

## Early Vancouver

### Volume Two

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

*Supplemental to volume one collected in 1931.*

### About the 2011 Edition

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## **JOHN MORTON OF BURRARD INLET AND ENGLISH BAY, VANCOUVER, B.C., 28 JUNE 1932.**

The attached statement, headed "John Morton, Vancouver's early pioneer," was written by his son, Joseph Morton, and is a carbon copy of a statement which he (Mr. Joseph Morton) requested the Vancouver newspapers, *The Sun* and *The Province* to publish—according to his own statement made to me this 28 June 1932. He delivered the statement to me at my house after, he stated, unsuccessfully attempting to get it published by these newspapers.

Mr. Joseph Morton has been well known to me for many years, and he has always laboured until intense emotion when discussing the manner in which his father's estate was bequeathed, afterwards administered, and its present inaccessibility to him. He stated to me today that "all I have" is the "Morton Rooms," facing the beach at English Bay, that the revenue from these rooms is annually \$2,460, that the expenses are approximately \$1,200 per annum, and that, within a recent time, \$3,000 was spent on repairs. He said, "You see, that does not leave much for me." And he added, "I was given this property, or \$30,000, but was not given the option of a choice."

Mr. Morton is not now employed, nor has he been, to my knowledge, for some years; he spends much of his time experimenting with machinery, etc. in his basement. Three or four (roughly) years ago, his wife was employed in a clerical capacity in some office, I believe a medical practitioner's.

J.S. Matthews

The impression might be gained from this statement that Mr. Joseph Morton's filial attachment to his father is or was not what might be expected of a son, but this is not the case in fact. Except when discussing the manner of the distribution, etc. of the estate of Mr. John Morton, his references to his father are such as one would naturally expect from a dutiful son, and his references to his mother—who died three days after his birth—are as affectionate as though he had known her. She is, to him, a sort of beautiful legend.

J.S.M.

Joseph Morton died in the Asylum for the Insane, New Westminster, eight months later, on 2 March 1933. He had been ailing for months; about a week before his death was taken to the general hospital, became violent, was sent to Westminster, and died shortly after admission. For years he never ceased to talk of the supposed undue influence of designing friends over his father before his father's death, and the fraud and manipulation of the estate after his father's death. It was an obsession.

## **MEMOIRS AND FACTS RELATING TO THE LIFE AND DEATH OF JOHN MORTON, VANCOUVER'S EARLY PIONEER.**

Mr. John Morton, accompanied by his cousin Mr. Sam Brighthouse and Mr. William Hailstone arrived in New Westminster, B.C. in the year 1862.

Shortly afterwards they came over to Burrard Inlet and preempted from the government all the land situated west of what is now known as Burrard Street and extending to Stanley Park. All three pioneers died very wealthy and within about thirteen months of each other, Mr. Morton passing away on the 18<sup>th</sup> day of April 1912. His wife, Jane Ann Morton, was the mother of his two children who survived him and who were Mrs. W.E.A. Thornton of Sardis, B.C. and Joseph Morton of 2116 York Street, City.

Mrs. Morton was formerly Miss Jane Ann Bailey of Blackpool, Lancashire, England and was the sister of James Bailey, Esq., Councillor and Justice of the Peace of Blackpool and she was also the sister of Mr. Sam Bailey, Tea Merchant of Blackpool. Mrs. Morton was also in partnership with her brother James in business in Blackpool which partnership she retained even during her married life to Mr. Morton until the time of her death in the year 1881 at New Westminster, B.C.

She is also one of the old pioneers but apparently has been forgotten though she is still resting in the Odd Fellows Cemetery at Sapperton, New Westminster, B.C. It was the wealth from her share in her business venture in which she formerly worked and helped to build up the business with her brother as above related that allowed Mr. John Morton to hold onto his preemption here

in Vancouver and which at the time cost him one hundred and eighty dollars or thereabout to purchase. Mrs. Morton died before the Woman's Property Act came into force and therefore Mr. Morton claimed her entire share in her brother's business and purchased a large farm with it at Mission Junction, B.C.

Joseph Morton was three days old when his mother died and Mrs. Thornton was twenty-one months and one day. There is a copy of a letter written by Mr. John Morton in the possession of the writer of this article in which he, Mr. Morton authorizes a Mr. Passmore to collect from Mr. James Bailey his dead wife's interest in the business in Blackpool. Mr. Passmore was the man from whom Mr. Morton purchased the farm. The writer understands that Mrs. Morton's interest in the business was in the neighbourhood of seven hundred pounds or about the equivalent of thirty-five hundred dollars and that the cost of the farm was two thousand dollars or thereabouts. Mr. Morton was a man of limited financial circumstances at the time of his wife's death and did odd jobs such as digging ditches on Lulu Island and peddling milk on a milk round in which it was understood he had a financial interest. His daughter he placed in the Roman Catholic convent in New Westminster and his son he placed out to keep with a private family. He purchased the farm at Mission in 1884 and shortly afterwards married again. His second and last marriage was to Miss Ruth Mount but there were no living issue from this marriage. His will was probated at over seven hundred and sixty-nine thousand dollars.

The will was dated May 22<sup>nd</sup> 1911. The witnesses to this will were a relative (nephew) of Mrs. Ruth Morton his widow and a Baptist preacher, P.C. Parker by name. The will left one hundred thousand dollars to the Baptist Educational Board of B.C. together with over seven acres of land in South Vancouver. Before his death he not only laid the cornerstone of the First Baptist Church at the corner of Nelson and Burrard streets but set aside the equivalent of eleven thousand dollars to build the Baptist Church since known as the Ruth Morton Memorial in South Vancouver. His only son he left in shabby circumstances for life and his daughter the same until after the death of his widow.

Practically all the cash from his estate disappeared soon after August the fourth 1914. The Yorkshire and Canadian Trust were not the trustee at that time.

Joseph Morton (only son to represent the three pioneers.)

### **MRS. JOHN MORTON. ENGLISH BAY BATHING BEACH. CARRALL STREET BEACH.**

Memo of phone conversation, Mrs. Ruth Morton, 1190 Montrose Apartments, 11 May 1932, whilst arranging for her to be a guest of the city of Vancouver at the opening of the Burrard Street bridge.

"Mr. Morton and I came over from New Westminster one summer's day in 1884 for an outing, just my late husband and myself. We had to buy our tickets for the stage the previous day, and afterwards we drove over the old Hastings Road, then a corduroy road through the trees. Mr. Morton was anxious that I should see the white sand at English Bay, and we tried to hire a boat by which we could go out of the First Narrows, but no seaworthy boat could be procured—they were all leaky—so we did not go. He was very fascinated with the beauty of Vancouver as it was then. Whilst Mr. Edmund Ogle, my nephew, and I were waiting on the beach for Mr. Morton at Gastown, in front of us was a sow digging up the clams, and a crow hopping in front of her getting a meal from the bits of the clams. Edmund Ogle started a dry goods business in Vancouver, on Carrall and Powell streets I think, a week before the fire; all was destroyed; he lives in Toronto now. We saw the English church" (St. James) "and at George Black's" (Hastings) "had lunch, and then went back to New Westminster on the stage, and from there up to Mission to the farm. At the time of the fire we were living at Mission. That Sunday afternoon a cloud of black smoke hovered high in the air across the river; it was evident a big fire was burning somewhere.

"I never saw Mr. Morton's clearing at the foot of Burrard Street."