

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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MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH MRS. THEODORE LUDGATE, 30 JULY 1936.

Widow of Theodore Ludgate, of the celebrated "Deadman's Island" lease and reading of the Riot Act there, at City Archives, Mrs. Ludgate is a guest at the Elysium Hotel, Pender Street West, and visiting Vancouver for the Golden Jubilee.

DEADMAN'S ISLAND. THEODORE LUDGATE.

Mrs. Ludgate: "I was a bride at the time. I married Mr. Ludgate at the home of R.R. Hall, M.P., Peterborough, Ontario, on October 1st 1898, about the time of the fire which destroyed New Westminster, and then, in October 1898, we came to Vancouver. Mr. Ludgate's first wife had been an invalid for about seven years, then died, and he was very much upset about it. He had built a mill or two in Michigan and Illinois, then the Corn Exchange National Bank of Chicago asked him to build a mill for them, and he was to go and find a site somewhere; there were some young men associated with the bank, or their fathers or something were, and they wanted the young men to learn the lumbering business; it looked to be a good investment; they would be producing something."

HARRY HEMLOW.

"So, Mr. Ludgate came to Vancouver, and quite without prearrangement, met an old friend, Mr. Harry Hemlow" (formerly leaser, famous Sunnyside Hotel, and alderman on the first City Council, 1886, and one time purchasing agent, B.C. Electric Railway) "and Mr. Hemlow said, 'Why not build on Deadman's Island?' The whole thing originated with Mr. Hemlow's suggestion. That was the winter of 1898-1899; January 1899."

DEATH OF LUDGATE.

"We came back to Vancouver twice afterwards. Theodore built a number of mills. After he left Vancouver the first time, he went to Seattle and built the Seattle Lumber Co, and several mills in the interior of B.C.; the Big Bend Lumber Co.; then he brought in the Bowman Lumber Co.; and the mills at Revelstoke and Arrowhead. Then he lost his money, and died suddenly of a broken heart some twenty years ago. He went to visit a friend in Ontario, but on arrival said he was not feeling very well; Col. Wm. McBain at Camp Borden, it was 1918, said to 'Go out in the garden and rest, I will be out in a minute or so,' so Theodore got as far as the door, then fell down and died. His mother is buried in the same grave in Peterborough, Ontario."

ARREST OF LUDGATE.

"I was terribly frightened. A great big policeman, Mr. Murphy, came to the house, and tried to persuade Theodore not to cut the trees on Deadman's Island, but Theodore replied, 'I've got five hundred axes all ready.' I feared they might kill him. Then I saw the buggy coming, and his hands were fastened." (She demonstrated as in prayer.) "No, they did not put him in jail. Mr. J.B. Williams, your former City Solicitor, has recently written a nice article about it; it was quite nicely written, but I do wish someone would tell the truth; write a nice story and tell the truth about our grand men; dear old Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Mr. George Maxwell, the member. Why, all they wanted to do was to do something; make something. It was outrageous, why, they even had the school children who could hardly write their names, 'printing' their baby names on petitions, and they canvassed signatures, house to house." (Mrs. Ludgate spoke with forceful, but controlled, emotion.)

LUDGATE OF ALBERNI CANAL.

City Archivist: Mrs. Ludgate, did you ever hear of a Ludgate on Alberni Canal; there is a story or rumour that, early in 1864, the first child born on Alberni Canal was a Ludgate child, and that he had some connection with Mr. Ludgate of Deadman's Island?

Mrs. Ludgate: "Noooo, I don't think I do; I don't think his family had any interest on Alberni Canal.

"Oh, yes! That reminds me; isn't there a place called Port Alberni? Theodore's mother told me her brother, or brother-in-law, or something, went to Port Alberni in very early days, and from there went to Honolulu. I think, oh, that must have been long, long ago; before the '80s; he died an old man many, many years ago. He may be the one buried in San Diego."

Read and approved by Mrs. Ludgate, 14 August 1936.