

Early Vancouver

Volume Four

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2011 Edition (Originally Published 1944)

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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Footnote or Endnote Reference:

Major James Skitt Matthews, *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 4 (Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 2011), 33.

Bibliographic Entry:

Matthews, Major James Skitt. *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 4. Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 2011.

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me and asked if that was my wife who came up on the boat with him. I said, 'Yes.' He looked at my letter from the superintendent to him, and he wrote across the corner of the letter in red ink, 'start this man to work immediately,' and he never forgot to speak when he came around the shops."

CISCO BRIDGE.

"Mrs. Onderdonk I only spoke to once, on July 4th 1884. They gave us a free excursion up to the end of the track; we had flat cars with railings around and board seats. She was aboard and congratulated everybody, and hoped we'd have a nice holiday." (See *Port Moody Gazette*.) "A fairly tall lady, fair complexion and good dresser. The oldest boy was Shirley, about thirteen years old then, and the youngest girl was Eva."

DAYLIGHT SAVING.

The first person in Vancouver to advocate daylight saving was Capt. W. Hart-McHarg, afterwards Col. Hart-McHarg, who was killed in April 1915 whilst commanding the first battalion sent from Vancouver to the Great War; i.e. the 7th Battalion, (1st B.C.)

I have often discussed it with him whilst going to or fro from the Richmond Rifle Range for Saturday afternoon practices. Capt. McHarg had been to England on the Bisley team, and the daylight saving idea was being discussed, or was actually in operation. Anyway, it interested him; he thought it an excellent idea—as it is—and he advocated it. I recall he addressed some assemblies on his return; I think it was some such organisation as the Women's Canadian Club; anyway, some such body, and it appeared in the newspapers that "Daylight Saving" was the subject of his address.

No one had, seemingly, heard of it, or if they had, or had read of it previously, said nothing about it. He was undoubtedly the first to bring it to public notice, and I remember that, about 1918, after his death, reflecting how interesting it would have been to him to know that it had been adopted by the Provincial Government.

J.S. Matthews,
25 April 1938.

Note: about 1918 daylight saving was law by Provincial statute.
In 1921, a City of Vancouver plebiscite rejected it.
In 1922, a City of Vancouver plebiscite adopted it.
In 1923, a City of Vancouver plebiscite rejected it.

DEADMAN'S ISLAND—ORIGIN OF NAME.

"The Indians called the island 'Memaloose Siwash Illahie.'"

"Memelous Siwash ill-lee" – Rev. P.C. Parker. "Mameloose Siwash illa-hee" – Thos. P. Wicks. "Mem-a-loose Siwash il-la-hie" – Rev. C.M. Tate.

DEAD INDIAN LAND.

Chinook jargon: "Mem-a-loose," i.e. dead, or die. "Siwash," i.e. Indian. "Il-la-hie," i.e. the earth, land, soil. *Dictionary of Chinook Jargon*, 1914, by Rev. C.M. Tate.

Interpretation: "It means 'Indian graveyard.'" – Qoitchetahl (Andrew Paul.)

DEADMAN'S ISLAND AND INDIAN TREE BURIALS.

"One morning—he told me this—it was April, and he looked across towards what is now Stanley Park, and there was Deadman's Island before him; it looked so beautiful; he was alone; he thought he would like to have it, so he took his boat and went across there. He told me the story one day when we were walking along Stanley Park Driveway in October 1911—shortly before he died—it was a beautiful morning, and when we got near Deadman's Island he told me the story. He went on that he took his boat, went over to Deadman's Island, and tied his boat up, and as he did so, he saw a box in a tree. He said, 'I took my axe and knocked that box down, and opened it up; there was a dead Indian sitting in it, so I skipped over to my boat, and went. I came back in a couple of days, and put the box back; then I went to

see Judge Brew about it at New Westminster. I drew a sketch of the island and handed it to Judge Brew, and Judge Brew looked at it and said, "That's like the ace of spades"—the shape of it. "Now," said Judge Brew, "I'll tell you, Mr. Morton, we had better find out before you do anything further; we had better find out from the chief; evidently the island is the burial ground of the Indians, and they may hold it sacred; so we must not offend them; better find out before we do anything." The Indians called the island "Memaloos siwash illahie." So Morton decided he did not want the island."

From narrative, 15 October 1935, Rev. P.C. Parker, executor, Morton's estate.

DEADMAN'S ISLAND. INDIAN BURIALS. WALTER MOBERLY.

NOTE ADDED LATER:

Note, in pencil, from Mrs. Margery Wade, 1035 Cardero Street, 2 April 1955, to Major Matthews: "Mr. Moberly used to tell me about naming Coal Harbour. Where he found coal, and about Deadman's Island, where, as a young man, he cut down a canoe fastened up in a tree, and a body fell out, and he ran for his life, knowing what the Indians would do about molesting their dead."

Chinalset (Jim Franks) in *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 2: "Smamchuze: One time little island there; may be two or three crab apple trees on top, where it's dry. Indian put dead man there so wolf not get him."

