

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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FREDERICK WILLIAM PAMPHLET. MARY HARRIS.

“The third child, that’s me, was born in Victoria, in the same house, 30th August 1871, and I married Miss Mary Harris, daughter of” [blank] “Harris, not in a church, but by the Rev.” [blank]; “he was a Methodist minister. Our children are three sons and one daughter.

1. The eldest is Alford Clayton Pamphlet.
2. The second was John Piercy Pamphlet.
3. The third Frederick William Pamphlet.
4. The fourth and last is Olive.

“None of them are married. Mrs. Pamphlet and I now live at 322 Sixth Avenue West, North Vancouver, and our children live with us. Father died in Victoria about twenty years ago.”

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION AT CITY ARCHIVES, CITY HALL, VANCOUVER, 15 OCTOBER 1935, WITH REV. P.C. PARKER, RETIRED BAPTIST MINISTER, AGED 80, OF GIBSON’S LANDING, B.C.

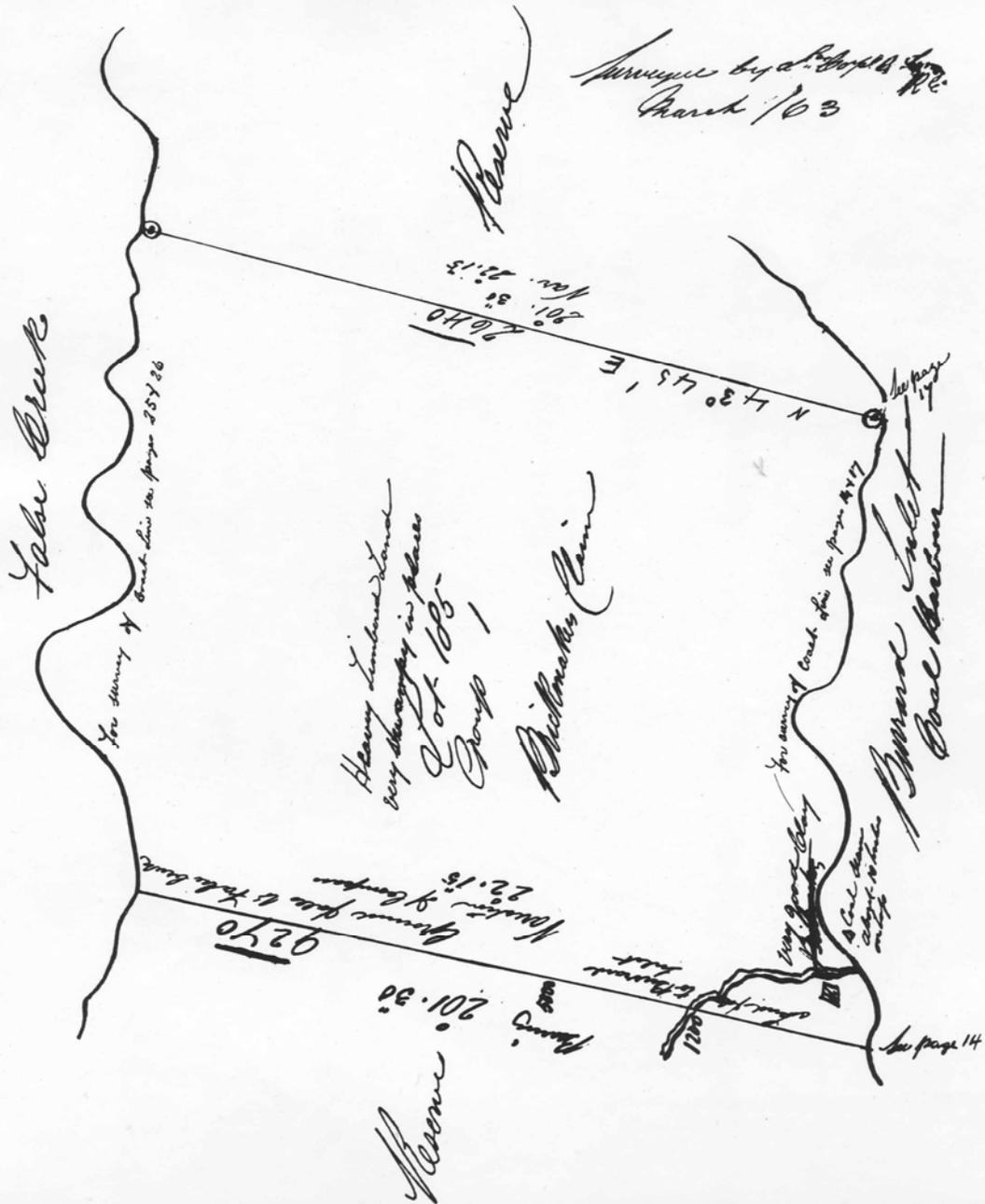
Introductory: Mr. Parker was one of the witnesses to John Morton’s will, is named as a trustee of some of its bequests, and, despite his years, is very active, wears glasses for reading only, and his memory is very clear. His wife of fifty years died this year; he has grandchildren in Vancouver. He lives alone in his home at Gibson’s Landing.

