

Early Vancouver

Volume Three

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Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1933-1934.

Supplemental to Volumes One and Two collected in 1931-1932.

About the 2011 Edition

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house, gets the Chinaman by the scruff of his neck, and booted him out of the cook house. Then I said to the boss, 'Do you know what you've done? Do you know there are eighty-two men coming up to eat?' So the boss said, 'Do you think you can cook?' I said I'd try, if he got me a man from the quarry, and, by golly, I did; I cooked for a week."

(Note: the practice of using the mouth to squirt liquids was a common one with Chinamen as recently as the early days of the twentieth century, so much so that there was newspaper comments upon it, which resulted in Chinese laundries being compelled by civic by-law to provide themselves with squirt cans for squirting water to dampen clothes for ironing; they previously squirted it with their mouths.)

GENEALOGY OF SCALES.

(Royal Engineer, 1859.) Arrived on *Thames City*, April 1859. (As at July 1933.) John Scales, Royal Engineer, and his wife, Sarah (née Excell.)

Children: seven.

1. John Henry, born 26 June 1854, eldest, has issue (see ante.) resides Vancouver.
2. Elizabeth, born about September 1857, married Thomas Cornish, issue, three daughters, one deceased, two in U.S., two sons, both in Nanaimo.
3. William James, killed in big explosion at Nanaimo, unmarried, explosion 3 May 1887.
4. David, deceased, three sons, two in Vancouver, one in Nanaimo, two daughters, one in U.S., one in Vancouver.
5. George, living in Nanaimo, 1933, single, has a gas boat and lives on it. Claims to be 68 on 24 June 1933.
6. Avis, widow of Geo. Cuthbert, three daughters, and four sons (I think) all in Nanaimo except one daughter, I think.
7. Rosamond, or Rosmond, claims 62 in 1933, married Thomas Paterson, coal miner, has two daughters in Nanaimo.

Issue of John Henry Scales (all born in Nanaimo, all resident, 1933, in Vancouver.)

1. William John.
2. Francis Arnold.
3. Thomas Clarence.
4. Redvers Henry.

Two daughters and one son deceased without issue.

CONVERSATION WITH MR. JOHN HENRY SCALES AT ARCHIVES, ROOM NO. 1016, CITY HALL, 14 JULY 1933.

As we looked on a very clear day out of the window, Mr. Scales, in response to my observation, said, "Yes, I see it, Mount Baker." His eyesight must be good—age over 79 years.

I showed Mr. Scales letter from Constable Jacklin, No. 265 of Provincial Police, Nanaimo, in which he records his interview with George Scales, who is living in a steamboat at Anderson's Boat House, Nanaimo, and in which he records that he was 68 years of age on 24 June 1933, came to Nanaimo with his parents when three years old, that they came on the steamer *Emma*, and that his father worked in the quarries on Newcastle Island taking out stone pillars for the Mint which was under construction in San Francisco. The American Consul states that the Mint at 'Frisco was built in 1874.

Mr. Scales: "George is off there. We went to Nanaimo after he accidentally chopped his little sister's finger off at our home near Moodyville. How could he do that when he was only three years old? George was

chopping wood with a small hatchet, and Avis was slipping her hand in, back and forth, and pulling the chips away. George said, 'Stop that; you'll get your finger chopped off.' She persisted, and her finger was chopped off; the middle finger, right hand."

NO DOCTOR AT MOODYVILLE THEN.

"She nearly died before we could get her medical attention. We took her across the Narrows in a boat to 'Maxies.' We got a horse and buggy there and drove her all the way to New Westminster before we could get her to the doctor, old Dr. Black. That was" (it happened) "right over on the North Shore, yes, near Moody's mill, before we went to Nanaimo; how could he go to Nanaimo when he was three years old and remember it?"

NEWCASTLE ISLAND. NANAIMO.

"We lived on Newcastle Island for a while, not long. The reason Father went over to Newcastle Island was because they were getting out rock for the San Francisco Mint; he was a stonecutter by trade; that was the reason we were over there; to be in the Royal Engineer party to B.C. each man had to be a tradesman of some sort."

Query: Mr. Scales, what sort of stone did they cut?

Mr. Scales: "All sorts, round, square; the pillars George speaks of." (Note: remains of the stone pillars, broken pieces, etc., can still be seen here in the quarry beside the wharf now used by the C.P.R. to land picnickers.) "The pillars would be about, oh, say, four feet diameter, and twelve feet long. Two of the last pillars—or what they thought were the last—got lost in Plumber's Pass." (Active Pass.) "The barque was lost with all hands. They filled her up below with stone, but the pillars were too big, so they put them on deck; somehow the pillars on deck got loose, rolled towards each other; anyway, the barque capsized and sunk."

