

Early Vancouver

Volume Five

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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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Nearly every successive city council has for many years re-arranged, added to, or altered in some way this apology for a city hall which was erected in 1890, from plans prepared by C.W.H. Sansom for a civic market. This was the first of two buildings which the city has erected for market purposes, both of which have proved dismal failures.

January 27th 1925.

Copied from a penciled manuscript in the Library of the *Daily Province*, discarded as of no further use at the death of Mr. Romang in June 1939.

This manuscript was undoubtedly written by Cecil Carter-Cotton, a son of the Hon. F.L. Carter-Cotton, proprietor of the old *News-Advertiser*. Mr. Cecil Carter-Cotton was a journalist and reporter of high standing, and prior to his death soon after 1925-30, was a reporter on the *Province*. He frequently wrote reminiscences of this character.

J.S. Matthews.

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH HENRY S. ROWLING, SON OF W.H. ROWLING, OF ROWLINGS, NORTH ARM, WHO WENT TO LIVE ON HIS MILITARY GRANT IN SOUTH VANCOUVER IN 1868, TAKING HIS SON, THEN FOUR YEARS OLD, WITH HIM, AT CITY HALL, 15 JULY 1935.

BURNABY LAKE, FIRST LOGGING OPERATIONS. BRUNETTE RIVER.

"It was me who opened up the Brunette River for logging; before I opened it up no logs whatever had been taken out of Burnaby Lake; the only timber which had been cut was the brush, and surveying, and roads; that was about 1890 or 1891 when I was about 26 or 28. We had no contract at all, just logging for the open market; when you first bought land in this province everything went with it, timber, minerals, water rights, and, on the banks, right down to low tide. We took out about five million feet and sold most of it to the Brunette Sawmill at Sapperton. No royalties in those days, at least not on that land, but we paid stumpage of 50¢ or 75¢ a thousand to the owner of the land."

WATER SUPPLY, NEW WESTMINSTER.

"Before I could start to use the Brunette River for logging, I applied to the Provincial Government for a charter to do so; it was necessary to put a dam across the river. The City of New Westminster petitioned against the granting of the charter as they had a water pipe across the stream, and they got an injunction from Judge McCreight to stop us driving logs down the Brunette. The trial was quite a long affair, a long story, but the gist of it is that I won; even with all the petitions, and I succeeded in getting our charter, that is, myself. Afterwards William McPherson joined me. The city thought that the logs would break the supports in the Brunette River which supported the pipes and brought to the city of Westminster from the Coquitlam the only water supply the city had. The supports were never damaged by us."

LOGGING, BURNABY.

"Well, we first built a skid road down to Still Creek to just west of Douglas Road; then we dammed the Brunette, but had to move our rollway landing" (where the logs are put in the water) "as we had dammed the Brunette so high that we could not float the logs under the Douglas Road bridge across Still Creek, so then we commenced to put our logs in the lake on the east side of the bridge.

"Still Creek was a little paradise of a place at that time. The crab apple trees overhung the banks of the creek, and to look down it was like looking down a beautiful sinuous avenue with green overhanging boughs all white with blossoms, and so sweet smelling; when the crab apple trees were in blossom—they were very numerous—the sweet scent was most pleasant. The banks were lined with wild flowers. The brown water was so still that it acted like a mirror, so that when looking down upon it you could see your own face midst the reflections of the white crab apple blossoms on the trees above you. Sometimes we took a little excursion or picnic, party, down to our camp—took them on the little steamer I will tell you about.

"I gave Bill Smith a contract to take the logs down Still Creek and across Burnaby Lake to the dam at the head of the Brunette River; that was before McPherson joined me."

STEAMER ON BURNABY LAKE.

“Bill got a small steamer, no name that I can recall, and put it on a sleigh, and hauled it with horses—early spring time—from George Black’s at Hastings to Still Creek on Douglas Road; a little bark burner; there were no gasoline boats in those days.”

BRUNETTE RIVER DAMS.

“When the logs got to the dam at the head of the river—we built two dams, one was down river about a mile, the fall of land compelled the second dam—we flooded the logs down to the Fraser River.

“We logged that area of land north of Still Creek near Douglas Road; mostly fir, cedar and spruce, fair sized logs, twenty inches to five foot six; compared with other logging localities it was not first class; there was not the percentage of clear timber.”

PRICE OF LOGS.

“That fall the price of logs was \$5.75 per 1,000 feet for fir; the next spring it was down to \$4.00. If we had sold the logs that fall we would have finished out operations with five span of horses, five yoke of oxen, our completed camp, our equipment and improvements, all to the clear and about \$1,500 in the bank to the good, but Mr. McPherson did not want to sell until the spring. There were no log scalers in those days, and the mill men claimed that the water stained through the sap and damaged the wood, and so gave a lower scale in the spring after the logs had lain in the water all winter—at least, the mill men claimed the water stained the sap. In addition, we had to boom them for towing down the Fraser—we did not sell to the Brunette Sawmill who would have taken them in the fall, but would not in the spring—and that cost us 50¢ a thousand we would have saved if the Brunette had taken them at the mouth of the Brunette—then we lost a boom of 400,000 feet in the gulf, and we sold one boom of 400,000, and took a note of it for ninety days, but the mill failed before it came due, and the outcome of the whole thing was that we got practically nothing for our logs and summer’s work.

“That’s the story of the first logging on Burnaby Lake.”

As narrated to me, and corrected by Mr. Rowling afterwards. J.S.M.

22 July – added:

PETER CORDINER. KRIDLAND’S, AFTERWARDS LAWSON’S. BILL DANIELS, “CREEPING JESUS.” SOUTH VANCOUVER MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, FIRST MEETING. FIRST SCHOOL.

“Kridland’s owned the land on the river front west of the North Arm Road” (Fraser Avenue) “and afterwards sold to Lawson’s. Bill Daniels owned a large area on the east side of the road, facing Kridland’s, and also on the river bank. Daniels sold the piece next to the road to Peter Cordiner” (alderman of first Vancouver city council) “for one thousand dollars; afterwards he sold the rest up river for \$25,000.

“The Cordiner barn, in which Mr. Chaldecott says the first meeting of the South Vancouver Municipal Council took place, was beside the North Arm road. The first school was on the northeast corner of River Road and North Arm Road, almost where it is now.”