

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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Major James Skitt Matthews, *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 5 (Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 2011), 33.

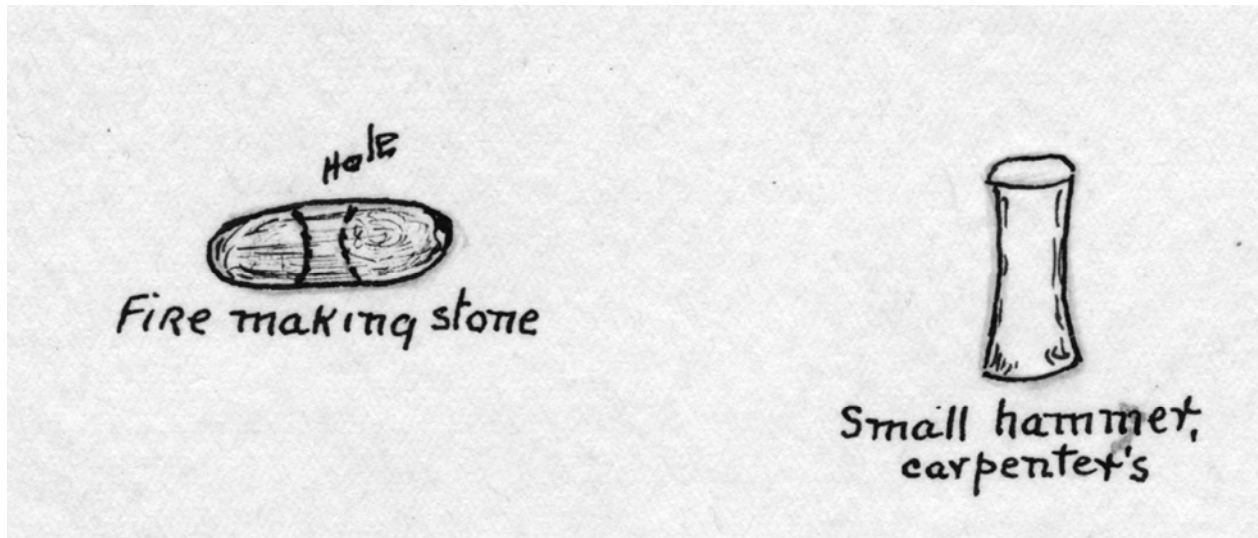
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Item # EarlyVan_v5_019

Read and approved by Mrs. Trites, 24 January 1939.

J.S. Matthews.

These two small Indian implements are in City Archives. For method of use, read August Jack Khahtsahlano's conversation, 22 August 1938.

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH CHAS. J. MALTBY, OF 1105 WEST 10TH AVENUE (CORNER SPRUCE), IN CITY ARCHIVES, 4 NOVEMBER 1937.

GOSSE OF FISHERMAN'S COVE.

Mr. Maltby said: "Capt. Macargo married Nancy, Alexander MacKay's only daughter; Macargo was Scotch; they had a daughter, Miss Macargo, who married a Mr. Johnstone, my grandfather" (same family as Johnstone straits) "and their daughter Miss Agnes K. Johnstone married C.M. Maltby, my father, and I was married in Toronto to Mary Gosse, and have two sons, one, the eldest, 16. I served with the American Army Medical Corps in the Great War, and had two brothers in the C.E.F., and a lot of cousins, too. I married Mary Gosse, daughter of Richard Gosse, who came from Newfoundland; you know all about him, and Fisherman's Cove, out West Vancouver; Mark Gosse married my father's sister; married a lady of the same name as himself; they were related or something. Get it correct. My mother was Miss Johnstone, daughter of Mrs. Johnstone, née Miss Macargo, who was daughter of Miss Nancy MacKay of Fort Garry, only daughter of Alexander MacKay, my great-great-grandfather."

GREER OF GREER'S BEACH.

"Fred Greer, son of Sam Greer, of Greer's Beach" (Kitsilano Beach) "is my brother-in-law.

"Alexander MacKay" (of Fort Garry) "married the daughter of the Hudson's Bay factor of Fort Garry; she had a little Indian blood in her; he left two children. Tom, the eldest, and Nancy, who married Capt. Macargo; those two were all he had in the way of children."

