

## **Early Vancouver**

### **Volume Four**

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

**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 125<sup>th</sup> 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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## **EXPLORATION, CAPILANO RIVER, 1890.**

### **CAPILANO RIVER. CAPILANO CANYON HOUSE. GEORGE GRANT MACKAY. A.P. HORNE. WATER WORKS, CAPILANO.**

(Also see Phillip Oben, *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 2.)

As written by A.P. Horne, Esq. (son-in-law to G.G. Mackay.)

Vancouver, B.C.  
16<sup>th</sup> July, 1935.

#### RE CAPILANO CREEK, NORTH VANCOUVER, B.C.

In May 1890, three of us, Harry H. Mackay (son of the late George Grant Mackay) and Robert Mackay Fripp, both now deceased and myself, decided to inspect the upper reaches of the Capilano River. Arrangements having been made with Chief Capilano (of the Capilano Indian Reserve) to accompany us—as he knew the route we should take, we started about the 24<sup>th</sup> May, (the Queen's birthday). The chief brought his cousin with him.

We were taken to the head of Howe Sound in a small steamer, landing on the east side, near the present site of the Britannia [*Howe Sound Copper*] Copper Mine. That afternoon we climbed the mountain, stopping for the night on the way. Chief Capilano found next morning that he had brought us up the wrong shoulder—however we eventually found the Capilano Creek.

It being extremely hot weather for the time of year, we took our time, travelling in the early morning and evening and resting in the middle of the day. We had packs and blankets, but carried no tent.

Our way took us along the banks of the river. We reached a lake, whereupon the Indians tied two logs together with boughs and saplings, on which we sat with our packs, one Indian paddling with a stick. The scenery on the route was most impressive.

Leaving the lake behind, we came to a portion of the creek which looked like still water but actually a swift current flowed underneath—and very beautiful it was, both banks being overhung with trees and undergrowth. A swim in the clear water seemed very desirable, and we always had our swim despite the cautions of the chief about the coldness of the water and the probability of our drowning! However, we were good swimmers and where the water was fairly deep we would undress, walk some distance up, go in head first and swim down to where we left our clothes. We slept in the open, but the Indians took cover under the overhanging banks of the creek.

Included in our supplies was a tin of beef extract—which we opened one night and took a teaspoonful in a cup of hot water before going to sleep. It was much appreciated by the Indians who consumed the remainder, and complained the next morning that they did not sleep well, the beef tea having caused them to sweat all night!

We saw several black bear in the course of our wanderings. The Chief told us that we were the first white men to come through the Capilano Valley.

Finally we crossed the First Narrows with the Indians in their canoes and landed in Stanley Park, having had a successful trip.

The object of our trip was to see the Valley with a view to taking up land there. Eventually this was done—all the property, from about the old waterworks intake, for considerable distance in a northerly direction, intersected by the creek, being acquired from the Provincial Government.

The property was surveyed by Williams Brothers & Dawson and owned by a company under the name of Capilano Park Company. The Company made a trail through the property and had a cabin built. Later on the property was sold—the purchasers taking off the timber, mostly cedar, which was valuable.