

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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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH HERBERT NEILL, NORTH VANCOUVER SQUAMISH INDIAN (NO INDIAN NAME), BORN AT MOODYVILLE, 1890; HIS FATHER WAS "LEON"; 26 JUNE 1935.

BURRARD INLET. FALSE CREEK. CAPT. VANCOUVER'S REPORT, 1792. INDIAN CANOES.

Major Matthews: Did you say that the Indians used to paddle their canoes through from False Creek to Burrard Inlet at Campbell Avenue? (Hastings Viaduct.)

Mr. Neill: "Yes. I know because I have done it myself."

Query: Didn't you have to drag the canoe? (Over the land.)

Mr. Neill: "Well, sometimes. When the tide was not high enough."

Query: Where were you going?

Mr. Neill: "Just shooting ducks around False Creek and in the inlet."

Query: When was that?

Mr. Neill: "I was old enough; born 1890."

Interjection by Andrew Paull: "Haxten" (who is over 100 years old and still living at North Vancouver with Mr. Paull) "Haxten told me that she used to cross from Coal Harbour to English Bay in a canoe."

Query: But did she say that they dragged the canoes?

Mr. Paull: "No. A canoe does not draw much; only two or three inches." (Note by J.S.M.: He means at very high tide; not otherwise.)

SECOND BEACH. COLUMBIA STREET. CARRALL STREET. DUPONT STREET.

Query: How about Hastings Street.

Mr. Neill: "Well, when I was a little boy, it used to be pretty swampy around the corner of Dupont" (Pender) "Street and Columbia."

Note by JSM: Capt. Vancouver stated, in his Journal, 1792, that the entrance to Burrard's Canal is almost blocked by an island (Stanley Park), and a smaller island (Deadman's Island) is beside it. It may be, at the hour the navigator was entering the First Narrows, that the tide was high, or very high, and that he saw Indians, in canoes, crossing at what is now Second Beach from English Bay to Lost Lagoon, or at Campbell Avenue from the harbour to the old head of False Creek, and, as he would not be able to judge the depth of water at these shallow, narrow passages from the surface of the water, he was justified in assuming that they were as navigable, almost as the First Narrows, and so assumed Stanley Park to be an island.