"The way I know about the barque being lost is this. When the barque was being loaded with the stone I used to talk to the captain who had two fox terriers. I asked him for one. He said, 'No.' Then just before he sailed he said to me, 'You take the two of them, I may not see you any more,' and he gave me the two terriers. We were living on Newcastle Island at that time, and the loss of the ship, the terriers, etc. all were indelibly impressed on my mind."

INDIAN BOWS AND ARROWS.

Mr. Scales' walking stick fell to the floor, and he picked it up, saying, "That's skookum wood; awful tough; the Indians used to split it and make their bows out of it; don't know what its name is; we always called it skookum wood. Grows in a sort of cluster; not a very big tree."

VOYAGE ON THAMES CITY, 1859.

"I remember the voyage out to B.C. on the *Thames City* quite well, particularly Neptune coming on board when we crossed the equator. Then there was some sort of mutiny among the crew. I don't know what it was about, but I know some man wanted to go down a companion way, and the sentry held his fixed bayonet in front of him as he stood at the top of the stairway, and the man said he would go down, and the sentry said, 'If you do, it will be on the point of this bayonet,' and the man walked right up to the bayonet until it touched him almost in the stomach, but he went no further; nothing serious happened, but I think they brought the ringleader to Victoria in irons."

FIRE CHIEF OF NANAIMO.

After having John Deasy's letter (Fire Chief of Victoria), from Saanich, 14 July 1933, read to him, Mr. Scales said, "Yes, I was Fire Chief of Nanaimo; volunteer fire brigade."

ROWING RACES IN THE 1870S ON BURRARD INLET.

"John Deasy is wrong when he says he rowed in a four-oared boat race between white and half-breed crews on Burrard Inlet in 1870; he's way off; he's ahead of time." (See Deasy letter, 14 July 1933.) "In 1863, Tom Deasy was only a little bit of a kid, and we used to call him 'Snotty nose Tom.'"

GASTOWN IN THE 1870s.

"I told you there was a bit of a verandah on the barn. That's not quite right; it was more of a shelter; Father put it up. The barn was divided into, I think, four rooms; there was a sort of lean-to at the back which served as a kitchen. No, we grew no vegetables, no fruit; no room; no room to grow anything; only forest and trees about us; all bush. During the years we were there Father was off logging at, I think they call it Indian River now."

Query: Mr. Scales, look at this. Here is a map of Granville in 1870 signed by Joseph W. Trutch, March 1870, drawn by J.B. Launders, March 1870, showing nine buildings in Granville. How is it that you say there was only two, Gassy Jack's and the barn?

Mr. Scales: "Can't help it; two is all I remember. There was no store; why, when we wanted groceries, we had to go up to the mill to get groceries and everything else. To the west of the beach was kind of straight, to the east it curved outwards to the mill."

CHARLIE, MAGGIE AND DEELIA HOUSE.

"The way I remember the time the House children and I rowed over to Moody's Mill was because we went over to see the monkeys, and there was a fellow over there had some hens with white top knots all flowing back from their heads. But I never took the girls over to see the monkeys again; once was enough."

Query: Well, Mr. Scales, are you sure it was not before Rowling went to the North Arm of the Fraser in September 1868 that you came to Burrard Inlet? Brown was at Rowling's place before Rowling went there, wasn't he?

GASTOWN.

Mr. Scales: "McRoberts had an orchard, beautiful orchard, I remember, because it was the first time I ever tasted quinces. I said to Mr. McRoberts, 'These are nice looking apples,' and he said, 'Yes, take one.' I did; one bite was enough. Rowling was there when we passed; he shifted there a little before we started to come over here; I remember, because he was having some trouble with his grape vines—they would not grow properly—and he thought he would have to move back. Why, there wasn't a house at Gastown. I cannot help the map, or what it says; *there was no trail between our place and Gassy Jack's*; we scrambled over to Gassy Jack's; just followed where someone had walked before through the bushes; that's what makes me so sure. There wasn't a house there then," (and after reflection) "unless it may be that they built those houses or shacks, whatever they were, after we went over to Moodyville; but when we were there, there was nothing" (reflecting) "*excepting the sheer legs*."

COAL.

