

Early Vancouver

Volume Five

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

2011 Edition (Originally Published 1945)

Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1936-1945.

Supplemental to volumes one, two, three and four collected in 1931, 1932 and 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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MRS. JOHN LEASK.

“George Cary is wrong if he told you Miss Hamilton lived in John Beatty’s cabin after the fire of June 1886.” (See *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 2, where Cary says he used to row Miss Hamilton across the creek; Miss Hamilton is still living [in 1937]; was L.A. Hamilton’s sister, and afterwards Mrs. John Leask, wife of first City Auditor.) “Miss Hamilton lived in Donald McPhadden’s cabin, because I remember my uncle William saying to me, ‘Miss Hamilton is living in Donald’s cabin’; it was a little bit of a cabin about twelve by sixteen.”

Approved by Wm. Mackie, 9 September 1937.

J.S. Matthews

14 JUNE 1937 – MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH MR. WILLIAM MACKIE, WHO RESIDES WITH MR. T. MACKIE, 8698 WEST MARINE DRIVE, AND WHO VERY KINDLY VISITED THE CITY ARCHIVES AT MY INVITATION IN COMPANY WITH MR. SAM MCCLEERY, 3115 WEST 49TH AVENUE.

GRANVILLE, B.C. SPARS, LAST CARGO.

Mr. Mackie said: “I landed at Gastown on May 7th 1882. I came from Scotland to join my uncle, William Mackie also—who was an old Cariboo and Cassiar miner. There were three William Mackies on Burrard Inlet at one time in those days; ‘Black William’ (Mackie) “was no relation. I had landed in Halifax, then travelled to San Francisco, where I had an aunt, and she detained me; got me to put it off and put it off, until finally I landed at Victoria on the 2nd May 1882, and then came over to New Westminster on the *Reliance*, or *Western Slope*, I think it was, and stayed in Westminster four days until I could get down river, down the North Arm, Fraser River, where my uncle was getting out spars for Angus Fraser; A.C. Fraser’s camp; Wm. Rogers, brother to Jerry Rogers, had a tugboat getting out the last cargo of spars out on the mainland. I was a green hand, and worked there a month, doing anything, *carrying water*; I was green; just from the old country.”

PREEMPTIONS. ROAD TO GRANVILLE. FRASER AVENUE. JERRY ROGERS’S CAMP.

“My uncle, William Mackie, same name as myself, had preempted one hundred and sixty acres in Fairview, about Heather Street, 20th and 22nd Avenue—what is now known as Douglas Park—in the seventies, but he never got a deed, but his improvements were just as good. Jerry Rogers used to have an old steam tractor out there.” (See Calvert Simson, etc.)

CABBAGE AND ONIONS.

“His preemption was a little flat with a creek running through it, and he had the most of that flat cleared when I came in 1882. I wrote to him before I came and asked him what he wanted that I should bring, and he replied to bring seeds, and I sowed them there, on the site of what is now Douglas Park, on the very next day, it was a Sunday, May 7th 1882, that I sowed them. I remember it so well because that was the day I wrote my father. It may be, as you say, that I was a day out, but I was almost sure it was May 7th, and I know it was a Sunday, May 1882; my uncle told me afterwards that the seeds grew very well. The onions grew as ‘big as sausages,’ to use his words.”

GRANVILLE. GRANVILLE HOTEL. JOE MANNION. DR. MASTERS. JOHN DEIGHTON (GASSY JACK).

“One day, the day after I landed in May 1882, my uncle and I walked to Gastown; we went by the North Arm Road, they call it Fraser Avenue now, and across the old False Creek bridge, and into Gastown. There were no houses in those days on the North Arm Road all the way from the Fraser River to what is now Water Street. We stayed with Joe Mannion, he had the Granville Hotel; old Dan McNaughton was there as barkeeper. Mr. Mannion kept a fine hotel; we had lots to eat, lots of game, but the meat was mostly beef; George Black, the butcher, supplied that. Jonathan Miller was policeman, and the town was quiet enough; of course, there was the occasional logger who might get a little too much, but I saw little of that.”

