

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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OFFICE SAFE. SUNNYSIDE HOTEL.

“The safe was located in the centre of the new building, and as the new part was well over the water—there was about ten feet of water under where the safe stood—when the floor broke the safe fell in the water, and that evening we examined the safe and found everything in good order—wet of course, but in good order. That was the only safe in town which stood the test, the rest of the safes in Vancouver were melted into an amalgam.” (Not quite correct. J.S.M.)

(Approved by Capt. Jackman, 23 May 1936. JSM.)

Capt. Jackman died some months later, in Vancouver.

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH CAPT. T.J. JACKMAN, RITZ APARTMENTS, 1040 GEORGIA STREET WEST, VANCOUVER, 22 APRIL 1936.

Came to Vancouver, 1883 from St. John's, Newfoundland.

City Archivist: Did you vote at the first election, 1886, for Mayor and Council? Ald. Harvey was in this morning; they are going to give a banquet on May 4th at the Hotel Vancouver to surviving citizens who voted at the first election.

Capt. Jackman: “Yes. Across from the Sunnyside Hotel, in Jonathan Miller's place, the Court House, they had a booth rigged up there. I voted for MacLean. Do you want to know why? Well, Alexander was running against him, and Alexander was manager of the Hastings Mill, but he made some wisecrack about Canadians being only ‘North American Chinamen’ anyway, and that licked him.” (See W.H. Gallagher, *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 1.)

“You see those opposed to Alexander had nothing ‘on him,’ so they had to get something to use as election propaganda; there hadn't been any Council, so there hadn't been any ‘misdeeds’; nothing to quarrel about; nothing to hold an investigation on; so they were short on election propaganda; so they worked up the ‘North American Chinaman,’ and the election was fought on that. He said it all right, but when or why, I never have known. It might have been because before the Canadians came we had only ten cent pieces; if a thing was two for a quarter you got ten cents change, and then the Canadians came, and brought five cent pieces with them.

“Alexander was a good man; they had nothing on him; they had nothing to use; so they framed it up to give plenty of publicity to his ‘North American Chinaman’ slip, and won the election. All the voting was done right there on Water Street in the little old Court House.”

City Archivist: How did it come that you voted at all; you were not a property owner.

Capt. Jackman: “Well, I don't suppose that ninety percent of the people who voted did own property at that time; there was no property for sale very much, and as I recall it, anybody who had lived here three months was available to vote.” (Not quite correct.) “It was a quiet kind of election, and it was known a half an hour after the voting was over who had won.

“Speaking for myself, there was not very much money around Vancouver in those days. Vancouver did not really begin to have money around until 1892 or 1893; it was terrible in 1888 and 1889, and even up to 1890 there was very little money; it was scarce. Things were just as tough as it is today with our financial troubles. The C.P.R. trains would come in with no more than dozen passengers in the pullmans, and I know, because I used to go and meet every train.”

DAVID OPPENHEIMER.

“There's something I want to tell you about Dave Oppenheimer. I was connected with the Douglas House hotel at the time of his election, when he was running against Wm. Templeton, a grocer, and Oppenheimer was stopping at the hotel with all his folks at the time, and there was a man by the name of Goodmurphy ran the Alexandra Hotel which was built on the same property as the Sunnyside” (not understood. J.S.M.) “was on after the fire. Goodmurphy came into the bar, and he said he had \$500 to bet that Templeton would beat Oppenheimer next year for election. I was a strong supporter of Oppenheimer, and felt he could not lose, so I went around amongst my friends and got a ‘tarpoleon

muster,' that means that we all dig up together, it's a nautical term, and we raised the \$500 and covered the bet. This was in the forenoon. When Dave came to his lunch at one o'clock it was a customary thing for him to go to the bar and buy a drink for who was there. He saw me standing there, and he said, 'Come on over and join us'; he whispered in my ear, 'I heard you made a bet today. If you lose it I will make good.' That will give you an idea of the type of man Dave Oppenheimer was. All that I can say that if there ever was a good fellow, Dave Oppenheimer was one."

FURTHER CONVERSATION WITH CAPT. T. JACKMAN, 2 MAY 1936.

H.B. ABBOTT. SUNNYSIDE HOTEL. C.P.R. OFFICES, GRANVILLE, BURRARD INLET. THE GREAT FIRE, 1886.

"I was an employee of Alderman Harry Hemlow at the time of the fire; he was lessee of the Sunnyside Hotel; I was chief factotum; general manager they would call it in these days of high sounding titles, but just 'boss' in those days. The staff of the C.P.R. in Vancouver at that time was just three men" (not quite correct); "Mr. Abbott, his secretary Mr. Turine" (sic) "and a man named Smith, and when the fire came down on us, I was just clearing out when Mr. Turine" (?) "came rushing across the square from the Ferguson Block" (southeast corner Carrall and Powell) "where the C.P.R. had their offices on the upper floor, with three big bundles of notes" (money), "and wanted me to put them in our safe. I rushed back, and put them in the safe, but the fit was so tight I had to jam them in with my foot before I could close the safe. The safe was in about the middle of the building."

DEPTH OF WATER UNDER SUNNYSIDE HOTEL.

"When the hotel burned the safe fell through the floor and there was about ten feet of water below; it fell into that, and was the only safe in town which came through the fire unharmed." (Disputed. J.S.M.)

"Other safes survived in more or less damaged condition; one or two nothing more than so much amalgam, but, except for being wet, the contents of the Sunnyside safe were as good as ever."

MAJOR GENERAL J.W. STEWART, C.B.

"I have just been up to see my old employer General Stewart in his office on Granville Street; he is getting older. I worked for him on the Skeena River during construction days, was master of a river steamer, and so on. He was a splendid man to be associated with."

Original signed, "O.K.—T.J. Jackman."

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH CAPT. T.J. JACKMAN, RITZ APARTMENTS, GEORGIA STREET, 29 AUGUST 1936.

JOHN THOMAS. "NAVY JACK."

Mr. Jackman said: "When I first came here in 1882, 'Navy Jack' was living in a shack by the 'Hole in the Wall' at the foot of Abbott Street, in a shack behind the 'Parsonage'; he also had a place on the west side of the Capilano Creek across the Narrows, and was living with an Indian woman.

"'Navy Jack' was a man about five feet eight or nine, good complexion, very good, almost florid, weighed about 160 or 170, with a mustache, square shoulders, heavy built man, and he would be about 50 or 55 then. He died soon after—about a year or two—probably 1884 or 1885, anyway before the fire, and may be buried on Deadman's Island or in the park at Brockton Point.

"I used to talk to him quite a lot. He had been up in the Barkerville country in the early days; in the early sixties. He had been master of a boat running from Soda Creek to Quesnel. I was a very young man, he was much older, but he was always very agreeable to me. He liked the ladies; very fond of ladies; liked their company.

"To me he was just an ordinary man; used ordinary language; never coarse. I was mate on the *Etta White* at the time, and when we came over from Moodyville I would meet him on the beach or around the saloons; there was no other place—other than the saloons—where we could meet. He was just an ordinary westerner; nothing outstanding about him."