

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



day and a half then; they wanted me to go with them, but Mother would not let me. This is a photograph of young Dick Alexander, the eldest son, when he was about three, as I remember him.”

HASTINGS.

Mr. Scales, continuing: “I don’t remember much about Hastings. There was a kind of hotel there on a grassy flat, and a stable where you could always get a horse to drive over to New Westminster.”

BRIGHOUSE AND HAILSTONE.

“Father was well acquainted with Brighthouse and Hailstone, but I don’t remember a man named Morton at all. Brighthouse had a bit of a farm up on the North East Road” (to Pitt Meadows, from the “Camp.”)

Query: Are you sure it was not the North Arm, about three miles down from New Westminster, Rosehill Farm?

Mr. Scales: “No, up on the North East Road. Afterwards Brighthouse married Mrs. Pritchard, widow of Captain Pritchard of the jail, and they went to live” (at Brighthouse) “on Lulu Island.”

HAILSTONE.

“Hailstone came over from New Westminster one day, and was looking around and found some clay, some pottery clay, down by the sugar refinery; good clay, pottery clay. They said to him, ‘What do you want to go away out there for?’ Hailstone answered, ‘Oh, some old fool will come along some day and buy it off me when Vancouver grows.’”

Mrs. Scales: “That was after the Fire.”

Mr. Scales: “Yes, after the Fire. Hailstone went to the Old Country and left his affairs in the hands of some real estate agent; I know he told me they were all crooks. I met him down at the City Hall one day. He let that property go for taxes. I cannot place Morton at all, but I know Hailstone and Brighthouse well.”

MEMORANDUM OF FURTHER CONVERSATION WITH MR. JOHN H. SCALES, FULLER BLOCK, 19TH AVENUE EAST AND MAIN STREET, 5 JULY 1933.

Mr. Scales had reviewed my memorandum of former conversation and approved of it. He plunged into narrative almost immediately I entered.

THE FIRST BUTCHER, GEORGE BLACK.

“George Black’s floating butcher shop” (George Black of Brighton Hotel, Hastings) “used to come around; when you wanted butcher’s meat you went down to the beach and got it out of his boat; he had a boat all fixed up with butcher’s block and everything. He had a slaughterhouse out in Hastings; afterwards he had one on False Creek, but long before that it was out at Hastings, and he used to go around the inlet, to Moodyville, Gastown, the sawmill, and to the ships.” (See Hugh and John Murray.)

SAILING SHIPS ON BURRARD INLET.

“There used to be a great fleet of vessels in Burrard Inlet sometimes. The most I ever remember was forty-two vessels all at one time; ships, barques, barkentines, brigs, brigantines, and three- and four-masted schooners; those three- and four-masted schooners were big vessels, too; that was at the time Captain Stamp had the mill” (Hastings Mill); “must have been around 1875, I suppose; they came from all parts of the world, some loading spars, some lumber, some shingles—shingles were made by hand then, no machine-made shingles in those days. You’d be surprised at the big lumber which *did* go out; no moulding, or anything fancy like that, no fancy stuff; you could get one by six dressed or one by six flooring, but no fancy stuff. At first Captain Stamp’s Mill had two old planers, one circular saws,” (Note: circular saws, plural) “that is, one saw about the other, an edger and trimmer; that was all; that’s all there was in the mill; that was everything in the way of machinery.

“I knew the rig of all those vessels; sometimes nowadays when I have been looking at a picture in a book of a vessel I would say, ‘That’s a barque,’ and people have said to me, ‘What’s that? Looks like a ship to me,’ but I knew all the rigs from full rigged ships to schooners; I was on the dock one day, and there was a very big ship which had a sail above her sky sail; she was a big one, and I asked what it was; they said,

'That's the moon sail,' a little bit of a thing away up in the clouds; I never saw more than one or two ships with a moon sail. I've seen nine ships tied up at Moodyville, all loading."

Query: How did those sailing vessels get into Burrard Inlet?

Mr. Scales: "Towed in. The old *Isabel*, Captain Stamp's towboat, towed them in. I never saw but one ship sail in; a full rigged brig, she sailed in the Narrows, prettiest thing you ever saw.

"One time there was a vessel caught fire. It was about four in the morning. I heard the disturbance, and got up to see what it was all about. They scuttled her, and then they beached her down somewhere about Deadman's Island."

Query: Was that the *Robert Ker*? She was ashore down Deadman's Island once, I think.

Mr. Scales: "I don't remember the *Robert Ker*."

(Note: the queer thing about Mr. Scales' narration is that he seems to have entirely forgotten—or never known about—matters which seem common knowledge to many pioneers. It is probably accounted for by the fact that he was in Nanaimo for some years.)

EARLY WATER SYSTEM. THE HASTINGS MILL FLUME.

Query: What about the Hastings Mill flume from Trout Lake, Mr. Scales?