“GASSY JACK.”

“My uncle told me about ‘Gassy Jack’; ‘Gassy Jack’ was dead before I arrived, but my uncle told me how he used to sit on the verandah of the Deighton Hotel, looking out over Burrard Inlet, and ‘Gassy Jack’ had said to him, ‘You see that sheet of water’ (pointing out into the inlet.) ‘You and I may never see it, but that sheet of water is bound to be a port someday.’”

GRANVILLE.

(Looking at Ridley’ Gastown photo.) “That is just exactly as I remember Gastown. Here, first, is the Deighton Hotel, and next is Jonathan Miller’s; then there was a bit of an office where you could send a telegram, and next to that was Joe Mannion’s Granville Hotel—Joe sold to Tom Cyrs just when Vancouver was starting to do well—and then there was a Chinese laundry, and Louis Gold’s, and then Robertson’s ‘Hole in the Wall’ saloon, and Dr. Masters had a place there somewhere, and this over here is Ben Wilson’s; he sold groceries.” (Note: Mr. Mackie has missed Sullivan’s and Blair’s.) “This railing here beyond Mannion’s is a sort of little bridge; this railing is to stop you falling into the water; the water came right up to the south side of the street we call Water Street.

“‘Gassy Jack’ had a big mastiff dog, and when he died it howled; he died right there in that hotel; I don’t know when; he was dead when I came.” (This may be the yellow dog mentioned by Joe Mannion in his narrative as having come with Gassy Jack from New Westminster in the canoe when he first came.)

“GASSY JACK.”

“‘Gassy Jack’ used to be a captain on the Fraser River boats. I’ll tell you a yarn they used to tell about him. He was naturally anxious to get the steamer away from the dock, and used to shout, ‘All aboard, boys, get aboard, boys’; in those days we did not, as a usual thing, call men by their surnames; it was Bob or Harry or Tom, and ‘Gassy Jack’ wanted to get the steamer started, and was a bit excited, and shouting, ‘All aboard; all aboard’; and there was a Yankee stranger there, and he thought he’d be smart, and calls out to ‘Gassy,’ ‘Say, Captain, my wife wants to take a dozen eggs up to Yale; the hen is sitting and we only need one more to make the dozen. Do you mind waiting awhile?’

“Well, ‘Gassy Jack’ cursed him, good and plenty.”

ONDERDONK. SAN FRANCISCO BRIDGE CO. C.P.R. CONSTRUCTION. IONA (MCMILLAN) ISLAND.

“I went over to Washington state soon after I arrived in 1882, then down to California, and back here again in 1883, and started to work in McMillan’s camp getting out piles for the C.P.R. Pitt River and Harrison River bridges; McMillan had the contract under Onderdonk; McMillan was working for the San Francisco Bridge Co.; Capt. Myers of New Westminster used to tow the booms up the river to Harrison River. Yes, I suppose quite likely the San Francisco Bridge Co. did have the contract to build the first wharf for the C.P.R. in Vancouver; there were pile drivers everywhere on the Fraser River when the line was being built, and it would be an easy thing to bring them around Point Grey.”

PILE DRIVERS. MACKIE CREEK, FAIRVIEW. L.A. HAMILTON. MRS. JOHN LEASK.

“Going back to my uncle’s preemption. When Hamilton was surveying all around here for the city of Vancouver, he named the creek that ran down from” (Douglas Park) “my uncle’s preemption; he named it Mackie Creek; it ran down a deep ravine, and came out down by the Leamy and Kyle Sawmill” (slightly west of the foot of Ash Street.)

“William Mackie located his stake half a mile and one chain from high water mark at the skid road, and we had ropes for the oxen, and I remember he told me that he measured it with a rope, his preemption stake was exactly half a mile and one chain, 66 feet, from his northeast corner stake. When Hamilton was surveying all around here, he called that creek Mackie Creek.

“Hamilton had a sister, Miss Hamilton, afterwards Mrs. Leask, and she was living in a cabin, owned by one of the squatters close to mine.”

