

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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"Then the strangers" (Fraser) "went to go ashore. He drew his sword. It flashed in the sun, and that confirmed the opinion that they were gods. They got into conversation through making signs. Fraser wanted to go on to the sea, but the 'Tchwashins'" (?) (Point Roberts Indians) "and the Musqueams of the North Arm of the Fraser River were at war, and the old Indian chief, father of Chief Cashmere of Langley" (who died about 1925-1930) "made them understand that if they went past their camp that they would be killed either by the Tchwashins" (?) "or Musqueams.

"Fraser turned back from there and went up the river again, but before he went an axe was missed. The whitemen went back and made a search for the missing axe, and found it in the possession of a young Indian buck. They took it from him, and kicked his backside, which was a terrible insult to a young buck—if it had been a girl it would not have mattered—and there was quite a hubbub about this, and they were going to kill Fraser and wipe out the insult, but an old Indian who died about 10 or 12 years ago at Katsey persuaded them not to, as he explained that the whitemen were gods, and more numerous than the stars above, and that if they killed Fraser that his friends would return, and there would be none of the Indians left.

"Fraser was allowed to go.

"Two snows after Fraser came down the river with more canoes, but with different 'queer' music" (perhaps bagpipes) "and went on down to the sea.

"This story was afterwards confirmed to me by the Chilliwack Indians.

"Mr. Wilkie thinks that there may be confirmation of this story as he states that Fraser's diary does not record what he was doing for a period of two years—Fraser's diary is supposed to lapse from March 1806 for a period of about two years, perhaps lost or destroyed—and that the missing two years coincides with the Indian story that he came down two snows before, 1808."

(Note: my experience—several such—is that Indians get their fathers, grandfathers and great-grandfathers mixed up a bit. This story appears to be founded on fact.)

J.S.M.

As narrated to me.

J.S. Matthews.

SIMON FRASER, 1808.

The enclosed narrative was submitted after typing to Mr. Otway Wilkie for his approval.

It was pointed out to Mr. Wilkie that there was a question of doubt involved in the astonishing age to which the Indians mentioned would have had to have lived, but Mr. Wilkie argued that it was not only quite possible for them to have lived to the necessary great age, but also quite probable that they did. This representation was made to Mr. Wilkie two days ago at a long conversation on the matter in this office.

Mr. Wilkie preferred to have the story recorded exactly as it is typed.

J.S. Matthews.