JOHN MORTON.

Mr. Parker said: “The way I became interested in the Mortons was that soon after my ordination in November 1879, I preached in the old Baptist Church at Salendine Nook, near Huddersfield, England. This church was the home church of John Morton. I came to Canada from England in 1883, was in Toronto for fourteen years, and early in December 1907, came to Vancouver, and was—temporarily for about seven months—minister at the First Baptist Church here on Hamilton Street. Afterwards I was at the Fairview Baptist Church.”

MORTON’S ARRIVAL AT BURRARD INLET.

“The way I recall that John Morton came to Burrard Inlet on a certain date is that he told me that he arrived in British Columbia on the 16th April 1862, having come up the Pacific coast, and that he arrived on Burrard Inlet on the 16th October 1862; both dates were the 16th, that impressed itself on my memory. After arrival at Victoria he took the first boat across to the Fraser River and up the Cariboo. I don’t know what happened much, but one story which he told me himself was that, whilst at Quesnel or some place near there, he was sitting down one morning getting his breakfast at a restaurant, when a man came in and called out, ‘Had anybody got any horse shoe nails?’; there was a sick man somewhere, and the doctor had been called to go on a long ride to the man, and the blacksmith was without horse shoe nails to shoe the doctor’s horse. Mr. Morton—he told me himself—replied that he had some, and he went and got twenty-two, and received one dollar each for them. It is just an incident, but it illustrates how careful Morton was. Morton was, like scores of others, disappointed in his search for gold, and returned to the lower mainland.”



Tracing of field notes, survey "Brickmaker's Claim" (D.L. 185, West End from Burrard st to Stanley Park) made—written instructions Col. Moody to Capt Parsons, 26 Jan 1863— by Lce-Corp-George Turner, Mar 1863. Showing Morton's "cabin, clay, coal seam, heavy timbered land, very swampy in places" Original Provincial Archives, copy City Archives, Vancouver.

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[photo annotations:]

Tracing of field notes, survey "Brickmaker's Claim" (D.L. 185, West End from Burrard st to Stanley Park) made—written instructions Col. Moody to Capt Parsons, 26 Jan 1863—by Lce-Corp-George Turner, Mar 1863. Showing Morton's "cabin, clay, coal seam, heavy timbered land, very swampy in places"

Original Provincial Archives, copy City Archives, Vancouver.

JOHN MORTON AND THE LUMP OF COAL.

“When he left the Cariboo, for a time he herded cattle on a ranch on the banks of the Thompson River, and hence came to New Westminster. Morton told me that it was *not* in a cobbler’s shop window that he saw the lump of coal. You cannot trust Joseph” (Morton’s son) “and, by the way, Joseph’s mother” (Morton’s first wife) “was also Morton’s cousin; so was Sam Brighthouse a cousin of Morton’s. The Mortons came to Salendine Nook about 1560 or 1561; they fled from Scotland owing to religious persecution. And first the church at Salendine Nook was Presbyterian, but there were few Scotsmen in England, and gradually the Mortons joined the Baptists. Brighthouse, as I have said, was Morton’s cousin, but Hailstone was a man they met on the way across the Atlantic.

“Joseph says that his father came on the first trip of the famous cable laying ship *Great Eastern* but that cannot be correct because Morton told me himself it was on a vessel—I cannot remember her name—which was sunk the next trip she made across the Atlantic by the Southern Confederate warship *Alabama*, and—well, the *Great Eastern* was not sunk.