Mr. Scales: "Just a big ditch; just a ditch dug in the ground; boarded in places where it crossed a low spot. I never was right up it to Trout Lake, but I used to walk along the ditch shooting. It was easy walking along the banks; easier than walking through the tangle of forest."

Query: Did you shoot ducks?

Mr. Scales: "No, grouse, not ducks, no ducks there, and used to get some trout in the ditch. Down at the mill there was a great big wooden tank the water flowed into" (see Map, 1886), "and I remember seeing trout in that tank a foot long; don't know how they got there."

BURNABY LAKE.

"The first time I ever saw Burnaby Lake I was with Father. Father was orderly to the colonel of the company" (Colonel Moody), "and the colonel had a bit of land on the east side of the Brunette River on the old Port Moody road; bought a few young milkers and had them out there; turned them loose, thinking they would stay around the place, you know, but he lost them, did not know where they had gone. He got Father to go hunt those cattle up; Father did not know where to go hunt for them, so we just got a lunch and away we went. Somehow we got away down around Burnaby Lake; Father said, 'Oh, look here; there is a lake down here or something,' so we stopped then and had lunch at the top end, at the east end, and had lunch; there was a narrow kind of arm" (of water) "and a log had fallen across it, so I walked out on that log; it was only about two feet from the surface, and I said to Father, 'Oh, look here, at the fish here; if I had a hook I'd catch some.' So Father said, 'I'll get you a hook,' so he bent a pin, and with the string off our lunch I made a hook and line, and was hooking them in like old Harry, so Father saw what I was doing, so he thought he'd try it too, so he came out on the log with another bent pin, and, well, the end of it was we got a little sack half full of trout."

Query: Did you get the cows?

Mr. Scales: "We got them later. Father dropped salt here and there, and by and by they wandered nearer and finally we got them in the yard."

Query: Mr. Scales, I did not pioneer in B.C., but I did in New Zealand, and my experience was that when you were hunting up steers in the bush, the bush was so dense, you could only see a few yards; you would be walking along in the bush quietly in the stillness, when all of a sudden there would be a terrific crash, you'd think the whole forest was tumbling in on you; and what had happened was that the steer was hidden behind some bush, you had walked up to within a few feet of it, it had dashed off, and by the time you recovered from your fright you could not tell which way it had gone or which way you came.

Mr. Scales: "Exactly. No use trying to drive the cows in; never do it. They like salt; you know, a salt lick. Soon as we found the cows, Father said, 'Come away, let them be,' and we started out laying the salt around them; circle it around them, drop it here and there, they kept coming up nearer and nearer, and finally we got them in the yard. Took some days."

WASHING CLOTHES IN STREAM. ABBOTT STREET.

"Women used to work those days. Down by that little stream where Mother used to do her washing." (See previous talk about stream near foot of Abbott Street.) "We got some little rocks and put some iron bars across them, so that she could put her boiler on; no washing machines those days."

Query: Strange thing, Mr. Scales, you don't remember all those houses which show on the map of Granville in March 1870 (Trutch map of Granville, 1870); there were eight of them. Don't you remember Turner building the first Indian Church, 1875-1876?

Mr. Scales: "Can't do it. The only thing I can remember between Gassy Jack's place and ours was two loggers came one Saturday night, and made a cedar bark tent, you know, got some cedar bark off some trees and" (motioning with his hands) "made a kind of shelter, cedar bark tent. The only thing I remember was, I saw the two loggers come one Saturday night; Mother had an Indian man working, Jim, some of the sailors used to come over to have dinner there; he was helping—and she had paid him all but one dollar. Well, on Sunday morning when he" (the Indian) "came up, I was standing outside; I could see he had been drinking. He wanted his dollar, and I says, 'You don't want that dollar today, Jim,' and he says, 'Aw, you shut up,' in Chinook.

"Then I said, 'You've been drinking,' and with that he hauled off and hit me. I yelled, and Mother came out, and said something, so he took a rush at her, and got her by the neck" (motioning to the throat) "and jammed her against the door, and took out a knife, and said, 'If you holler I'll give you this.' I ran to the two loggers. I hollered, 'Come on up, an Indian is going to kill Mother.' So one of the loggers comes up pretty fast, and the Indian saw him coming. There was an old shovel on the ground; don't know how long it must have been lying there." (Note: this shovel may have had something to do with the old barn; surmise the old barn was the coal bore mentioned in geological reports.) "The logger picked it up by the handle to strike the Indian, but the handle broke as he picked it up, and he did not hit the Indian. The Indian ran, ran into the bush, and got tangled up in the bushes, and the logger caught up with him; he took a jab at the logger with the knife, and the whiteman got hold of his wrist and took the knife from him; then the other whiteman comes up, and the Indian took to the water. Soon as he got out in the water he let out a war whoop or something out of him, and in ten minutes two hundred" (?) "Indians in canoes came down from the" (Hastings) "Mill. I wasn't scared; not a bit, then. They picked him up out of the water, some of them wanted to know what it was all about, and then they went away; all except his woman, she wanted to know what he had done; she said, 'Don't you stay here alone tonight.'

