

Early Vancouver

Volume Three

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

2011 Edition (Originally Published 1935)

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

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

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.

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. 3 (Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 2011), 33.

Bibliographic Entry:

Matthews, Major James Skitt. *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 3. 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 Vancouver, Vol. 2.) "I never quite understood what the Royal Engineers had to do with that boundary.

"I made a lot of money three times, and lost it again. I have just joined the Old Age Pensions Association. I had a farm up in the Okanagan; I lost that during the war for taxes. I had a five-storey building on Hastings Street—down by Jackson Avenue; I paid \$25,000 for the lot, and put up a \$55,000 building; mortgaged it for \$40,000 to put up the building, then I had a second mortgage for \$9,000 and a third for \$13,000, and took the 750 acre farm in the Okanagan" (Kelowna.) "I think it was for the balance of my equity when I sold. But during the war, if you had a clear title house, you could not borrow \$500 on it, so I lost the farm. I will be 70 in February next, and am going to apply for the Old Age Pensions. They won't have to pay it long, I think. I started logging at 16, have worked pretty hard, lot of out in the open in wet clothes, and that sort of thing; trouble with my heart, liable to die at any time; but I have no fear; I'm ready any time. My wife, of course, is about 25 years younger than I am; I think she was 21 and I was 46 when we were married on St. Valentine's Day, 1910, at Wesley Church.

"I married Miss Mary Houston, daughter of John and Kate Houston of Vancouver—still living—at Wesley Church, Georgia Street, Vancouver, February 14 (St. Valentine's Day) 1910. Our children were William Henry Rowling, and Mayo Mary, now Mrs. H.C. Duggan."

MEMORANDUM OF FURTHER CONVERSATION WITH HENRY S. ROWLING, ABOUT 27 JUNE 1933.

LAND SALES.

"You had better alter that part of my story where I said that the land scrip Father bought was applied on adjoining sections; I think the land scrip he bought was applied on sections on Lulu Island, and that he sold them afterwards; I don't know.

"A man named Brown—no, not Ebenezer Brown, a Brown, I think, who had been a Royal Engineer—helped Father build that log cabin, or it may have been Brown's military grant, and Father bought D.L. 258 from him. You see my brother Jim and I were minors, and not recognised. I squatted on Lot 330, Jim squatted on D.L. 331, but when the auction sale took place we bid them in; nobody bid against us; just good-naturedness; we wanted them because that was where the little natural pastures were, where we ran our cows. Father squatted on D.L. 329 himself, that is, to the west of D.L. 258, but I am not quite sure of the number of the district lots from memory, I think I'm right. Father had two fractional sections across the river on Lulu Island, and he traded these with we two boys, and we gave him a clear deed; we just exchanged, and he took D.L. 330 and 331."

JAMES (JIM) MCGEER, FATHER OF GERRY (HIMSELF) MCGEER.

"You see, when these sections were put up for auction squatters had sometimes done a lot of improvement work on them. Neighbours recognised this, and just did not bid; of course, there was nothing to prevent them bidding; if they had bid there was no legal way of preventing them getting the property, but when the auctioneer put the section up for bidding, they said nothing, kept quiet, and of course it went to the man who had done the improvements and who wanted it. I remember the time Jim McGeer, Gerry McGeer's father, had his place put up for auction. It was the first piece put up at the sale, the piece out Kingsway way, where Jim had a milk ranch. The auctioneer said, 'I will ask you to consider that Mr. McGeer has done a lot of improvement work on this property. Of course, it is your privilege to bid on it if you want to; if you do I cannot help it, but I ask you to consider the point.' Then he added, 'I don't know what he wants with the old "gravel pit" anyway, but he's in the milk business, and there is a nice stream running through it.' They never could leave Jim alone; always making some sort of a joke about him or his milk." (See *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 1, Matthews, 1931.)

EXCERPT FROM LETTER, 18 JULY 1933, FROM THOMAS DEASY, JASMINE AVENUE, MARIGOLD P.O., SAANICH, B.C., TO J.S.M.

"I also know Mr. Rowland [Rowling]. He was proprietor of 'The Retreat' Saloon at 'The Camp' during the days of the Royal Engineers. He was one of them. He had two daughters, fair haired girls."