

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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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH MRS. ELIZABETH NEWBURY, 756 EAST 10TH AVENUE, AND WITH MRS. J.J. HATCH, 597 EAST 23RD AVENUE, VANCOUVER, WHO, TOGETHER, VERY KINDLY CALLED AT THE CITY ARCHIVES THIS AFTERNOON, 24 FEBRUARY 1938.

BEARS IN MOUNT PLEASANT.

Remarks after Mrs. Hatch had read the article on the subject by Mr. William Fleming, published in June, July and August 1936, in the *Mount Pleasant News*, and captioned, "Memories of Early Vancouver." (See typed copies in book form, pages 7, 9, 17.)

Mrs. Hatch said: "My sister-in-law came up from Seattle and was visiting us, and took a couple of cushions—it was summer time, 1890 or 1891, because my son, who was born in 2nd April, was nine months old at the time, and he is now 48 years old—well, she took the cushions, and went out in the woods at the rear of our cottage, and placed them on a long log lying on the ground. The log was covered, on the top, with moss and ferns, and looked so pretty; you know how pretty those old logs looked; it seems a nice place to rest, and she took a book with her to read.

"There were no streets there in those days, but it was 597 East Twenty-third Avenue, because we have lived in the same house since—almost fifty years—on Twenty-third Avenue between Caroline and St. George Street, not in the city then, but in District Lot 301.

"Well, apparently the old mother bear was off hunting food for the three cubs, and the three cubs were under one end of the log, but they said she was up the tree just beside and above the cubs, and of course my sister-in-law was just arranging to spread the cushions on top of the log and lie down to read the story book, when the old bear came along."

DUCKS AND GEESE.

"We had been missing our ducks and geese, and were trying to guess what was taking them. We sent word downtown, and Bob Hatch and Mr. Winskill came up with dogs, guns, picks, axes, and all the men went off on a regular hunt, and came back with the dead bears. They saved the skins, of course, but I think the meat went down to the butcher shop downtown.

"At that time, all Mount Pleasant was woods; Mr. J.H. Hatch came in 1888, my husband in 1889, and we went out there to live; it was the old Edmonds property, and the government was selling it in lots; that was why we went out there."

BEARS. MRS. CHRIS WINSKILL.

"Mrs. Winskill, she still lives beside us, she had just moved out there, had just come up, and they were building a shack, and they had a little white dog which they had put in a split cedar picket pen so that they would not lose him. Mrs. Winskill was outside her shack, and all of a sudden saw a big bear take a bound clear over the picket fence into the pen after the dog. Mrs. Winskill jumped over and got the dog; it was a good big pen, or the bear would have got the little fellow before she let him escape from the pen."

COUGAR IN MOUNT PLEASANT. WATER WELLS.

"Then, we had an old fashioned well, with a windlass, rope and a handle you turned like a mangle to draw the bucket up. We were wondering what it was that was taking our ducks, so one day I was winding up the bucket, when a cougar bounded out right in front of me with a great curve of a bound; down went the bucket to the bottom of the well with a splash, and I ran into the house, and called to them to look out of the back window at the cougar in the yard. It was shot a few days later by Mr. Major, who lived at the corner of Twenty-fifth Avenue and North Road."

MOUNT PLEASANT EARLY DAYS. MRS. CHRIS WINSKILL.

"In those days Mount Pleasant was a wild place; I wondered why I had ever come to such a place; nothing but trees and forest, no roads, nothing. I remember the first woman I met. I was walking along in the trees when I heard a woman's voice—you know, in a silence, the voice carries a long way—I heard a woman's voice singing, 'We'll hang Joe Brock to a sour apple tree.' I said to myself, 'Goodness, gracious, whatever is that; there is a woman somewhere around here somewhere in the trees'; it was Mrs. Hudson."

BEAVERS AND BEAVER DAMS.

"The beaver dam was on Mrs. Winskill's place; we all used to go down there washing; went down there with our coal oil cans for pails, and did our washing in the beaver dam; we used to have to help each other in those days."

BIRTHS. DR. LANGIS.

Mrs. Newbury: "There was no such thing as a telephone; the nearest telephone was down at the Gurney cab stables, down at the foot of the Mount Pleasant hill a mile or more away, and many's the time I have dashed off across roots and stones and sticks until I was breathless, to try and call a doctor, and I remember one time, I was so angry, I couldn't get a doctor, and I had to do the best I could, and then when Dr. Langis did come it was all over, and the child in my arms, and I went for Dr. Langis, and it didn't disturb him a bit. He just said quietly, as though it didn't matter at all, 'Oh, I knew you were here and that everything would be all right.' Dr. Langis might have died wealthy if people would only have paid him. I used to say to him, 'Why do you attend to them if they never paid you,' and he'd say, in his quiet sort of a way, that 'it was all right; it was his duty'; you know his slow, quiet, calm way of talking."

TROUT. DOERING BREWERY. BREWERY CREEK.

"Trout; oh, there were lots of trout in the creek, Brewery Creek I think they called it; just east of Main Street; where Doering had his brewery. Go out in the creek and catch trout for breakfast; all kinds of trout in that creek."

CLEARING THE LAND. HIS WORSHIP G.C. MILLER.

Mrs. Newbury: "The Mayor" (Geo. C. Miller) "was just a kid then, about two feet high; his father used to drive for Mr. Bodwell, of Bodwell Road; the Millers lived in a two-room shack."

Mrs. Hatch: "We all did our own work in those days. I have used a ten-foot crosscut saw; they were building the road around the park in those days, and the men used to start off about four in the morning and walk all the way to Stanley Park; they were making the road, and we were also clearing the land around our own little place too; men and women worked. I used to saw logs, cedar logs, to make cedar shakes and pickets and home-made shingles; pickets for our garden fences, and shakes and shingles for roofs. The men would go off to work and leave us so much to do; tell me what to saw, and I would saw it."

"And my husband was a silver gilder in Toronto, had never done a day's work, comparatively, in his life; never lived in the woods before. We were clearing our land."

WATER WELLS. EARLY WATERWORKS. HOTEL VANCOUVER. EARLY SEWERAGE.

December 7th, 1937
Sechelt, B.C.

To City Archivist

Dear Sir:

Re Water Memorandum

I have to say the office buildings in the early days were only small, and got their water wherever they could; from wells and streams in various parts of the city. One good stream was where the present Post Office, Hastings and Granville, now stands; also everyone kept a good rain barrel.

The Vancouver Hotel had an artesian well, and the water was very good.

Almost all houses had wells, and those who did not have one got from those who had.

Of course, everyone knew the Waterworks was being put in, and they would soon have city water.