

Early Vancouver

Volume Five

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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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Footnote or Endnote Reference:

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

Bibliographic Entry:

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

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Social affairs in Yale were the same as in Douglas. We didn't say dances in those days; we called them balls. Picnics and sometimes a concert with lantern slides. And, in Yale, the young men went around about twelve o'clock New Year's Even, singing "All's Well." New Year's Day they called at all the homes and had refreshments. Our refreshments, when anyone called on anybody, the hostess served wine and rich fruit or pound cake. Nowadays it is tea, coffee and some very poor cake or a stale doughnut and, in some cases, very poor tea.

This concludes all about Yale. All I have told just includes Douglas and Yale. But I think I could fill a book.

We left Yale in December 1874 and came to Chilliwack. In the year 1875 I came to Upper Sumas to teach school. I was the first teacher at Upper Sumas School. I taught until 1877, when I went back to Chilliwack.

CHILLIWACK. PORT DOUGLAS. FORT YALE.

My life in Chilliwack was not very long. I disliked Chilliwack; their mode of living was altogether different to Port Douglas and Fort Yale. For one thing, they were so religious. Mostly all were Wesleyan Methodist. I went to school there for awhile and in 1875 I came to Upper Sumas to teach and taught until 1877. Then, in July of that year I went up to the Cariboo and taught school at Stanley. Left there in autumn of 1878 and came home to Chilliwack.

In the year 1880, on the 9th November, I married my husband, Thomas Fraser York. Then went back to Yale to live. Left Yale again in 1881 and came with my husband to make my home at Upper Sumas and have lived here ever since, with the exception of two years when I lived in Bellingham, U.S.A., called Whatcom at that time.

Doctors were scarce and far between in all three places. Chilliwack did have one for awhile.

THOMAS FRASER YORK.

My husband, Thomas Fraser York was born in Fort Yale, October 21st, Trafalgar Day, 1858. He lived there until 1865. Then the family moved to Upper Sumas, B.C. The old people remained there until they passed away. Mrs. York September 14th, 1886 and Mr. T. York, 23rd December 1893.

Note: the manuscript is unsigned. J.S. Matthews.

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH MR. GLENDOWER K. ALLEN, 5501 MACKENZIE STREET, PRESIDENT, VANCOUVER GLADIOLUS SOCIETY (SEE THAT DOCKET.) MR. ALLEN VERY KINDLY CALLED AT THE CITY ARCHIVES THIS MORNING, 25 JULY 1945.

GROWING PLANTS WITHOUT SOIL.

Note: in 1944, Mr. Allen published, in pamphlet form, a treatise entitled "Growing Plants Without Soil." \$1.00.

Mr. Allen: "I first started growing plants without soil in 1918 in Calgary while I was in the employ of the Alberta Government telephone, as a hobby. In 1924 I came to Vancouver and experimented until 1933; then I opened up large greenhouses on a commercial basis, situated at 6559 Argyle Street, South Vancouver. There I commercialised the growing of tomatoes in torpedo gravel. Torpedo gravel is a cracked pea gravel. My fruit from 1933 to 1940 has been analysed at the Experimental Farm, Ottawa, and each year the fruit has been higher in nutrition value, plus all vitamin, at least twenty-five percent, compared with the Ontario and Utah greenhouse tomatoes. For three years running I have sent five crates of greenhouse tomatoes, grown without soil, to the Vancouver General Hospital and the authorities, the dieticians, say that the patients prefer them to any other kind of grown tomatoes."

Major Matthews: Has anyone else in Vancouver preceded you in the growth of vegetables without soil?

Mr. Allen: "No, no one. Not any one; I was the first. In Calgary, in 1918, I had read small articles on it and on one of my visits to Edmonton, I met on the train a celebrated German by the name of Dr. J.S.

Krausser, originally from Düsseldorf, Germany. We got into conversation and he gave me two formulas to work out and since then I have been in correspondence with him; he is now in Pasadena, California, President of the College of Technology, where they have, on an average, every year, about six thousand students, all being taught this method of plant life. In 1940 I gave up the greenhouse due to labour shortage and difficulties getting the required chemicals. I then built a small greenhouse at my present residence, 5501 Mackenzie Street, where I am carrying on some very interesting experiments and research work along the line of soilless growths, with inerts such as gravels, coarse sand, navy jack, cinders, and even sawdust. I have had one of my best crops from sawdust.

"Now, here, this is important: I am the only man recognised by the Dominion Government in the research work of three new drugs; one is colchicine; the next is chloral-hydrate and the third is acenamalaphene. These drugs are to assist the breaking up of the chromosomes in the cells of the plant, in other words, to sterilise and bring about better, larger and disease-resistant plants. As far as vegetables are concerned, the important part of this work is the necessity of seeds being sterilised through this process which, eventually, will decrease the diseases which are now attacking the vegetables plants in the garden."

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH MR. GLENDOWER K. ALLEN OF 5501 MACKENZIE STREET WHO KINDLY CALLED AT THE CITY ARCHIVES THIS MORNING, 25 JULY 1945.

VANCOUVER GLADIOLUS SOCIETY. GREAT VANCOUVER GLADIOLUS SOCIETY.

Mr. Allen: "We gave up using the name of Greater Vancouver Gladiolus Society; we found the 'Greater' had no special meaning or advantage.

"The Vancouver Gladiolus Society started four years ago, in 1941, but the first year we did not issue a printed programme. In 1941 and 1942 we did not hold an exhibition. There were four men, Mr. W.H. Bayley, Mr. H. Tarrant, Mr. Thomas Alex and Mr. George Lake; that's four. They found it very difficult to get members and they called me" (G.K. Allen) "up on the phone in December 1942 and asked me if I would take over."

Major Matthews: Why did they turn to you?

Mr. Allen: "Well, because I was a kind of expert; I am a professional commercial grower. I have a place out in Burnaby, one in Kerrisdale and one in Capilano; an acre in Burnaby, one eighth of an acre up in Capilano; and five city lots up in Kerrisdale where I live and I grow bulbs on all of them; all three. At that stage, December 1942, they had fifteen members. I called a meeting in the Vancouver *Province* boardroom on February 15th, 1943, and we had forty-six interested parties. I think that evening we added thirty-eight members. Then we called another meeting in March and arranged for the 1943 show which took place in the I.O.O.F. Hall at the corner of Seventh and Main. It lasted two days and we had about ninety exhibitors; anyway, just under one hundred. All the prizes, value prizes, were donated, and we had plenty. In October of 1943, the new President, Mr. A.H. Gray, was elected. The first president was Mr. Bayley, and the second was A.H. Gray, and the third was myself" (G.K. Allen.)

"Here is an interesting thing. In October of 1944, which is our annual meeting, when I was elected president, my objective was one hundred and fifty members and at our show on August 10 and 11, 1944, we climbed up to 135 paid up members; it costs one dollar membership fee.

"Mr. Bayley still exhibits; he is a compositor on the Vancouver *Province*, but Mr. Gray, our second president, we do not know where he is; a strange thing happened, it is all we can say, that the day before the second exhibition he disappeared from Vancouver and we have not heard from him since. He was a candy maker.

"In our 1944 show in the Georgian Room, Hudson's Bay Co. store, we had an exhibition for competition, three thousand three hundred blooms. This year I have worked hard to make it a success and I shall be disappointed if we have less than five thousand blooms and many from the United States. To date, we have never had exhibitors from elsewhere than British Columbia."