“Anyway, Morton came down from the Cariboo, and he told me he saw the lump of coal in the only store of whipsawed finished lumber—the others were of logs—there was in the whole of New Westminster. What store the lump was in I don’t know. When he saw the piece of coal in the window he went inside the store to see the man in charge, and the man said that ‘There is the Indian’ going up the Port Moody Road. Morton chased after the Indian. Morton was not after the coal, he was after the clay; Morton was a potter. I don’t know if you know, but where there is coal there is clay under it, a seam of clay; sometimes the clay has been washed away, but usually it is under the coal. Morton came first; first of three friends to Burrard’s Inlet.”

16 OCTOBER 1862.

“Well, the Indian got the dugout. I asked Morton once where they landed, ‘Where about was it?’ and he replied that it was about where the Blue Ribbon Tea warehouse is now on Hastings Street West, east of Burrard Street. He told me that he came together with the Indian and they stopped where the Blue Ribbon Tea people are, they stayed all night under the trees; that was the 16th of October 1862. He told me that definitely and distinctly, just as he told me he had landed in Victoria on 16th April previously.

“The next morning the Indian took him through the Narrows, and around to a point somewhere near Siwash Rock, and the Indian showed him the coal, but said Morton to me, ‘I was not bothering about the coal; I wanted the clay, and there was no clay.’ So the Indian said to him, ‘I show you the white sand of English Bay,’ and when they got there, he pulled the dugout up into the bush and ‘brought me back to the very place we had started from.’

“John Morton told me he said to the Indian, ‘Take me back, take me back,’ and the Indian replied, ‘I take you back when the tide going in.’ So the two waited for the turn of the tide, and came back through the Narrows in the canoe into the inlet; they went right around again and through the Narrows.”

(Note by JSM: The salient features coincide with Joseph Morton’s narrative in *The First Settlers on Burrard Inlet*, but the detail varies.)

“‘As we passed through the Narrows,’ Morton told me he said to the Indian, ‘How deep?’ The Indian replied, ‘Totelem, totelem, totelem, totelem, totelem, totelem,’ six totelems. ‘I put the word down in a book,’ said Morton, ‘and found out afterwards that “totelem” meant ten yards, so that the depth was one hundred and eighty feet,’ and Morton told me that the Indian thought that was the depth because the Indian had brought 180 feet of fishing line to catch rock cod.”

BURRARD INLET A NATURAL HARBOUR.

“Morton told me, ‘I said to myself, “This is a natural harbour, and I’m going to locate here.”’ Oh, Morton had foresight. So Morton said, ‘What I did was this. I went up to New Westminster, and asked Judge Brew if that land had been taken up, and Judge Brew told me that there was no survey of the place,’ that he” (Morton) “would have to stake it out himself, and also, Brew told him that when he had done his duties” (legal requirements) “he could have it surveyed and would get his land.”

CHRISTMAS, 1862.

“So Morton told me that he came back. Morton never told me about Brighthouse or Hailstone. Anyway, Morton stayed there under the trees—stayed by himself—until a day or so before Christmas 1862. He got his log hut up, and then, as I understand it, Brighthouse and Hailstone came.”

(Note: the application for the land, signed by all three, is dated 3 November 1862, and witnessed by Brew.)

“Of course, he told me this, that he never went away from the place after staking it, not to go to work or anything. Finally, they found they could not make much out of it, and arranged with Judge Brew to get work to keep going” (see Joseph Morton narrative) “until the three years were up.”

MORTON’S OCCUPANCY DISPUTED.

“I have heard little of how he went to or from New Westminster, but here is an instance of Morton’s carefulness. One day he received a letter, and the letter was from somebody who said he had already staked the land which he” (the writer of the letter) “understood they were occupying; that he was sorry they were working on it, but if they would pay him a shilling a year as rent he would allow them to stay on.”

Mr. Parker, looking at photograph of the three partners’ application for land:

“I am surprised at this, for all three must have been there at the time, Brighthouse, Hailstone, Morton. I see that Morton’s name is the last signature on the application; he never told me where the other two were, but he did want them to come, but he came first. He said to me, ‘I wanted the narrowest part.’” (Coal Harbour end, and he got it in the end.) (For explanation, see Mrs. Morton’s narrative about white sands and Blackpool.)

