

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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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH EX-SERGEANT CLAUDE H. WILLIAMS, FORMERLY OF B.C.B.G.A. AND 6TH REGIMENT, D.C.O.R., VANCOUVER, 1 MAY 1935.

SHAM FIGHT IN WEST END.

“It was, I think, after Queen Victoria died; it was July 1st, Dominion Day, and I think 1901, that we had the sham fight in the West End. Col. Worsnop was in command; Tite was captain, I think, at the time.

“The ‘enemy,’ which was the Navy and the 5th Regiment, C.G.A., Victoria, went out ahead of us; they were supposed to have landed at English Bay; we followed. We went down Georgia Street, and turned south through the clearing. I recall we had one gun with us, which we fired at the enemy as they approached through the rough clearing of shrubs, stumps and holes. It was not much of a show to look at, as in those days there were only four companies of about forty or less men in each company—the only troops of any sort, volunteer or otherwise, in Vancouver.

“They say that afterwards we went to the Hotel Vancouver, and beer and biscuits were brought out to us, but I forget.”

(Captain N.M. McNeill, late of 102nd Battalion, C.E.F., and also Prince Rupert, confirms this. J.S.M.)

[LETTER FROM J. EADES WARD.]

July 29th, 1937.

MAJOR J.S. Matthews,
Archivist
City Hall,
Vancouver, B.C.

Dear Major Matthews:

In reply to your letter of July 27th, 1937, the following information regarding “Woodlands” on the North Arm of the Burrard Inlet is correct.

Alexander Myddleton Wood served in the South African War with the Artillery and Infantry. He enlisted in Victoria, about the year 1899, and after returning, as his father, mother, and sisters were living in Vancouver, he returned to this city.

The Canadian Government issued script to all soldiers, who served in the South African War, for the purpose of securing a quarter-section of land or any land up to 160 acres.

Alexander Myddleton Wood secured district lot 2048 in the municipality of North Vancouver. He and his father rowed up in a boat to see the land and thought it would make a good camping place, so they camped by the stream, and then decided they would build a small cabin. His mother and sisters also became interested in the summer camp, so they built another cabin for the ladies and all of them were so pleased with the place they decided to reside there permanently, and kept on adding to the house until there were about six rooms and a large verandah.

Mr. Hugh Myddleton Wood, who is my father-in-law and is still living, age 89, and about 6'4" in height; now residing at 891 E. 11th Avenue, cleared up about 1½ acres of land, which at one time was anything from six to twelve feet deep in logs. He made this work his hobby. He planted an orchard and garden; the fruit trees are still there. Then built a greenhouse. His grapevines are still producing, and also installed a Pelton Wheel and put electric light into the house and grounds.

Mr. Wood is a Clergyman, and he and his wife and daughters used to row into town to church each Sunday, and sometimes on week days to go shopping, and row back again.

Alexander Myddleton Wood, the ex-soldier, developed tuberculosis and died a few years after his return from South Africa, in Vancouver General Hospital. Mr. Wood then had district lot

2048 surveyed into 100 foot waterfront lots and placed them on the market for sale. He also purchased the adjoining district lots and finally was the owner of approximately 1000 acres. The other district lots were also subdivided on the waterfront, including district lot 1407 and district lot 950.

The first man to purchase a lot was Mr. John L. Kerr, (now deceased), Cashier of the Federation Life Insurance Co., who built a beautiful home which is still occupied every summer, Mr. Thomas Alfred Ostler was one of the first settlers and worked for Mr. Wood. He purchased a lot at "Woodlands," and assisted Mr. Wood in building houses, developing, and clearing the land.

Dr. H.B. Finlay (Dentist) bought the next lot and built a summer home. Others who purchased land and built houses were Brig. Gen. J. Duff Stuart, Major A. Rowan, Wm. C. Brown, K.C., J.M. Whitehead, John Garden, J. Eades Ward, Joseph D. Inkster, and many others, until today there are approximately sixty houses, built on the waterfront or adjoining the waterfront.

There are three landings. The first one is named "Grey Rocks" named by Mr. Wood. The centre landing is a public wharf at "Woodlands," being owned by the District Municipality of North Vancouver. The third wharf to the north is "Sunshine," and "Sunshine" is considered to be a separate summer resort because there is a cliff between "Sunshine" and "Woodlands," however, there is a connecting road, and H. Myddleton Wood, T.A. Ostler, and J. Eades Ward owned all the property in between, which was sold for camping lots.

Originally Mr. Wood's wharf was known at "Wood's Landing," but I suggested they should change it to "Woodlands," which was done, and the Steamship Company adopted the new name, and it is now shown on the local maps as "Woodlands."

Mr. Wood has three daughters, the eldest is my wife, Louise Ellen. Miss Mary Wood, the second daughter, lives with and takes care of her father. The youngest daughter is Mrs. Noel Joy, and lives at 1109 E. 10th Avenue. My wife and I have 5 children and 2 grandchildren, the only grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Mr. Wood. Mrs. Wood died about six months ago.

