

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.

Copyright Statement

© 2011 City of Vancouver. Any or all of *Early Vancouver* may be used without restriction as to the nature or purpose of the use, even if that use is for commercial purposes. You may copy, distribute, adapt and transmit the work. It is required that a link or attribution be made to the City of Vancouver.

Reproductions

High resolution versions of any graphic items in *Early Vancouver* are available. A fee may apply.

Citing Information

When referencing the 2011 edition of *Early Vancouver*, please cite the page number that appears at the bottom of the page in the PDF version only, not the page number indicated by your PDF reader. Here are samples of how to cite this source:

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.

Contact Information

City of Vancouver Archives
1150 Chestnut Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 3J9
604.736.8561
archives@vancouver.ca
vancouver.ca/archives



MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH GEO. L. SCHETKY, ROYAL TRUST BUILDING, WHO HELPED TO FORM THE FIRST VOLUNTEER FIRE BRIGADE IN VANCOUVER, AND WAS LONG A MEMBER, BUT WHO DID NOT VOTE AT THE FIRST CIVIC ELECTION IN 1886 AS HE WAS TOO YOUNG.

He was away from Vancouver for some ten years prior to 1905 or 1906.

THE FIRST CIVIC ELECTION. "SCENE FROM THE BALCONY." SUNNYSIDE HOTEL. MAYOR M.A. MACLEAN. R.H. ALEXANDER.

Mr. Schetky said: "After the election, the candidates, with their supporters and friends, got up on the balcony of the old Sunnyside Hotel on Water Street—it was one of those old-fashioned balconies out from the second floor—and appeared before the crowd on the road below. It seems to me that there were some torches there" (see *Early Vancouver*, W.G. Gallagher and others); "there were no street lights, of course. Then they called on the two candidates, the defeated and the elected, for speeches.

"MacLean spoke first and made some nice remarks, thanked them, and spoke the usual post-election pleasantries. He was well received, and stood back.

"Then Alexander appeared, and said bluffly and bluntly, 'Well, I am defeated; it was a case of might against right.' Then you should have heard the boos."

"NORTH AMERICAN CHINAMEN."

"Another thing which he is reported to have said—I do not know whether he ever did or not, but they said he did—was that 'As far as these Canadians were concerned, they were only North American Chinamen. Give them a bowl of blackstrap'" (molasses) "'and a chunk of salt pork, and that's all they need.' Of course, if he did say it, he did not say that on the balcony, but before or during the election."

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH COLONEL JAMES SCLATER, D.S.O., ETC. OF "THE PORCH," JOAN CRESCENT, VICTORIA, FORMERLY OF VANCOUVER, ETC., WHO CALLED AT THE CITY ARCHIVES TO GOSSIP, 11 OCTOBER 1939.

FIRST C.P.R. STATION. SIR GEORGE MCL. BROWN. COL. JAMES SCLATER, D.S.O.

Col. Sclater: (looking at photo of arrival of first C.P.R. train at foot of Howe Street, 23 May 1887, photo No. P. Can. 7, N. Can. 5) "See that shed over there; Sir George and I occupied part of that office; over the sea."

72ND SEAFORTH HIGHLANDERS.

"The Seaforth Highlanders gave us a dinner the other night; Col. John Tait, Major Archie Rowan and myself; the last three survivors of those who formed the 72nd Seaforths.

"You see, Duff Stuart was to be the" (first) "colonel; I was to be adjutant, and Archie Rowan was coming with us, but Ottawa said that Stuart was soon to take over the command of the Sixth, and further, they did not approve of transfers from one regiment to another in the same city. Leckie" (Col. Leckie, 1ST O.C., 72nd) "kept a company open for me for about a year, but I could not transfer; Ottawa would not allow it. The night of the first parade of the Seventy-Second, I stood on the sidewalk curb, and could almost have wept."

MAJOR-GENERAL J.W. STEWART, C.B.