Query: Did he ever say anything to you about drawing straws for who took the different parts when they divided it up?

Mr. Parker: “No.

“Morton said to me, ‘When we got the letter, Sam and Bill wanted to throw up, and give up the whole business; they would not do anything. I said, “No.” I said, “I’m not going to leave the place for anybody.”’ So Morton said, ‘I took the letter to New Westminster and to Judge Brew.’

“Now here’s another instance of John Morton’s carefulness. Morton told me that when he showed the letter to Judge Brew, he doubled under the signature so that the judge would not see it. Judge Brew read the letter, leaned back, heaved a sigh, and said, ‘I don’t know who has written this letter, but he is either a liar or a knave. You go on with your duties’” (legal) “and when your time’s up, you can have your land surveyed and get your papers.’ Morton told me confidentially who wrote the letter; it was Burnaby.”

DEADMAN’S ISLAND AND INDIAN TREE BURIALS.

“One morning—he told me this—it was April and he looked across towards what is now Stanley Park, and there was Deadman’s Island before him; it looked so beautiful; he was alone; he thought he would like to have it, so he took his boat and went across there. He told me the story one day when we were walking along Stanley Park Driveway in October 1911—shortly before he died—it was a beautiful morning, and when we got near Deadman’s Island, he told me the story. He went on that he took his boat, went over to Deadman’s Island, and tied his boat up, and as he did so he saw a box in a tree. He said, ‘I took my axe and knocked that box down, and opened it; there was a dead Indian sitting in it, so I skipped over to my boat and went.’” (Note by J.S.M.: This varies with other narratives of this incident.) “Morton continued, ‘I came back in a couple of days and put the box back; then I went to see Judge Brew about it at New Westminster. I drew a sketch of the island and handed it to Judge Brew, and Judge Brew looked at it and said, “That’s like the ace of spades”—the shape of it. “Now,” said Judge Brew, “I’ll tell you, Mr. Morton, we had better find out before you do anything further; we had better find out from the chief; it is evidently the island that is the burial ground of the Indians, and they may hold it sacred, so we must not offend them; better find out before we do anything.” The Indians called the island ‘Memelous Siwash Ille.’” (Ill-lee.) “So Morton decided he did not want the island. I answered him with: ‘Our footsteps tread where centuries ago, the red men fought and conquered, lost and won, whole tribes and nations gone like winters’ snow.’”

[Note:] Memelous, i.e., dead; illahee; i.e., house of slabs, cedar.

INCIDENTS WITH INDIANS.

“One day, there were two Indians came along bringing with them a squaw. At the time they did not understand the Indian language” (see Joseph Morton narrative) “—all three Englishmen were there at the time—and the Indians talked and talked. Mr. Morton and his two companions were at one end of the room; the Indians were inside and the squaw began to dance, and finally jumped over a bench. By and by they went away. Morton had put down the words they were saying, and finally found out that what the Indians wanted was, that they saw three men living there alone and thought they should have someone to look after them, and the squaw was showing that she was capable. The three men, at first, thought the Indians were there about land, and were a bit afraid at first, and thought the squaw dance was the war dance.”

INDIAN HANGING.

“The other story is that—Morton must have been alone—one day when he saw a lot of Indians coming across the bay, over Stanley Park way, some in canoes, some walking along the trail, beating tom toms, he was alarmed; thought they were coming after him, so in the little time that he had he fixed up a dummy in bed; hat at the top of the bed where a man’s head would be, boots at the bottom under the clothes with a bit of boot sticking out, and then he bolted up towards the Hastings Mill, and watched what would occur. By and by he saw that they had put something up a tree” (see Joseph Morton narrative) “and that the thing was twisting and dangling around as if it had been hung, and as the Indians did not go near his place he went back and found that they had hung an Indian woman—near the entrance to Stanley Park. This squaw was the wife of a chief, ‘Slippery Dick’ or ‘Nimble Dick’; one of his other wives had had a baby, and the squaw they had hung was one of the wives of the chief; she was jealous, and had pinched the infant’s throat and killed it. ‘Now,’ said Mr. Morton to me, ‘there had been a hanging in New Westminster; some man had killed another’ (I think it was Jack Sprague who was hung; Bishop Sheepshanks mentions it) and, in Morton’s phraseology, ‘Whitemans hung for killy whitemans, they hung squaw for killy papoose.’” (Note: Mr. Parker spent his early years among eastern Indians, hence squaw and papoose.)

