

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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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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by side with the remembrance of our great calamity. Again thanking you, and those ladies who have so kindly assisted you,

I am, dear Madam,

Yours very gratefully

[signed] M.A. MacLean.

Mayor.

Vancouver,
June 19th, 1886.

Miss M. Thain,
Moodyville

Dear Miss Thain,

Your very kind gift of pillows from "The Little Helpers" of Moodyville was received by me and distributed according to your instructions.

In addition to the other aid offered to our destitute citizens by the inhabitants of your village, in the way of shelter, food and money, your contribution for their benefit proves you to be worthy children of worthy parents.

The assistance thus given to us in our hour of need will not soon be forgotten, I assure you. Thanking you in the name of our citizens.

I am very gratefully,

Yours,

[signed] M.A. MacLean.

Mayor.

MEMO OF CONVERSATION OVER THE PHONE WITH LIEUT.-COL. JOHN McMILLAN, FORMERLY QUARTERMASTER, 6TH REGIMENT D.C.O.R., VANCOUVER, AND 7TH BATTALION C.E.F., 3 NOVEMBER 1936.

Following an item in "Over the Foreyard," 10 October 1936, *Vancouver Daily Province*, asking if any person knew where the wrecked hull of the McLean schooner *Rob Roy* lay in the Pitt River.

ALEXANDER MCLEAN, SR. ALEXANDER MCLEAN, JR. SCHOONER ROB ROY. LIEUT.-COL. JOHN McMILLAN. STURGEON.

Col. McMillan: "Did you have any answer to your query in the *Province*, Matthews?"

City Archivist: Not a word.

Col. McMillan: "Well, I'll tell you. I came up from the Columbia River in the winter of 1894; I was working for Wallace Bros. at their 'Bon Accord' plant on the Fraser River, and we used to go up the Pitt River every day collecting sturgeon, and so we passed the MacLeans' place almost every day.

"The wreck of the *Rob Roy* was lying in the mud on the west bank of the Pitt River opposite Donald McLean's farm house below the Pitt River bridge. The rigging was gone, so were the top masts, but the two masts were still standing, just the main spars, and the hull was down in the mud, and the tide ebbed and flowed in and out of it. I have not been there for many, many years, and don't know if there is any remains left now or not.

"The elder Alexander must have been a wonderful man; I never knew him personally, but from what I have heard. He was born in Scotland and went to Australia, and sailed his vessel from Australia to San Francisco." (See fuller details in McLean file.) "Billy Saunders and Dave Bailey, half-breeds, used to tell me about him. He sailed the *Rob Roy* from San Francisco to Puget Sound without any nautical instruments other than a clock; no sextant, or quadrant—that was quite a feat; found his position by dead reckoning. And he had his wife and family with him.

"The account in the *Province* says he had a lot of cattle on the *Rob Roy*, 250 head or something, but I don't think she could carry more than ten or twelve; she was only a little thing; he must have made a number of trips and got a few at a time. They had a lot of trouble with the river water in those days; the Pitt River was not dyked, and the river water and tide was continually backing up; his farm was below the Pitt River bridge on the west bank.

"Old Mr. Alexander had two sons, Donald and Alexander. Donald's farm was highest up the Pitt River, and his house stood well back from the river; the *Rob Roy* was in the mud of the bank in front of his house; Alexander's, or 'Alex's' was further down the river, adjoining, west bank; between that the knob of a hill called Mary Hill at the mouth of the Coquitlam River; the *Rob Roy* was lying nearest Donald's house. The last time I saw her would be, well, about 1896.

"The younger Alexander McLean was born in 1852, and died in Vancouver in the summer of 1932. There is an old Scotch adage that 'Every McLean has a boat of his own,' and the McLeans of Pitt River were no exception; the younger Alex took to sculling; was a famous oarsman, and rowed on the Fraser River against the world's champion sculler." (I think Ned Hanlan. JSM.) "He staked his farm, or rather mortgaged it, and he lost the race and he lost his place" (farm) "and went up to Kamloops, and was ferryman there for some years.

"But the old man, the elder Alexander, must have been a wonderful man from what I have heard."

(Note: and so was the son Alex, whom I knew personally; a fine fellow, indeed, perhaps a bit wild in his youth, but a great athlete, Scotsman, and a venerable figure in his old age. J.S.M.)

Corrected and approved by Col. McMillan, 4 November 1936.

J.S. Matthews.

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH J.C. MCPHERSON, PRESIDENT AND MANAGER, MESSRS. PEMBERTON REALTY CORPORATION LTD., REAL ESTATE AND FINANCE, HOWE AND HASTINGS, 17 OCTOBER 1939.

TALTON PLACE.

Mr. McPherson said: "Talton Place was the first properly organised building project in the City of Vancouver; it was commenced in the spring of 1910. It derives its name from Thomas Talton Langlois, a well-known pioneer of Vancouver, and organiser and president of the B.C. Permanent Loan and Savings Company, and Pacific Coast Fire Insurance Co. Talton Place extends from the Vancouver-Marpole interurban track to Cypress Street, and from the old city boundary on the north side of Sixteenth Avenue to the south side" (inclusive) "of Thirteenth Avenue; six city blocks.

"We purchased the property from the Canadian Pacific Railway, paying an average of fifteen hundred dollars per fifty foot lot. The actual site was chosen because of its commanding position, at a point high above the smoke of the city, overlooking English Bay, and at that time on the outskirts of the 'old' City of Vancouver. To the south and west there was practically no development at all; the land lay in clearing and in stumps; a few houses, to the north, scattered on the brow of the hill overlooking Kitsilano Beach. The ground where commencement was made was level, with gradual slope to the north.

"Construction of about twelve houses were commenced on Fourteenth and Fifteenth avenues simultaneously; the concrete sidewalks and curbs laid, and trees and shrubs planted upon the boulevards. The houses which were of the California bungalow type, and very modern at that time, were set back thirty-five feet from the property line; over one million and a quarter dollars was expended in the development of this model residential area.