Qoitchetahl (Andrew Paul): "The bodies lay on the bare rock on the top of those little islands just west of Point Atkinson; bare solid rocks. The bodies were simply protected with split cedar slabs, about three inches thick, eight inches wide, and five feet long; held in place by their own weight; no other covering to the remains."

Thos. P. Wicks, i.e. "Skookum Tom," pioneer of early 1880s, who speaks Chinook, says, 14 October 1939: "It really should be Memaloos, and illahee; memaloos means 'dead'; illahee is the little house of two slabs over the dead laid on the ground; I suppose it could be interpreted 'Village of the Indian dead'; there was a lot of the little 'houses' or shelters over the dead body, altogether."

Rev. C.M. Tate, conversation 1 July 1932, *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 2: "Oh! That was the deadhouse; the Indians all along the coast used them for putting the dead in; some of the deadhouses were quite pretentious."

Mrs. James Walker, eldest daughter of Joseph Silvey, "Portuguese Joe, No. 1" of "Gastown," 28 November 1938. As a small child she attended the last potlatch held at Whoi-Whoi (Lumberman's Arch):

INDIAN GRAVES.

"There was a lot of Indian graves all along the First Narrows. They did not bury their dead; they put them on the ground, with the blankets, and put a shelter over them; just slabs of wood, no floor, two slabs leaning one against the other to cover the body; there was quite a lot of them along where the *Empress of Japan* figurehead is erected now on the First Narrows shore. There was Indian graves all along there. And some of the little houses had windows of glass in them, but that was only the chiefs, or some 'high' Indian, but the others they just laid them on the ground with their blankets and things and put the shelter over them."

In 1884, L.A. Hamilton, C.P.R. civil engineer and land commissioner (Hamilton Street) painted a watercolour of the Indian trail—wide enough for one man to traverse—along the First Narrows shore, and depicted in the trees beside it an Indian above-ground "grave"; short slabs of wood, leaning against each other to form a small peaked shelter over the deceased. See photo No. N. St. 15.

August Jack Khahtsahlano, son of Khay-tulk, grandson of Chief Khahtsahlano (Kitsilano), conversation, 15 March 1937: "No cemetery; no graveyard; just come in boat with the deadmans; climb the bank, dig a hole." (He refers to Brockton Point in later days, but, in his Indian speech, converts the English plural deadmen into deadmans, and tells of how his father Khaytulk was buried in a "deadhouse," a small wooden mausoleum, the body lying in a small canoe inside the "deadhouse," at the end of the Pipeline Road, First Narrows.)

From the whole, I deduce that, conversation between Indians and pioneer whites, being carried on largely in Chinook, would include references to the island; that the Squamish referred to it as “memaloos Siwash illahie,” “village of the dead houses on the island,” and that whitemen would, unconsciously, interpret the expression to mean, “island where the dead are,” i.e. “Deadman’s Island” or “Dead Indian Land.”

Vancouver, B.C.
31 October 1939.

J.S. Matthews

EXCERPT, *PROVINCE*, TUESDAY, 11 AUGUST 1936.

CAPT. JOHN IRVING.

Capt. Irving knew Vancouver even before “Gastown” existed, for the famous “Gassy Jack” Deighton, after whom “Gastown” was named worked for him as a Fraser River pilot.

EXCERPT, *MAINLAND GUARDIAN*, NEW WESTMINSTER, 15 APRIL 1874, VOL. 10, NO. 12.

Item.

CAPT. DEIGHTON TAKES CHARGE.—Our citizens will join us in congratulating Capt. John Deighton, who is now in full charge of the steamer Onward, and will conduct her in future over the track that he has traversed so often in former days. We have at the same time to bid adieu to Capt. John Irving who goes to take command of the Glenora, and proceed with her to Stickeen River. We are sure that the community without exception, will wish him good fortune and long life. We cannot forget the fact that he has grown up amongst us, and that we feel as if we were parting with a member of the family. We sincerely trust that his new venture will realize his most sanguine expectations, and that she may acquit herself as the “Onward” has always done.

EXCERPT, *MAINLAND GUARDIAN*, NEW WESTMINSTER, 15 APRIL 1874, VOL. 10, NO. 12.

Advertisement.

DEIGHTON’S HOTEL
Granville.

This newly constructed and commodious Hotel, is situated close to Hastings Sawmills, on Burrard Inlet.

The establishment is replete with all the comforts of a home. The furniture and everything connected with the fittings are new. The large and comfortable parlors, single and double bedrooms, extensive dining-rooms are furnished in every respect with care, and are under the experienced management of Mrs. Thos. Deighton.

Granville is in daily communication with New Westminster by Steamer and Stages. For Invalids or Sportsmen, no better location can be found in the Province, and the charges will be found to suit the times.

JOHN DEIGHTON,
Proprietor.

EXCERPT, *MAINLAND GUARDIAN*, 9 JUNE 1875.

DEATH OF J. DEIGHTON

We have to record the passing away of another of our pioneers. Death has been busy with us lately, and he spares none, young or old, he does his fell work without respect to age or station.

Captain Deighton was an original in his way, and his name became almost a household word with most of our citizens. Although uncouth occasionally in his language, he possessed a