

## **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**

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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



**JOSEPH MORTON. ELIZABETH (LIZZIE) MORTON (MRS. THORTON OF SARDIS.)**

“But what I was telling you about was Morton, and the ranch. I often wondered what was the ultimate disposal of the ranch.” (Note: it was sold by Morton’s executors.) “You know all about Joe” (Morton’s son.) “As I said, Morton and I became very friendly; we had been speaking about Joe, at least, he had. It was just before his” (John Morton’s) “death. Well, about Joe. Morton told me he had offered Joe the ranch at Mission if he could go and live on it, but Joe wouldn’t. Mind you, I was friendly with Joe, too. Joe was afterwards longshoring down here in Vancouver.

“I had been dickering with Morton about buying the ranch which he had offered to Joe if he would come up and live on it. Well, what do you suppose Morton told me Joe’s answer was. Morton told me Joe said, well, it was something pretty rude and vulgar.

“So Morton told me he was going to deed the ranch to Lizzie. I often wondered if he did.”

**SECOND MRS. JOHN MORTON.**

“I don’t know for sure, but I think Mrs. John Morton, his second wife, who is still living, was governess, or something like that, for Morton’s before his first wife died.”

**FIRST WATER WORKS, MISSION. FIRST ELECTRIC LIGHT, MISSION. FIRST COLD STORAGE, MISSION.**

“Off and on, I have run almost every kind of business at Mission. Hotel, bar, postmaster, butcher, farmer, I put in the first waterworks, the first electric light, the first cold storage, I have been a little of everything, and am now the ‘Mission Gas and Storage Co.’”

The especial object of our call was to hear of Dr. William A. Briggs, O.B.E., D.D., M.D., F.R.G.S, a neighbour and esteemed friend of Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, and the whole evening was devoted to a discussion of the life and endeavours of this distinguished benefactor of Vancouver, whom Mrs. Wilson tersely described as “a charming gentleman and a clever man.” Dr. Briggs presented the City Museum with a remarkable collection of Siamese relics, principally china and crockery, etc. (See Dr. W.A. Briggs file.)

Approved by Mrs. Wilson as correct as to fact, 24 September 1937.

J.S. Matthews.

**MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH (EX-)ALDERMAN C.H. WILSON AND MRS. WILSON, AT THEIR LARGE RESIDENCE IN EXTENSIVE GROUNDS AT 3200 WEST KING EDWARD AVENUE (FORMERLY 25<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE), DUNBAR HEIGHTS, FRIDAY EVENING, 17 SEPTEMBER 1937.**

Mrs. Wilson graciously called for Mrs. Matthews and myself, and upon our arrival at her home, we found the Misses Campbell, daughters of the late Roderick Campbell awaiting us. Mr. Wilson is of the firm of Crowe and Wilson, 441 Seymour Street; his former partner being the late Senator S.J. Crowe, also an alderman of Vancouver.

Mr. Wilson came to Vancouver 4 July 1886. In 1900 he purchased twenty acres in a swamp west of the old North Arm Road, now Fraser Avenue, from the Provincial Government, paying two thousand dollars for it, and ultimately sold it for twenty-one thousand dollars. In consequence, Wilson Road, now 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue, East and West, came to be named in his honour; and in addition, Wilson Heights, Wilson Hill, and Wilson Heights Church. He was an alderman of the old City of Vancouver in 1902, 1903, 1904, and 1905.

Alderman and Mrs. Wilson were married at Christ Church, Vancouver, in 1906.

Prior to making a tour of Australia and New Zealand in 1913, Mr. and Mrs. Wilson had acquired their estate of five acres, a delightful spot on the “very” crest of Dunbar Heights, and at a time when all that area was either forest or forest clearing. One thousand dollars per acre was paid for the land, and during their absence in Australia on tour, a gardener was busy on the site of their future home; the gardener lived in a hut of cedar shakes which had been the shack of an old logging camp at or near the corner of Balaclava Street and 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and at the end of a corduroy skid road leading down by easy grades through the forest to salt water near the English Bay Cannery on Point Grey Road (west of Bayswater

Street.) At that time the approach to their residence was possible by horse and buggy, but not much more than possible, and a horse was the best means; tonight, as we drove along over paved streets, well lighted and with concrete sidewalks everywhere, one could not refrain from reflecting on the changes which time has wrought.

Later, said Mrs. Wilson, there was a car service—once an hour—via Fourth Avenue and Crown Street, but that she said “was about six blocks away, so usually we used to walk down the old Johnston Road, now Blenheim Street—all the way from Twenty-fifth, and catch the car at Fourth.”

Their three children are:

1. Isabel, now Mrs. Holger Tang, of Vancouver, who has two daughters.
2. Morris Charles Wilson, on the staff of the Royal Trust Co. of Vancouver, and who is married and has a son, Kenneth Charles Wilson.
3. Evelyn, now Mrs. Arthur McKim of Vancouver.

### **MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH EX-ALDERMAN C.H. WILSON, ALDERMAN, 1903 AND SUBSEQUENTLY, 9 JUNE 1936.**

#### **COAT OF ARMS, VANCOUVER, 1903.**

“The coat of arms now used by the city was adopted by the City Council in 1903, during my first term as alderman. I opposed it, but it was adopted. Some fool of an artist suggested it.

“The old coat of arms was infinitely better; the present one is a fool of a thing. The Golden Jubilee medal for pioneers is the same as the old crest just reversed, but it is a splendid little token.”

### **MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH MR. CHAS. H. WILSON, EX-ALDERMAN, AT VANCOUVER PIONEER’S ASSOCIATION PICNIC, NEWCASTLE ISLAND (S.S. *PRINCESS JOAN*), 14 JUNE 1939.**

#### **SEA OTTER.**

Mr. Wilson said: “I’ve just been for walk over to the far end of the island. They tell me that about three years ago, that a sea otter had its nest over on that little Five Finger island yonder or West Rocks; on a bit of small rock about ten feet square. They did not know that sea otter would come into the Gulf of Georgia; their pelts are very valuable; worth five hundred dollars each, or something; there were thousands of them at one time on the west coast” (of Vancouver Island.) “But the remarkable thing is that, three years ago, a sea otter had its nest of kittens on the little island out there.”

#### **KITSILANO BEACH.**

Major Matthews: I have heard our older pioneers speak of “the time the sea otter” was at Greer’s Beach; they seemed to think it very remarkable that a sea otter should be at Kitsilano Beach.

### **WAR, 1914-1918.**

Major Matthews: (chatting with Sergeant I.V. St. G. Williams, late 6<sup>th</sup> D.C.O.R., and who did not go overseas) Sorry the war’s over.

Sergeant Williams: “Why?”

Major Matthews: Well, in war it’s what can I do for you; in peace it’s what can I do you for.

Of all the wonderful things I saw in the war, and we saw great wonders, the most wonderful of all were the men—and the women who stayed at home did as much as the men. Battles are not wholly won by cannon, but by morale; the women kept up the morale of the Canadian army; men cannot fight if the women wail. Their little parcels, of cigarettes, and chewing gum, wore down the enemy.