrings away. The herrings used to be very numerous, thick in the water. We used to get a pole and drive a lot of nails in it so that the sharp ends stuck out like spikes, then get into a boat or canoe, go out in the harbour, and sweep it through the water. The pole would be, say, twenty feet long, with the nails clustered at one end, then you sat or knelt in the bottom of the canoe, and swept it from bow to stern. You had to be quick and keep the pole going or the herrings would wriggle off, but you would always get four or five herrings each sweep. Anyway, whatever it was, the herrings migrated from English Bay; before that they came here to spawn, along by Swywee, the West Vancouver lagoon just west of the Capilano River; they were thick in the water there."

### **WEST VANCOUVER.**

"All I can recall of West Vancouver in the early days was a deserted log hut at the lagoon Swywee; the rest was just trees. My wife died in 1897," (presumably an Indian woman, for his granddaughter Mrs. Gus Band is the wife of Chief Gus Band) "and was buried in the North Vancouver Indian Cemetery; there was no other cemetery in North Vancouver in those days."

Among his descendants are granddaughters Rita Lumly, now Mrs. Harris White; Olive Lumly, now Mrs. Gus Band; Harriet Lumly, now Mrs. Bennie Cordicittel. Great-grandson Ralph Band and daughter Florence Cordicittel.

### **BIG TREES. DUNCAN McDONALD. TOM TURNER. NORTH VANCOUVER.**

Duncan McDonald continued, "The biggest tree I ever saw, and I have [been] following the logging 'game' all my life, since 1873, all in North Vancouver, Moodyville and thereabouts, was one time when we went for a timber cruise about ten miles up Lynn Creek; we went over a big hill and down the other side, and came across a great fir. I guess it is there yet, or the stump. It was nine feet diameter; we measured it carefully. Of course, cedars grew bigger at the stump, but then, cedars when big are nearly always hollow in the centre."

He died at North Vancouver, 1 March 1933.

### **WHITE ROCK.**

Master Gunner J.C. Cornish, first sergeant major of the first military unit in Vancouver, No. 5 British Columbia Brigade of Garrison Artillery, and now a resident, retired customs officer, at White Rock, November 1932.

"There is no doubt the large glacial rock on the beach was the origin of the name White Rock; *it still carries* on parts of its surface some of the old lime wash with which it was coated in the early days as a beacon for vessels entering the bay," (Semiahmoo) "but I find that it was at the expense of the American government, and for the use of vessels entering the harbour of Blaine, Washington. In those days there