Query: In Chinook?

Mr. Scales: "Oh, yes, I talked Chinook. I says, 'All right,' and she says, 'You get someone to stay with you.' So I went over to one of the ships, and a man said he'd come, and he did, brought two barkers" (pistols) "with him, and I let the dogs loose, and the next day when I looked out, I see Jim" (the Indian) "coming down the beach. I said to Mother, 'Jim's coming.' She said, 'Has he been drinking?' I said, 'He's walking pretty straight.' He came up, he spoke to me, in Chinook of course, and says, 'My woman tells me I make much fool of myself; what did I do?' So I told him. 'That's what my woman tell me,' he said. So he said he wanted to 'come back work for you.' I called Mother. She was sort of uncertain like. So he said, 'If you'll let me come back to work, I promise I won't drink anymore.' So Mother said, 'Try it,' and you know, I travelled all over the country with that Indian after that, and never had the least trouble; he would do anything for us. That was the Indian I was with the day I met Supplejack." (See previous talk.)

POTATOES.

Query: Oh, I wanted to ask you, where did you say you got those potatoes?

Mr. Scales: "We went down to Jericho beach; there was a little settlement of Indians there; not the big settlement, not the big settlement up in False Creek; they had had some potatoes down there, Jim said; we did not find any. Then we came back and it was just inside the First Narrows that we went ashore and

up the hill; we went up the hill a piece and then turned off to the right; I don't know just where it was, but somewhere up by the 'Lookout'" (Prospect Point); "back in the woods a piece, there was a bit of a clear space, flat place on top of the hill. We met Supplejack; Supplejack was a great big Indian, six feet or more, black long hair, he always wore his hair long, down over his shoulders it hung, black, and long, and he had a hat, big black slouch hat, low crown, and a broad brim like the preachers used to wear."

INDIAN GARMENTS.

Query: What sort of clothes did the Indians wear?

Mr. Scales: "Oh, any sort; sometimes one thing, sometimes another; sometimes part whiteman's, part Indian's, may be Indian coat and whiteman's old trousers; most Indians just had a blanket around them. But we met Supplejack coming down, and he says, 'Where are you going, Johnny?' Then, 'You're scared of me; you look pretty white,' and I said, 'We're going to look for potatoes,' and he said, 'You go ahead, I won't hurt you'; we got our potatoes.

"Talking about Indians. One day an Indian came along in his canoe and landed on the beach in front of our place at the foot of Abbott Street, or thereabouts; he was all wrapped up in a blanket. He got out of the canoe, and came up on the beach with both hands full of ducks, his blanket all around him. He spoke in Chinook, and said, 'Want some ducks?' I answered in Chinook; the two dogs were loose, and when I spoke in Chinook, no sooner than I had spoken—the two dogs always got excited when I spoke in Chinook—the one dog on one side and the other on the other side of him, they just went at him. He dropped his ducks and swung from side to side, waving the blanket sideways, back and forth, to keep the dogs off. Then he hurriedly backed down the beach to his canoe, and went off. He never came back for his ducks, he just left them. I was sorry about it; if I had thought of the dogs being loose, I would not have spoken in Chinook."

Query: How did he get all the ducks?

Mr. Scales: "Shot them. Shot them with a gun; old Hudson's Bay flintlocks."

MOODY'S MILL. CAPTAIN STAMP'S MILL.

"Captain Stamp's mill had little machinery; two old planers, one circular saws" (plural), "one saw above the other, one edger, and one planer; that's all the machinery. The planers would take one by six or one by twelve, but you could get nothing fancy, and that was about the only dressed lumber you could get. Moody's Mill, at first, was a regular old breakdown" (ramshackle.) "When we went over there it was run by an old waterwheel, then after a while they built a new mill, ran it with half water and half steam. The old *Sparrowhawk's* machinery ran the steam end; she was an old English war boat—cruiser—and she was condemned and sold her machinery, and the Moody's Mill got her engines."

MILITARY GRANTS OF LAND.

"You know, up at Port Moody, there were two preemptions, one alongside of the other; Murray on one, Clarke on the other" (Clarke's was not his preemption originally); "they called it the Murray-Clarke place. Some of the Royal Engineers held their scrip for years, did not put it on land. Land! Who wanted land? There was lots of land; land wasn't worth anything. My sons say to me sometimes, 'Why didn't you buy land? See how well off you'd have been now.' I know all about the mistakes I've made, but land; why there was lots of land. When we'd see a place, we'd say, 'Oh, we'll get a better place than *that* someday.' Why, over in Victoria one military land scrip, the fellow who had it was in a bar and wanted some more, so he sold his for a bottle of rum. Some of the Engineers waited, did not put it on for years; Murray got to know, I suppose, I heard he did, about the railway coming, and he put his on at Port Moody, and Clarke, of Victoria, he got word too somehow or other, and put his on beside Murray's." (See John Murray.)