EARLY ACCIDENTS.

“Another thing he told me. It was a case in which he had been saved from drowning; he had had two or three narrow escapes. He and Hailstone had gone over to what is now North Vancouver to get some poles; there were better poles over there; and coming back they fastened the poles to the top of the canoe and Mr. Morton got in the front of the canoe and Mr. Hailstone at the back, and when they thought the tide was right they came along, but were overtaken with the rush of the waters. They kept coming on and on and when they got to the landing place, Morton jumped out, the canoe tipped, and Morton had some time fishing Hailstone out; he” (Hailstone) “was nearly drowned.” (See Joseph Morton narrative.)

TRIP TO SAN FRANCISCO.

“When Morton was through with the preemption duties and they had got their deed to the land, Morton took a trip to San Francisco. He and some of the boarders where he was staying decided to go to England; they went down to get their tickets; others were before him, but he had put his baggage on board. But for some unexplained reason he got nervous, left the line of ticket seekers, went to the boat, got his baggage and went home. He regretted this and went back again to get a ticket, but his courage again failed him, so he went back home again, and they giped him a good deal. Next morning the landlady came to him waving her arms and said, ‘You lucky man! That boat has gone down with all hands.’ The vessel was the *Golden Age*.”

MORTON’S CHARACTER.

“I’ll give you an insight to Morton’s character; he was a very careful man, very thrifty, great foresight. One day just before I came here in 1907 there was a man doing some work for him on his house down at English Bay. Mr. Norton was pulling out some old nails out of boards, straightening them to use again; the carpenter he was employing would not use them; said he was mean.

"It was about that time that John Morton went to church one morning, and there was a Russian baron, Baron Uxgull or some such name, who was making an appeal for funds for a college for the Baptists in Russia, for training preachers for their churches. John Morton gave \$250 that Sunday at that service.

"I said to Mr. Morton afterwards, 'that if a man does not save he cannot give.'"

BAPTIST COLLEGE.

"Morton gave the property for a Baptist college, right where Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper's house was down in the West End; Hamilton, the engineer" (C.P.R.) "was consulted as to the best location, and the property was donated to the Baptist convention, but they did not pay the taxes and the property reverted to the city for nonpayment of taxes, and Morton bought it back. Mrs. Morton should have some letters which Mr. Morton wrote to Rand Bros., real estate agents, in which he expresses himself in regard to education for the Baptist ministry. He had a lawsuit, too, over some property down at the foot of Bidwell Street, where that sawmill was; there was a squaw or some Indian who had squatted there, and he lost his property." (Kanaka Ranch, Denman Street.)

MORTON'S WILL.

"I witnessed his will. He asked me over and over again to make his will for him, but I would not do it. I said that it was a legal matter and that I did not know anything about that sort of work. Mr. E.B. Morgan afterwards did it; you will see my initials to the changes, and I witnessed it. Mr. Morton was leaving a small annuity only to Joseph. I said, 'You cannot do it.' I said, 'Joe will have a legitimate cause for complaint, and people will sympathise with him.' He replied, 'If I leave more he'll only "sit" on it.' So he left Joe one thousand dollars a year instead of fifty dollars a month, or five hundred a year. Mr. Morgan said nothing during these conversations. What I said was on my own responsibility as a minister.

"When the started the Fairview Baptist church, he gave me three hundred dollars, and when they finished it, he paid off the whole thing that was unpaid. There was no furnace; 'Winter coming on,' he said, 'and no furnace'; he said he was going to get the very best furnace to be got, and he gave it. When Mrs. Morton dies the Baptist church will get \$100,000; originally I was the sole trustee, but since there have been some changes and just now it stands now I am not sure. I expect there will be some sort of friendly lawsuit to determine matters. Mr. and Mrs. Morton furnished all the funds for the Ruth Morton Church building during the Pastorate of the Rev. J. Willard Litch, and also paid off the indebtedness of the North Vancouver Baptist Church. There was no lack of generosity on the part of Mr. and Mrs. Morton."

As narrated to me, put down at once, 15 October 1935, and edited by Rev. Mr. Parker.

J.S. Matthews,
City Archivist.