Query: Oh the sheer legs? What sheer legs? You didn't tell me about them before. What do you suppose they were there for?

Mr. Scales: "I think they must have been boring for coal; there were three legs; the legs were still standing, just to the west a few feet of the barn, right on the shore. I think they must have been boring for coal; there was some black looking stuff lying around. There was a big fire place in the barn, built of rocks and stones. As I told you, the barn was right on the beach, and the legs were to the west and nearer still to the beach, just on the left front."

MOODY'S MILL.

Query: What was Moody's first mill like?

Mr. Scales: "When we came first the old sawmill was running with water" (and he chuckled.) "Start on a log, saw stopped, back up, start again, stop, back up; have to stop and pull the log from the saw half a dozen times; the old waterwheel!!!! Ha ha!"

WHALES IN BURRARD INLET. HERRINGS.

"Did any of the old timers ever tell you about the whale killed in the harbour? They were going up the inlet, going up to Port Moody, five or six of them, and one got in a little too close, and got drowned on those flats" (Lynn Creek and Seymour Creek flats); "the others went through the Second Narrows; he

worked around and around, and the more he tried to get free, the deeper he got in the mud; he made an awful racket there during the night," (with emphasis) "I'll tell you. They cut him up; some of the whites and half-breeds, kanakas; all kinds of men here then. It was right down in front of where we lived—between Lynn Creek and Moody's Mill.

"There were lots of those black fish then; look like a whale; used to go up and down the harbour *squirting*; you don't see that nowadays."

Query: Herring?

Mr. Scales: "Herrings all gone; why, when we went over to the Island" (Nanaimo) "the herrings were that thick when you rowed you just stirred them up; they used to sell them for a dollar a ton."

FRASER RIVER FROZEN OVER.

"Anybody ever tell you about the Fraser River frozen solid? Take a team of horses, drive right over; go on one side, pull off the other; hauling hay across, on sleighs; right about where the bridge is now, by the penitentiary at Westminster, somewhere along there. There used to be a meadow on the south side." (Note: this meadow is the flat land below Port Mann.) "We used to go over there for hay. I was only a bit of a child. My Father made a sleigh to pull my sister Elizabeth over there on, I remember; I was too big to ride on a sleigh, I was a big man. No, I was going to walk, not ride on a sleigh; I'll never forget it. You see, it used to be rough ice; they used to clear a patch and flood it with water, make it smooth for skating, so that the skating would be good—a very little water would make it smooth—but it was rough where we crossed, and I fell down and could not get up; I yelled, and Father came and got me."

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH MR. JOHN HENRY SCALES, 23 JULY 1934.

ROYAL ENGINEERS BAND.

"I have often watched the Royal Engineers Band form up under Prof. Haynes at 'The Camp' preparatory to going to church. The uniform they wore was a red coat with white waist belt and brass buckles, dark trousers with a red stripe, and, for head gear, a black busby with all white plume on the right side. I judge their numbers to be twenty, perhaps twenty-five, not more."

FALSE CREEK CROSSING. MAIN STREET.

"When we went from Gassy Jack's across False Creek, we crossed the narrow part where Main Street is now, on stepping stones, when the tide was low. There was a man on the south side whom we called 'Julius Caesar,' and he used to roll his rocks into the mud, to provide a stepping stone passage, probably more for himself than for us. You had to wait until the tide was right before you could get across, and if you stayed too long you had to get back by going around the head of False Creek."

THE 'BLACK TRAIL,' KINGSWAY.

"There was a big fire ran through all the timber between here and Westminster, some time in the late '60s. After that the mill men from English Bay used to travel through there to New Westminster picking their way as best they could in and out among the stumps; I used to hear them talking, and saying that they had come over, or were going back, by 'The Black Trail.'"

MEMORIES OF 65 YEARS IN VANCOUVER.

(Note by J.S.M.: as I sat with Mr. Scales looking out over Vancouver on this beautiful summer's afternoon, surveying this city stretching before us as far as the eye could see, Mr. Scales remarked, "Just fancy sitting here on this beautiful afternoon, and looking on that scene, and reflecting that what I used to do was sit on a stone on the beach" (Water Street) "and watch the gulls, or an eagle, or see the big fish" (whales) "blowing as they went up and down the inlet—that was about all there was to see in those days. It has been a remarkable life; to think of all the changes that have taken place, and to sit here and watch that stream of automobiles going up and down Hastings Street."

Mr. Scales is a picture of health; his eyesight is wonderful.