EARLY SCHOOLS.

Query: What education did you get, Mr. Scales?

Mr. Scales: "Not much." (With emphasis.) "Mother used to go out to nurse; she had a diploma, but Mother was out so much after we left the Camp" (Sapperton.) "Sometimes my sister thought she was boss, sometimes I did, and between the two of us and Mother away, I got mighty little. Mrs. Moresby had a

school, and we used to pay a dollar a month; it was back of the present penitentiary buildings at New Westminster; then, after we moved from the Camp to New Westminster, I went to a public school.”

ROYAL ENGINEERS ATTEND DIVINE SERVICE.

“It used to be fine to watch the soldiers line up for parade; looked fine all dressed up,” (Mr. Scales’ face glowed as he recalled it) “marching to church on a Sunday morning, band playing ahead of them.”

THE OLD GAOL AT WESTMINSTER. SAM BRIGHOUSE. WIDOW OF CAPT. PRITCHARD.

“I knew the old gaol well. It was not where the present penitentiary is, but way down on the next street above Columbia Street, back of the present C.P.R. station; I used to go up there often; go through it; knew his wife well; after Captain Pritchard died, she married Sam Brighthouse. She was a kindly woman to me, and to the dogs. I used to go up there with a parcel; I’d be around the butcher shop down on the street and the butcher would say, ‘Will you take this parcel up to the gaol?’ Of course, that was before we came around to Burrard Inlet.” (Note: Captain Pritchard was appointed warden of prison 5 January 1866—he had been jailer since 1860. He died 13 July 1870.)

Query: What I cannot understand, Mr. Scales, is how, in view of Trutch’s map of March 1870, showing about eight buildings in Granville, you saw only two, the barn and Gassy Jack’s, when you came around Brockton Point in the summer of 1869. What I am trying to establish is dates; we must be accurate as to dates or your whole narrative loses value. You must have been a lad when you carried the parcels to the jail. Are you sure it was 1869 you came to Burrard Inlet?

Mr. Scales: “Can’t help it; I don’t remember any buildings except the barn and Gassy Jack’s. We fixed up the barn, and then went back for Mother and the other children; all of them came around. Only two of us, my sister Elizabeth and myself, came on the *Thames City*; the rest were born in New Westminster; seven altogether. It must have been 1869; it was a year, maybe two years after his discharge; not long after his discharge anyway. I don’t remember anyone living at Granville besides ourselves.”

CANOE TRIP TO SEATTLE.

“After we went over to Nanaimo, I worked in the cook house, cooking, dish washing for eighty-two men. Then Father took a crazy notion to go to Seattle. We packed up, and started off in a canoe, five of us, boys; it took us just nine days to go; we did not know where we were steering for.”

Query: Did you paddle or sail?

Mr. Scales: “Paddle. We had a sail and sailed once for about two hours, and nearly capsized the canoe; a heavy wind came up; we skimmed along like an aeroplane, but we also nearly went under; we had enough of that.

“We stayed in Seattle about six weeks, the longest I was ever out of B.C. Not much in Seattle then—two old wooden places they called hotels; one, I think was the Occidental, where Occidental Square is now, and I think the other was called, not sure, think it was New England Hotel; two common wooden buildings; no streets, no roads, there was a drug store on a corner, five or six feet below the road, and the mud was running down off the road into the only door the drug store had, and clerk was trying to sweep it back.” (Mr. Scales smiled in amusement.) “If you wanted to go to Lake Washington, you had to go by a trail; we worked in a coal mine about four weeks, then quit, and were glad to get back to Nanaimo. Seattle was a dirty hole, nothing but sawdust.”

CHINESE COOKING. NANAIMO.

“I want to tell you about the ‘whale’ blowing. When I was working in the coal mine cook house at Nanaimo, one day I heard a noise like a whale blowing. It was going ‘gssh, gssh, gssh.’ There were some cracks in the cook house door, so I peeped through the crack, and here was the Chinese cook filling his mouth with coffee and milk and blowing it out of his mouth all over a lot of pies he was going to bake; make them look nice after baking. When the men came up from the mine and sat down, I said, ‘Don’t eat those pies,’ and the boss happened to be sitting near, and after the meal was over he called me over to his office, and said, ‘What’s this you’ve been saying about the Chinaman spitting on the pies?’ So I told him, and he said, ‘You watch, and the first time you see it, come right over to my office and tell me,’ so that evening I heard the blowing again, and I went over the office, and boss comes back to the cook

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