SQUATTERS. PREEMPTIONS. EDMONDS. GREER’S BEACH.

“Squatters began to squat along the south shore of False Creek in 1883; about the end of October 1883. There was seven of us located land there, but we never got our land. John Sprott of the government office, New Westminster, and my uncle, we used to sleep together. Edmonds, of course, already owned

the land above the False Creek bridge” (Mount Pleasant.) “Well, John Sprott, he located about one third way down False Creek, then came Donald McPhadden” (or McFadden), “then myself” (William Mackie, Jr.); “my property came right down to the ravine” (slightly west of foot of Ash Street), “then my uncle’s piece, and then John Beatty, he lived with old Chief George and an Indian woman on the Indian Reserve at the mouth of the creek, so my uncle had to go around the other side of the reserve, on to what we called Greer’s Beach afterwards; Uncle preempted that. My uncle built that cottage there, but there was another cottage there—about fifty years ago—Jericho Charlie, the Indian, he had that cottage, and Sam Greer bought the Indian Charlie out, and jumped my uncle’s claim.”

IONA ISLAND. RICHMOND CANNERY. CHRISTOPHER ISLAND. WOOD ISLAND.

“Dan McMillan named Iona Island in the North Arm, after the place in Scotland called Iona, where the first Christians were. He and Angus Fraser built that cannery, the Richmond Cannery, the year I came out, 1882.

“Christopher Wood was a cousin of Robert Wood. They were uncles to Greta” (Miss McCleery.)

AIRPORT, SEA ISLAND.

“My brother sold the airport on Sea Island to the city of Vancouver. Then I went to Agassiz for thirty years; farmed there; own some yet, the B.C. Hop Co. leased it from me.”

SILVER WATCH. NAPOLEON.

“I am going to give you this old silver watch; it belonged to my grandfather, Capt. George Mackie; then Father got it, and finally I got it; you see this bit of reddish silk in the back of the case; well, that was cut from Napoleon’s carriage on the field of Waterloo in 1815. John Mackie was a sergeant—he was my great-great-granduncle—and he cut it from Napoleon’s carriage for a souvenir.”

GARRIPIE (OF MARPOLE).

“Garrapie who was the first at what we called Marpole; married a half-breed.”

Read, and as corrected, approved by William Mackie, 9 September 1937.

J.S. Matthews.

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH WILLIAM MACKIE, 8698 WEST MARINE DRIVE, WHO, TOGETHER WITH MRS. MACKIE AND ANOTHER LADY, FAVOURED ME WITH A CALL THIS BEAUTIFUL AFTERNOON AT THE CITY ARCHIVES, 9 SEPTEMBER 1937.

INDIAN MURDERS. “SUPPLEJACK.” KHAY-TULK. WILLIAM MACKIE, SR.

Mr. Mackie, in the Scotch accent which, after so many years, he still retains, said: “Supplejack pretty nearly got away with my uncle. Let me tell you what my uncle told me about him. Supplejack was suspected of doing away with a good many whitemen, but they could never get the evidence.” (Uncle, i.e., also Wm. Mackie.)

Major Matthews: Well, the Scotch did away with a few Englishmen? (Mr. Mackie laughed.)

Mr. Mackie: “Well, you know, in early days there was no trail from Gastown to the ‘End of the Road’ at Hastings, and the only way to get there was to get an Indian to take you there in a canoe. Well, Uncle had just come up from California. I don’t know just when it was, but it must have been when he first came from California, because Supplejack was dead before I came in 1882; it must have been in the middle sixties. Anyway, Uncle wanted to go to Hastings and, you know, you always had to pay an Indian before he would do anything, and Uncle had some twenty dollar gold pieces in his pocket, and when he started to pay Supplejack, he pulled out the gold pieces, and Supplejack saw them, and could not resist the temptation.

“Jack’s squaw was with them; she was afterwards the squaw of ‘Jericho Charlie’” (note: Chinalset) “and Supplejack must have made up his mind to get the gold. They started off from Gastown in the canoe for Hastings. Supplejack was in the front of the canoe paddling, his squaw was in the stern steering with a