

Early Vancouver

Volume Five

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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

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MEMORANDUM OF FURTHER CONVERSATION, 12 SEPTEMBER 1935.

I asked Mrs. Morton what prompted Mr. John Morton to leave a good home in Salendine Nook and seek his fortune in the wilds of the northwest of America.

“Just a boy’s love of adventure,” she answered, “wanted to go somewhere; wanted to do something. Mr. Morton went twice to the Cariboo; after they got to the head of navigation at Yale they had to walk, and slept in their blankets. Mr. Morton had no miner’s claim of his own; he worked for others—deep in the water, too—and he did well.”

MORTON COMES TO BURRARD INLET.

“You see,” she continued, “the way it was. He saw a great big lump of coal in the shop window at New Westminster, and they told him an Indian had brought it. His father’s pottery works had given him some knowledge of clay, and he knew that where there was coal there would be a certain clay nearby. The pottery works in Yorkshire did not make cups and saucers; not such fine pottery as that; they made the coarser kind of pottery such as crocks, cheap brown teapots and breadpots; they had a traveller who used to go off through the neighbouring counties and get orders, and sometimes he brought back the finer pottery from Staffordshire—cups and saucers. There were lots of weaving mills, too, near Huddersfield.”

COAL IN FIRST NARROWS.

“Well, it was arranged that the Indian should take Mr. Morton to where he got the coal in the First Narrows, but the clay there was of little or no value; there was so little of it. Mr. Morton often used to be asked about clay; they tried to get some up at Bowen Island; we were up there one day, and were walking along by the wharf” (see Joseph Mannion and Grafton, *Early Vancouver*, vols. 2 and 3) “and there were some bricks in the road we walked on, and Mr. Morton said scornfully that he did not think much of their bricks. He said, ‘That was where they tried to make bricks.’”

MORTON’S CLEARING AND CABIN. INDIANS ON BURRARD INLET.

“Well, Brighthouse and Hailstone would not stay on the land at Burrard Inlet; only Mr. Morton would stay.” (Joseph Morton says they took turns.) “He stayed by himself; Brighthouse and Hailstone were on the farm at Sapperton. Mr. Morton stayed in the cabin, and sometimes slept in the woods; he was afraid of the Indians. But he stayed there so long that, by and by, he learned to speak Chinook, and finally got very friendly with the Indians. His sisters used to send out to him from Yorkshire—‘to the three pioneers’ they were sent—some little skull caps made of coloured cloth, like the English public school boys wear to designate the school colours—and the Indians always like lots of colour, and the Indians were very well pleased when Mr. Morton gave them the coloured caps.”

INDIAN FOOD SUPPLY.

“Then again, he had a grindstone, and allowed the Indians to sharpen their axes, to grind their axes, and that pleased them too. Then they began to bring him ducks to eat. The Indians caught the ducks by subterfuge. They covered their canoes with brush and hid under it, and floated or paddled quietly down on the ducks; the ducks did not suspect there was anyone under the brush and came close. Then the Indians had a forked arrangement on the end of a stick, and when the ducks came under the brush they caught them by the neck in the forked stick.”

RUTH MORTON BAPTIST CHURCH.

“Mr. Morton was always very careful in his business affairs. He always investigated, and if he saw it was some worthy endeavour, he always supported it. That was how the Ruth Morton Church was built. They wanted his help, and it seemed to him to be a worthy cause.”

Read to Mrs. Morton, 18 November 1935, who approves of it.

J.S. Matthews.