There are two good streams flowing through "Woodlands" and "Sunshine"—"Allan Creek" and "Sunshine Creek." I have been informed that if a dam was installed, the two streams would provide sufficient water to supply a city as large as New Westminster. They proceed from "Elsay Lake" on the top of the mountains. [*Note: this is all wrong.*]

I built a summer home with five rooms, 28 years ago, where my wife, myself, children, and grandchildren enjoy their holidays during the summer months. "Woodlands" faces East and gets the morning sun. The view from the waterfront is beautiful and practically the same scenery which you would see from Howe Sound or Pender Harbour, as there are no mills, factories, or industrial plants in sight.

There is daily boat service, good fishing, also good hunting in the mountains behind. It is an easy climb to the top of the mountains by following a skid road from Deep Cove; on arriving at the top, one would imagine they were in a different country. The timber is smaller, consisting of white pine and yellow cedar with acres of blue berries, no underbrush, and strings of small lakes with water lilies.

Even the insects are different. The large blue dragonflies exist in great numbers. There are many signs of bears in the vicinity, especially on the lookout trees, which show the claw marks.

Also, there is good deer shooting. One year my eldest boy, Jack, killed a deer weighing about 200 pounds. Sometimes in winter, the deer come right down to the waterfront. One resident, hearing a noise at night, looked out of the window, and saw a deer eating the bark of one of his fruit trees. He went back, and securing a gun, fired through the window and killed the deer. On another occasion, a deer was seen going into the water and commencing to swim across the inlet. Two residents followed it in a rowboat, and caught the deer just as it was landing on the other side.

There are lots of hair seals on the rocks on the waterfront at night, but they are very difficult to catch. The fur is of practically no value, but were used by Mr. Wood and his family for mats in the bedrooms, and the fat boiled down was found very useful for oiling boots in the wintertime.

In the year 1911, my wife and I made a trip to Switzerland, and after seeing the beautiful roads around Lake Lucerne, and realizing the necessity of providing good scenic roads on the waterfront of the harbour of Vancouver, and being a member of the Municipal Council of North Vancouver District, I introduced a resolution to provide a scenic road from North Vancouver to Indian River on the waterfront of Burrard Inlet. This road has been surveyed with the intention of recording the grades, and establishing the road in order that all subdivisions on the waterfront would be made to conform with this road, which I named the "Indian River Drive." It has now been opened as far as "Woodlands" so that it is possible to drive from North Vancouver to "Woodlands" in a motor car.

Mr. H. Myddleton Wood was born in Brentford, London, England, and immigrated to Canada in the year 1868, at the age of 17 years. Before coming to the coast he was in the logging business on the Georgian Bay, and afterwards owned and operated three lumber mills at Fesserton, Ontario for several years, and could walk a log with any river driver. He was related to Sir Hugh Myddleton, who introduced the water system into London, England. A Statue was erected to his (Sir Hugh Myddleton) memory on Islington Green and is still there.

Yours truly,

J. Eades Ward

Major, C.E., ret.

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH MR. AND MRS. HIRAM W. WOODWARD, 151 WEST FOURTH AVENUE, NORTH VANCOUVER, WHO KINDLY CALLED AT THE CITY ARCHIVES THIS AFTERNOON, 27 SEPTEMBER 1939.

Mr. Woodward is the nephew of Edward Woodward, first lightkeeper at Point Atkinson.

HIRAM W. WOODWARD. PIONEER, 1873.

Mr. Woodward said: "My father and mother came to British Columbia with four daughters and one son, Hiram, that's me, and we all landed at Victoria, 24th May 1873, from St. Williams, County Norfolk, Ontario. Father was Wesleyan; Mother Church of England, and our farm at St. Williams was next to Mayor Fred Cope's, of Vancouver, old home.

"We came by Union Pacific Railroad; it was unballasted at the time, and the trip to San Francisco from Ontario took three weeks. There were two boats a month only from San Francisco to Victoria, and we 'just missed the boat,' and had to stay two weeks in a hotel in San Francisco. Then we took the *Prince Alfred* up to Victoria—she was afterwards lost at sea.

"Father had lung trouble for about a year; pneumonia; and the doctors sent him out to British Columbia. He had no idea what he was going to do, but, by trade, he was a carriage builder. On arrival at Victoria we stopped at the Pacific Telegraph Hotel.

"I don't know, exactly, how long we stopped in Victoria, but we took the ferry boat, the old *Otter* to New Westminster, and got off at New Westminster; there was a man named Robert Wood met us, and took us down the North Arm of the Fraser River to his place."

ROBERT WOOD. CHRISTOPHER WOOD.

"When my father hunted and fished on Lake Erie, he used to take Robert Wood, a young fellow, out with him, and Wood used to say, 'When I get to be a man, I am going to British Columbia, and take up a farm for each one of us.' Of course, when Father came out to British Columbia, Mr. Wood, naturally, met us; he already had his farm down the North Arm. Robert Wood was a single man, and had a shack to live in, but