

Early Vancouver

Volume Four

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Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1935-1939.

Supplemental to Volumes One, Two and Three collected in 1931-1934.

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.

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AT THE STATION

The scene at the station was a very lively and enthusiastic one. The roadway, wharf, platform, and bank above were covered with people waiting the arrival of the train. The arch across the track was arranged in a very tasty manner; on the side facing the roadway was the legend 'Labor Omnia Vincit' and over the track 'Orient Greet Occident' and 'Confederation Accomplished.' It was ... [etc.]

CANNON SHOT.

On August 25th 1936, Mr. A.A. Scott came to the City Archives, City Hall, and exhibited to me a small cannon shot, iron, slightly rusted, weight 16½ ounces, with the ring of the moulding around the circumference, diameter about 1½ or 1¾ inches, which he said had been picked up some years ago on the site of the Rat Portage Lumber Co.'s barn at the foot of Fir Street, Kitsilano Indian Reserve, which would be on the site of the old Indian village. He did not know the history of it, said that Dr. G.H. Raley, Indian missionary, had a similar one.

This is the smallest cannon shot I have ever seen, as being picked up around Vancouver. There is no reason to believe it was ever fired at Indians; British warships did not shoot at our Indians; never; it was probably given to them by some British sailor (perhaps filched), and kept in the old Indian lodge by the Indians, and when that was dismantled, or destroyed when they built the new one, it was lost or misplaced by them, and fell to the ground where, years after, it was picked up by some white man.

FROM PROVINCE, 20 OCTOBER 1938.

“‘FORTY YEARS AGO,’ OCTOBER, 20, 1898.”

MOODYVILLE CANNON (EPITOMISED).

“For years it was the custom to discharge a cannon at Moodyville Mill on the North Shore when a ship finished loading. But the cannon will be held no more. Apprentices of the ship ‘Tamar’ stole it as a prank, and it is now bound for Australia. How they got it on board is a mystery.”

2 OCTOBER 1936 – “OLD CHIEF” CAPILANO. PAYTSMALK. MRS. MARY CAPILANO.

The solution, if any, of the extraordinary story so frequently printed in Vancouver, and also in the Canadian Geographical Journal, July 1936, attributable to Mr. Noel Robinson, a well-known Vancouver journalist, and, by repetition, becoming, unfortunately, accepted as fact, seems to be the following:

“Old Chief” Capilano, as a boy, lived at Musqueam, where his descendants of the same name still live, one of them Ayatak Capilano, now a man of 65 or 70, stating that his grandfather, the “Old Chief,” told him that he saw the first white man come down the Fraser (1808). The “Old Chief” seems to have had two sons, one of them afterwards succeeded him as chief, that is, Chief Lahwa, uncle to Ayatak. The “Old Chief” is mentioned by Capt. Richards of the H.M.S. *Plumper* as going on board, in August 1859, whilst in Burrard Inlet. Chief Joe, Mary’s husband, succeeded Lahwa.

“Old Chief” Capilano had a half-brother, Paytsmauk. Paytsmauk had more than one wife, and several children. One of the sons was Ska-kul-tun, and Ska-kul-tun (or Kha-kul-tun) was the father of Layhulette, or Agnes, commonly called Mrs. Mary Capilano.

It is claimed that Mrs. Mary Capilano is very aged—over 100. Report is that “Old Cronie,” who died in 1935, aged 88, always said she was younger than he was. Mrs. Harriet George, or Haxten, a very aged Indian woman, says she is younger than she is because she recalls Mrs. Mary Capilano as a little girl. Mrs. R.M. Bower, daughter of Ben Springer, manager, Moodyville Sawmill, states that “Old Mary used to wash for us; I don’t think she is 90.”

Another point is that the name of the river which enters in the First Narrows is not Capilano, but Homulcheson, and never was known as Capilano to Indians until the white man named it thus. Capilano is a Musqueam name, and the family still resides there. But “Old Chief” had two homes, one at

Musqueam, one at Homulcheson, and it is reasonable to assume that in that way his name became attached to the creek.

The fact is seemingly clear that Mrs. Mary Capilano is the granddaughter of Payst-a-mauq (or Paydsmuk, or Paysmauk), whose half-brother, "Old Chief" Capilano was a boy "about four feet" when, in 1808, he saw Simon Fraser come down the river. The welcoming of Captain Vancouver appears to be a myth.

If anyone "welcomed" Vancouver in 1792, it might have been See-yik-klay-mulk, whom legend credits with being "the oldest man" living at Whoi-Whoi (Lumberman's Arch) and who built the first house there.

J.S. Matthews.

GENEALOGY OF CAPILANO FAMILY.

Prelude: following a conversation with August Jack Haatsalano, (as recorded) 14 September 1937, in which he expressed his opinion somewhat forcefully on certain statements in the *Province* attributed to Matthias Joe, chief, under the caption, "Indians Work Draws Praise," in reference to exhibits at Vancouver Exhibition, 1937, I wrote to F.J.C. Ball, Indian Agent, Vancouver, and this is what he replies.

MRS. MARY CAPILANO.

Dear Major:

In 1937 the official age of Chief Capilano Joe's widow, as recorded by the Indian Department, Vancouver is 80.

1. Mathias Joe went to the coronation of King George V on his own, and, not being selected officially to represent the Indians, he had no credentials, and was not received by the King as his father had been received by King Edward VII. Mathias was shown the Royal stables, and similar sights shown to overseas visitors, but he emphatically never "interviewed King George on behalf of the Squamish Indians"; that, like many other Mathias' statements is a pure imagination.

2. I believe the fire at Mathias' house took place in 1928, but it is not on record. There is a photo of Matthias Joe in this coat (or one like it) in the defunct "Morning Star" of Dec. 27th 1928. He says, in that article, that his father wore it, but mentions nothing about seven generations then. How can he go back seven generations when his name of Capilano Joe was only given by courtesy! He is a descendant through the female line of the old man Dtutchookahnum who met the first sailing ship at Watt's Point, and his son Keeahplahnoo met Capt. Vancouver in English Bay. Keeahplahnoo's half brother, Paitsmauk, left a son Kahukhultun, who had three children, viz., Lauwhloat (Mrs. Joe Capilano), Gahlinultoowh (Squamish Jacob), and another son, name unknown. Lauwhloat married Joe, who apparently adopted the name Keeahplahnoo from his wife's grandfather's half brother. Note: Kahukhultun's children may not all have been by the same woman. When Lahwah died, the surviving sister was agreeable to passing over the chieftainship to Hyas Joe, who apparently assumed the name of "Capilano."

The coat looks like a fairly modern affair, probably bought by Capilano Joe from some interior Indian, but this is only my personal opinion.

Fred

erick J.C. Ball,

Indian Agent

P.S. I have Dtutchookahnum's family tree; have you seen it?

F.J.C.B.

(Letter undated, but about 21 September 1937.)

("Hyas" means "fine," "strong," "big," "important." J.S.M.)