

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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MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH T.W. HERRING OF NEW WESTMINSTER, 16 FEBRUARY 1936.

Who, on Saturday, 15 February, attended a reunion banquet at the Hotel Georgia, Vancouver, of the surviving members, Westminster and Vancouver, of the British Columbia Brigade of Garrison Artillery, of which No. 5 Company was the first military unit in Vancouver. Mr. Herring came to New Westminster in 1858 with his father from Bellingham—gold rush days. He is thought to be about the last of the Seymour Battery.

SCHOONER *ROB ROY*, 1859 FRASER RIVER. ALEXANDER MCLEAN OF PITT MEADOWS. T.W. HERRING, NEW WESTMINSTER, 1858. SEYMOUR BATTERY.

Major Matthews, City Archivist, and Archivist, Old Garrison Artillery Association: What became of McLean's *Rob Roy*, the old schooner?

Mr. Herring: "She went to pieces on the river bank up on their place at Pitt Meadows; I can see her there yet (in my mind); her old deck sticking out."

Major Matthews: How long was she? A hundred feet?

Mr. Herring: "Only a bit of a thing; not a hundred, about seventy five. McLean sailed her around the Horn by dead reckoning." (Mr. Herring smiled a knowing smile, insinuating that such seamanship was quite a feat.) "I have a captain's certificate myself."

Note: the *Rob Roy* and her owner, Alexander McLean, and his son of the same name, are interesting people of Vancouver, Westminster, and Bellingham. Both were in Burrard Inlet in 1858 or 1859, and settled at Pitt Meadows before that. (See *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 2.)

(Note: well, 75 feet? What would she want with three masts; how could she carry 250 cattle. J.S.M.)

WEST VANCOUVER BUILT A SHIP.

From the "False Creek Archives" (J.S.M.)

The schooner *Holy Terror* wasn't a privateer; nor a pirate; she was awful, but not that bad.

Built in the early '90s on that beautiful shore now called West Vancouver, the *Terror*, for short, was never more than a hope about sixty feet long, and her end was tragic. She never felt the wild waves waving; was a love that was lost; somebody built a fire under her, and she went heavenwards—in smoke.

"Holy Joe" designed the *Holy Terror*. That wasn't his name, nor hers, but was what the neighbour squatters called both when Joe wasn't listening. Joe built her too, himself; out of timbers and planks which drifted onto his beach below his cabin out Point Atkinson way, and, in earlier days, there was plenty of such flotsam about. Joe belonged to the Salvation Army, and being both nautical and thirsty by nature, got soused by the salt seas when he rowed through the Narrows—no ferries then—"up town" for grub, and soused on shore when he got here; after such a trip Joe had to be "saved" all over again.

For a living, Joe burned charcoal for the soldering pots of the salmon canneries of the Fraser river. Then he got an idea—a splendid idea—"I'll build me a little schooner," said he, to take charcoal over, and for "general trade" on the gulf. It was a noble ambition. Time, and the waves, brought material to his beach, and when the hull was ready for a tiny steam engine—no gasoline in those days—Joe's pioneer tillicums admitted admiringly that the *Terror* was a beautiful shape, and kept straight faces; her lines curved, in spots, as the lines of that rocky shore. When "Holy Joe" wasn't looking, his pals grinned, and dubbed his ship the *Holy Terror*.

Then one day Joe came uptown, to Andy Linton's float at Carrall Street, for more groceries or something, and when he got back the *Terror* had vanished; there were enough ashes to fill an urn as big as a barrel, but Joe was just callous.

With her one and only venture, West Vancouver's aspirations as ship building centre withered, perhaps for all time; one such experience was too shocking. So they put a ship on their civic coat of arms.