

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 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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JENNIE WAH CHONG. HASTINGS SAWMILL SCHOOL. FIRST CHINESE STUDENT.

“There was a little Chinese girl attending the Hastings Sawmill School, Jennie Wah Chong; she was the daintiest little thing; such dainty feet.”

(Note by J.S.M.: Mrs. Christie was one of the seven former student girls attending the luncheon given by the Golden Jubilee Committee at the Hotel Vancouver, 24 July 1936, to the surviving girls of the Hastings Sawmill School. Jennie Wah Chong became the wife of Goon Ling Dang (trade name “Jung Kee”) of Canton Alley, 1936, and had one son, now working on the *Chinese Times*, and one daughter; she died about “fourteen years ago.”)

Corrected by Mrs. Christie.

J.S. Matthews
11 November 1936.

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH MRS. RUTH MOUNT CLEMENTS, SUITE 404, 1298 WEST 10TH AVENUE, VANCOUVER, 1 MAY 1939.

Widow of A.L. Clements, Esq., and niece of Mrs. Ruth (John) Morton, who came this morning to the City Archives with a photo of four ladies, all Ruths, and of four different generations, the eldest 90, the youngest 15. They were Mrs. Ruth Morton; Mrs. Ruth M. Clements, her niece; Mrs. Ruth J. Steacy, née Clements, her grandniece; and Miss Ruth A. Steacy, her great-grandniece.

JOHN MORTON’S ESTATE. JOHN MORTON, FIRST SETTLER. MRS. RUTH MORTON, HIS WIFE.

Mrs. Clements said: “Last September, Mrs. Ruth Morton, my aunt, was quite well; then she developed a slight lump on one of her breasts; it is cancer. Her doctor wants to operate; I am against it; there is nothing to be gained; it is too far gone.

“When wealth came to Mr. Morton, he got others to handle his affairs for him; he had not been accustomed to handling large sums of money.

“First the Rands were his agents; in the earlier days, say 1888, perhaps as late as 1894; they invested his funds, and once, when he was in England, he wrote Rands for money; they replied there wasn’t any; no ready cash; there was a ‘depression on’; it was wanted for taxes; he even lost property for non-payment of taxes. Then the management of his affairs was changed from Rands, and a Mr. Hope took it over.

“Mr. Hope did pretty well; the estate was picking up; then he, too, invested money, and things began to go to pieces again. So, E.B. Morgan was appointed.

“The same thing happened again. E.B. Morgan and the Great West Trust invested his money in their promotions, and again affairs got into a distressful condition. Then the court appointed the Yorkshire Guarantee to look after the estate, and they still have it.

“After Mr. Morton’s death, Mrs. Morton was living on one hundred dollars a month from the estate, but, of course, she had her own property as well; houses, the big one on Pendrill Street at the Bay—on Davie Street—one hundred a month for three years. Then R.K. Houlgate was appointed to look after her personal property. He had been manager of the Yorkshire Guarantee, and when he left that firm, he took over the care of her personal affairs, and when he died, his partner, Mr. Summerfield, took it on.

“Mr. Houlgate brought the estate back again, built it up; then he died, and now, Mr. Summerfield, his partner, is looking after it. Mrs. Morton liked Mr. Houlgate; he used to come up and chat, and she liked him to come.”

MORTON’S BEQUESTS.

“At Mr. Morton’s funeral, the Rev. Mr. Perry, minister of the First Baptist Church, said that Mr. Morton had put up \$41,000 towards the Baptist Church at corner of Nelson and Burrard. Mr. Morton did not actually build the Ruth Morton Memorial Church; he told them he would raise half of the cost if they would raise the other half. He gave them the lot next to his home down on English Bay, and they sold it for \$15,000;

more than they expected. Then, when they opened the church, they were short of money, and aunt" (Mrs. Ruth Morton) "gave them \$3,000 out of her bank account.

"I know Mr. Morton helped with the North Vancouver Baptist Church, and he build the Summerland Baptist College; they lost it; could not keep it. He has willed the Baptists \$100,000 for churches at Mrs. Morton's death. Then he kept some children—orphans or something—in India, and at his death, Mrs. Morton took care of them. A queer thing at that, after placing Ruth Morton Church free of debt, the church people mortgaged it to build some small Baptist church somewhere else, and then appealed to Mrs. Morton to pay off the mortgage, and—she did—she gave it to them. Mr. Morton's hand was always in his pocket."

THE FIRST COAT OF ARMS, CITY OF VANCOUVER.

The first coat of arms, used from about 1888 to 1903, was designed by Lachlan A. Hamilton, an alderman of the first City Council; C.P.R. Commissioner, and in 1936, the sole surviving member of the first City Council. He surveyed the site of the city into streets; Hamilton Street is named in his honour.

J.S. Matthews.

THE FIRST CITY COAT OF ARMS.

The first city coat of arms, showing a fir tree, a vessel, and a locomotive, was designed by Alderman L.A. Hamilton, C.P.R. Land Commissioner. (Hamilton Street.)

J.S. Matthews.

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH MR. C.V. COLDWELL OF UNION STEAMSHIPS LTD., SON OF ALDERMAN CHAS. COLDWELL, ALDERMAN, FIRST CITY COUNCIL.

ARRIVAL OF FIRST TRAIN, 23 MAY 1887.

Mr. Coldwell: "Most certainly I saw it. I was a boy of seven, playing on the beach a few feet north of the present Alexander Street, just east of Carrall Street, and I remember looking up as the engine and train came down the track on piles above us where we were playing, the engine all decked out in roses and flowers.

"But there was a train into Vancouver before that, a construction train; it came some weeks previously; the train on the 23rd May was the second train I had ever seen."

Note by J.S. Matthews: There is mention in some conversation I have had; it is recorded in *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 2 or 3 I think, that the first train came in as far as the Hastings Sawmill about March 27th. The narrator said he was working on the track, building the small bridges, and the engine and cars ran over them as soon as they had fixed them; makeshift bridges, and, perhaps to get freight, groceries, supplies, from the Hastings Sawmill wharf, then the only wharf on the south side of the inlet.

Mrs. Joseph W. Cameron, 1903 Bayswater Street, says first construction locomotive arrived foot of Westminster Avenue, 23 February 1887.

FIRST CITY COUNCIL, 1886. ALDERMAN COLDWELL. A "LOST STORY."

Alderman Coldwell's son, for many, many years the esteemed employee and trusted official of the Union Steamship office staff, once told me that someone, I forget who, had long promised him that someday he would tell him an interesting story about his father, Alderman Coldwell. "But," said Mr. Coldwell, "he" (his friend) "died," and then added with mournful lamentation, "that just shows you how necessary it is to record things while we have a chance. I don't know what he was going to tell me, but he promised many times, but never did."

And poor Coldwell of the "Union Steam" went on lamenting, and is yet; and the City Archivist, a close friend, but a "cruel beast," lets him go on.