"There" (looking at Gen. Stewart's photo) "was a splendid character if ever there was one. When he died, I came over from Victoria especially for the funeral, but I was not a pall bearer, and when they saw me, they came over to me and said, in surprise, 'We didn't know you were coming over; never thought of it, or you would have been one of the pall bearers.' I replied that it didn't matter; I felt it made no difference; I would have come anyway; that 'I was quite content as I was.' So afterwards we went down to Gen. Clark's office, and he was all apologies, but I said it was quite all right; I really did not mind; but Gen. Stewart was a fine character."

72ND SEAFORTH HIGHLANDERS, TITLE.

Major Matthews: Why did they call them Seaforths?

Col. Sclater: "Oh, I don't know; suppose I knew once, but I don't know now."

Note: see Pipe-Major Hector MacKenzie's narrative, 6 October 1939, as to why they were given the name "Seaforth." No evidence has, so far, presented itself to show that the name was especially applied for, and, though I was very active in militia circles—in the 6th D.C.O.R.—neither then nor since has anyone ever mentioned to me why the title was chosen. Col. Leckie, the first commanding officer, was practically a stranger to Vancouver; it is extraordinary that Col. Sclater—so keen to become one of them, and so active at that time—does not know. It would seem that Mr. MacKenzie's explanation is right; perhaps the documents at Ottawa show.

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH MR. AND MRS. FRANK J. SCOTT OF R.D. No. 5, WATSONVILLE, CALIFORNIA, U.S.A., WHO VERY KINDLY CALLED AT THE CITY ARCHIVES DURING THEIR VISIT TO VANCOUVER TO WELCOME THEIR MAJESTIES THE KING AND QUEEN, 23 MAY 1939.

MR. AND MRS. FRANK J. SCOTT. OBEN AND SCOTT. JOHN OBEN. PHILLIP OBEN.

Mr. Scott said: "We have been coming up to Vancouver for twenty years; at last we have come, to see the King and Queen. Mrs. Scott is American; I was born in Toronto, 20th May 1879; then our family went to Plattsmouth, Nebraska, then moved to Vancouver in the fall of 1887; left it in 1895 for San Francisco, California. John Oben was my father's partner; he was my uncle; so was Phillip Oben; we are staying with his sister, Mrs. C.J. Neville, 3231 School Road, South Vancouver."

Major Matthews: Do you recollect much about early Vancouver, Mr. Scott?

DEADMAN'S ISLAND, LAST BURIAL. EARLY CEMETERIES. CHINESE. WEST END SCHOOL, 1888. MINNIE McCORD. KANAKA RANCH.

Mr. Scott: "I remember the last burial on Deadman's Island. I was just a school boy; went to the West End school which was erected in 1888; that was my first school; Minnie McCord was one of the pupils of the same school; she lived down with her mother, who was half Indian, down on the Kanaka Ranch, about half way between Denman Street and Nicola and the entrance to the park. And I went to school with Mrs. J.Z. Hall. I was standing on Georgia Street when the Chinese funeral went past; that was the last burial on Deadman's Island."

FIGS. DUCKS. WEST END. FALLING THE FOREST. OBEN'S CAMP. KANAKA RANCH.

"The coffin was on a spring wagon, drawn by horses, and followed by another spring wagon with a whole roast pig—or hog—and many roast ducks, and Chinese delicacies, and numerous Chinese in Chinese costume and pigtails. Following the improvised hearse was a Chinese standing on the back end of the rear spring wagon; he was distributing small pieces of thin paper with a Chinese inscription—the name of the dead person on it—to those who were following. I was standing about Nicola Street, at the foot of the hill; I did not follow the funeral, but at that time—this will help you to establish the date—the forest was still standing in the West End from about Nicola Street to Coal Harbour and the park; that is, with the exception of a little clearing about Denman Street where my uncle Phillip Oben had his camp at the Kanaka Ranch."

MOUNTAIN VIEW CEMETERY. DEADMAN'S ISLAND. BRIDGES. PARK ROAD.

Major Matthews: Well, Mountain View Cemetery was opened about January or February 1887; how was it they were not burying the dead Chinamen there?

Mr. Scott: "At that time they would not allow Chinamen to be buried in Mountain View, so he had to be buried on the island. The way I know the date—that it was after the park road was built—is because the first time I ever saw the road around Stanley Park, it was covered with white clam shells, and the funeral was after that."