

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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Contact Information

City of Vancouver Archives
1150 Chestnut Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 3J9
604.736.8561
archives@vancouver.ca
vancouver.ca/archives



MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH MR. JOHN DUNSMUIR, PRESIDENT, VANCOUVER EXHIBITION ASSOCIATION, AND OF MACKENZIE, WHITE & DUNSMUIR, LTD., AUTO EQUIPMENT, 635 BURRARD STREET, WHO KINDLY CALLED AT THE CITY ARCHIVES, 24 APRIL 1940.

CHRISTMAS TREES. FAIRVIEW.

Mr. Dunsmuir: (responding to some remarks made by Major Matthews upon the marvel of Vancouver's growth from wilderness of forest into a city seven miles deep by ten miles wide in the short space of a single life) "Yes, and when I was a boy I used to come up here in Fairview and cut Christmas trees in the clearing."

Major Matthews: You're the man I'm looking for; when was that. I have often wanted to find out someone who was first in the Christmas tree business; who started it? How old were you then?

Mr. Dunsmuir: "Well, about ten, I suppose; I was born in 1894, and that was about 1904. Harry Goddard—he lived on Richards Street; I lived on Robson—and we had an old buckboard and horse; we used to go around and take orders, and then deliver the trees."

Major Matthews: And the price?

Mr. Dunsmuir: "Oh, about ten cents each. Harry and I cut them up around here" (City Hall, 12th and Cambie), "take them down an old rough trail in the buckboard, and over there" (pointing) "there were cows; down there on Sixth and Cambie" (west of Cambie) "and then over the old Cambie Street bridge to town."

Major Matthews: That was my cow; I rented all that land west of Cambie as far as Ash Street, and down from Sixth Avenue to False Creek for my cow to pasture in; this is my old wharf at the foot of Ash Street" (showing watercolour by Bloomfield.) I paid \$5.00 every three months for the use of about twenty acres of second growth trees; there were little patches of grass here and there, where I used to tether the cow; all down there where the Vancouver Engineering Works is now.

ANECDOTES RE MISS MARGARET FLORENCE MCNEIL.

At the luncheon tendered by the Corporation and Citizens to Miss McNeil, at Stanley Park Pavilion, 27 April 1940, all present—about forty—were invited to speak, and did; each one spoke a few words; some spoke longer than others. Mrs. H.R. Willis, president, Native Daughters, was inadvertently overlooked; Mr. Ernest Walter of the *Province* had to keep an engagement before his turn came.

The last speaker was Major J.S. Matthews, City Archivist, and after describing how Mr. Walter had given him the clue which led to the rediscovery of Miss McNeil after an absence of fifty-four years from Vancouver, he concluded the festivity with these words:

Do not suppose that this moment, this occasion, is without emotion for her; for years she has been waiting for this day. Miss McNeil has known of her distinction; modestly she forbade to tell. After this, let none say a woman cannot keep a secret. Hers is one of the most magnificent instances of feminine patience and modesty which has ever come to my notice.

Major Matthews sat down, and his Worship Dr. Telford indicated that the luncheon was over, and the assemblage commenced to disperse.

In Miss McNeil's radio remarks over K.E.X., Portland, Oregon, on 6 May 1940, in which she described her visit to Vancouver, she says:

Question: Have you always known you were the first white child born in Vancouver.

Answer: Yes. Ever since I can remember; Mother frequently mentioned that I was the first white child born in Vancouver after it was incorporated.

Question: Tell us a bit about the Fire.

Answer: All I know is what my mother told me. A forest fire caused by the land clearing operations swept the town, and forty minutes after the first house caught fire the entire city was in flames. Mother had to snatch me from my bath, and with my brother and two sisters, fled to the waterfront.

J.S.M.
May 1940.

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH MISS MARGARET FLORENCE McNEIL, WHO, IN COMPANY WITH HER COUSIN, AND MRS. HENRY HAYS MOORE, WIFE, MAJOR MOORE, U.S. ARMY (RETIRED), AND MRS. VINCENT MARINOVICH, A FRIEND, ALL OF PORTLAND, OREGON, LUNCHEDED WITH MAJOR AND MRS. MATTHEWS, 1158 ARBUTUS STREET, ON SUNDAY 28 APRIL 1940, JUST PRIOR TO THEIR RETURN TO PORTLAND, OREGON, AFTER A THREE DAY VISIT TO VANCOUVER AS GUEST OF THE CORPORATION AND CITIZENS OF VANCOUVER.

GREAT FIRE, 1886. ALEXANDER AND ANNA McNEIL.

"Will you please accept these four gold and one stone relics of the 'Fire,'" said Miss McNeil, unwrapping a knotted handkerchief of yellow hue, due to age, and which contained a quantity of similar relics of the "Fire," all of them twisted, shapeless, but of gold or silver. "You see, the heat must have melted them when our house burned; they are molten remains of some jewellery of Mother's, but what I do not know; the smaller one may have been an ear ring. The heat must have been very intense.

"Father was a tall man, six feet four in his stocking feet; Mother was short, and comparatively, quite small.

"Archbishop Duke of the Holy Rosary Cathedral, made me present of this framed photograph of my baptism. You will see that I was baptised by the Rev." (Father) "Patrick Fay, and that the name given me was not Margaret, but Maggie Florence; they always called me Maggie at home. And, you see, Mr. McGuigan, the first City Clerk, was one of my godfathers."

Note: the Baptismal Registry of Holy Rosary Church shows that Miss McNeil was born 27 April 1886, was baptised on 16 May 1886, and there is a notation written in Father Fay's handwriting, "First child born in Vancouver." JSM.

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH AUGUST JACK KHAHTSAHLANO, SON OF KHAY-TULK, I.E., "SUPPLEJACK," AND GRANDSON OF CHIEF KHAHTSAHLANO, IN WHOSE HONOUR KITSILANO IS NAMED, AT CITY ARCHIVES, 29 APRIL 1940.

Note: much offence has been taken, especially by Indians, to a serial article appearing daily in the Vancouver *Sun*, under the caption "Romance of Vancouver" by Alan Morley, which states in its issues of April 10th and 22nd 1940, that Supplejack, or Khaytulk, father of August Jack Khahtsahlano, was suspected of killing thirteen white men in or about Burrard Inlet, and that he died in jail whilst waiting trial for the murder of the fourteenth, and that he was buried "in a tree" at Chaythoos, or Prospect Point, First Narrows.

KHAY-TULK. "SUPPLEJACK."

Major Matthews: August. Did your father Supplejack murder about thirteen or fourteen men?

August: "No."

Major Matthews: Did your father die in jail?

August: "No. He died in his own home in Chaythoos."

Major Matthews: How do you know?

August: "How do I know? Why, my mother told me. My mother told me that he, my father, was sick one month and half, and he died; he wasn't sick; he got hit on the head; kicked by a cow. He had twelve cows