TONQUIN MASSACRE.

"Alexander MacKay was one of the partners of the North West Trading Co., and as such was part of the *Tonquin*, and he was killed by the Indians on the Pacific Coast when they raided her in 1811; I have been told by my mother that Alexander MacKay warned the captain not to let more than ten Indians aboard at one time. Then, about 1814, MacKay's widow married Dr. John McLoughlin, the celebrated Hudson Bay official; my mother has told me all about it lots of times."

ALEXANDER MACKENZIE.

“Mother was consoling with me once. I had complained that I was doing all the work, and someone else getting all the credit, and she said, ‘Never mind, it’s often like that,’ and then she told me that Alexander MacKay was the first white man to see the MacKenzie River, but MacKenzie got the credit. MacKay followed the river for two weeks, enquiring from the Indians as to the length of it, and the Indians told him it was so many moons long. He reported that to the Fur Trading Club in Montréal; that was two or three years before MacKenzie made his famous trip, but MacKay was the first white man who saw that river. He had to hurry back to the Great Lakes and Montréal before the freeze up.

“MacKay and MacKenzie were co-leaders in 1793 to make the trip across the continent. MacKenzie would never have got across if it had not been for MacKay; MacKenzie had only ten years experience, but had it not been for MacKay’s knowledge of the terrain, and his ability to talk to some of the Indians in their own tongue—of course, as they got further west neither MacKay nor MacKenzie could talk to the new tribes they met—it was MacKay’s knowledge that pulled them through. MacKenzie went back to the Old Country, and reported to the Royal Geographical Society. MacKay did not go back to Scotland, as he intended to get married to the Hudson’s Bay factor’s daughter in Fort Garry, and then he got killed in 1811, and of course, as Mother says, MacKenzie got all the credit for the MacKenzie River discovery. But, Mother said, ‘It ought to be “MacKay’s River,” not MacKenzie’s.’”

“Fort William, Ontario, was original Fort William MacKay; that was in the early days of the North West Trading Co.; he was a brother of Alexander MacKay.”

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH CHARLES J. MALTBY, OF 1105 WEST 10TH AVENUE, VANCOUVER, WHO CALLED AT THE CITY ARCHIVES THIS AFTERNOON, 8 OCTOBER 1938.

(Memo: a copy of Mr. Maltby’s conversation of 4 November 1937 had been forwarded some time ago to Mr. Lanctot, Dominion Archivist, Ottawa, who replied 29 September, and I had phoned Mr. Maltby to come over and read Mr. Lanctot’s reply. JSM.)

DISCOVERY OF MACKENZIE RIVER.

Mr. Maltby said: “My grandmother was Miss McCargo, and her mother was Mrs. McCargo, née Nancy McKay, daughter of Alexander McKay. My grandmother told me herself that MacKenzie” (the discoverer) “got to know that the river existed from the fact that McKay told him” (MacKenzie) “that it did when he” (McKay) “reached Montréal after his trip to the river; he came back with the fur brigade to Montréal.

“McKay had heard of the river through the Indians. At some point where he was in the North West, there were strange Indians present among those whom he knew; he enquired where they were from, and through the interpreter was told that they came from the big river. McKay had sufficient time to spare; the weather was good for travelling, and he went off to look at it, followed it for a week or ten days, but did not reach the mouth; he had to turn back for want of time. Read this:

Astoria, by Washington Irving, Putnam’s Sons, New York and London, p. 45.

Mr. Astor made his overtures to several of these persons, and three of them entered into his views. One of them, Alexander McKay had accompanied Sir Alexander MacKenzie in both of his expeditions to the north west coast of America in 1789 and 1793. *[para. cont.]*

“It’s a strange thing, but histories about the MacKenzie River read MacKenzie this and MacKenzie that, but never a word about MacKay.”

CAPT. GEO. VANCOUVER. NARVAEZ.

Major Matthews (City Archivist): That’s nothing new. Why, right here in Vancouver we have the same thing. We have Vancouver everywhere, including the statue, but Capt. George Vancouver was not the first whiteman to see the site of the city. Narvaez was here a year before Capt. Vancouver, and his name is not recorded in one single place, street, or anything else; ninety-nine percent—more than that—never heard of him, nor read his name.