

Early Vancouver

Volume Six

By: Major J.S. Matthews, V.D.

2011 Edition (Originally Published 1945)

Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1940-1945.

Supplemental to volumes one, two, three, four and five collected in 1931, 1932, 1934, 1939 and 1944.

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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Contact Information

City of Vancouver Archives
1150 Chestnut Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 3J9
604.736.8561
archives@vancouver.ca
vancouver.ca/archives



opened up a confectionery manufacturing plant, known as Nelson and Shakespeare Limited, Vancouver; it was at 149 Alexander Street, in a five-storey building. The business grew from a comparatively small beginning until it was employing more than sixty people; then we sold to the wholesale grocers, W.H. Malkin Co. Ltd., and they closed the business up. Finally, I became established in the general insurance business, and which I have followed ever since.”

Read and approved, 3 May 1943.

W.B.S.

CONVERSATION WITH AUGUST JACK KHAHTSAHLANO OF LOWER CAPILANO, NORTH VANCOUVER, SON OF KHAY-TULK, OR “SUPPLEJACK” OF CHAYTHOOS (END OF PIPE LINE ROAD, FIRST NARROWS), AND GRANDSON OF CHIEF KHAHTSAHLANO, I.E., KITSILANO, OF SAME PLACE, ETC., ETC., CITY ARCHIVES, 9 JULY 1943.

August very kindly brought me a basket of blackberries.

BLACKBERRIES, 1943. WEST VANCOUVER.

Major Matthews: How much?

August: “Four pounds; all you’re going to get this year. No blackberries; all gone. I go all along West Vancouver, that’s all I could find. No more. No blackberries this year. And cherries. No cherries; just few.”

MAKING CEDAR SLABS. MAKING CEDAR CANOE. FALLING CEDAR TREE.

Major Matthews: August. Did Indian cut cedar slab without falling tree; cut cedar slab from live cedar tree?

August: “Sure they did.”

Major Matthews: How?

August: “Well. You see this” (taking pencil and drawing.) “They pick a good cedar tree, the one they want; it leans a bit. Well. They put in an under cut, like this. Cut about half way through to the middle, then they drive a small wedge; small wedges; yew wood wedges, or deer’s horn. The tree begins to fall; it splits right up.

“You see, it split open while it’s standing up, and then it falls. Drive in the wedges; then the tree split right up to top, and then it breaks when the split goes so far. It goes so far till it gets there, and then it breaks.

“Don’t you see? The whole weight of the tree is on the uncut half, the half they did not cut, and it breaks away. Then the piece the Indians want hits the ground. About half the tree; other half remain standing up, like spike. Then they cut the piece what’s on the ground just the length they want for canoe, for anything, for cedar slab, for what they want it for, such as shakes, cedar shakes.”

INDIAN CANOES.

Major Matthews: First time I ever heard about this. Do they do that when they want log for canoe?

August: “Eh, eh. Yes.”

Major Matthews: Is it big enough?

August: “They’s always pick the right sized tree. The canoe is only half the log, and they’s got the best part of the log on the ground, and they’s cut off the part they want for the canoe.”

Major Matthews: How long would it take them to cut it down with a stone hammer and stone chisel?

INDIAN DAY OF LABOUR.

August: "Maybe one man one month and canoe finished—if he works every day from daylight to sunset. No eight hours in those Indian days. I remember, not my grandfather—he died before—but another man old enough to be my grandfather. I see him put a handkerchief around his head. Then he's got a little basket like that, with all his little wooden wedges in it, and he go off to work."

INDIAN TOOLS.

Major Matthews: What sort of a chisel?

August: "Well, they's used to use shale; like slate, it's hard; but when I's a boy they's got iron."

Major Matthews: Where did they make the canoes?

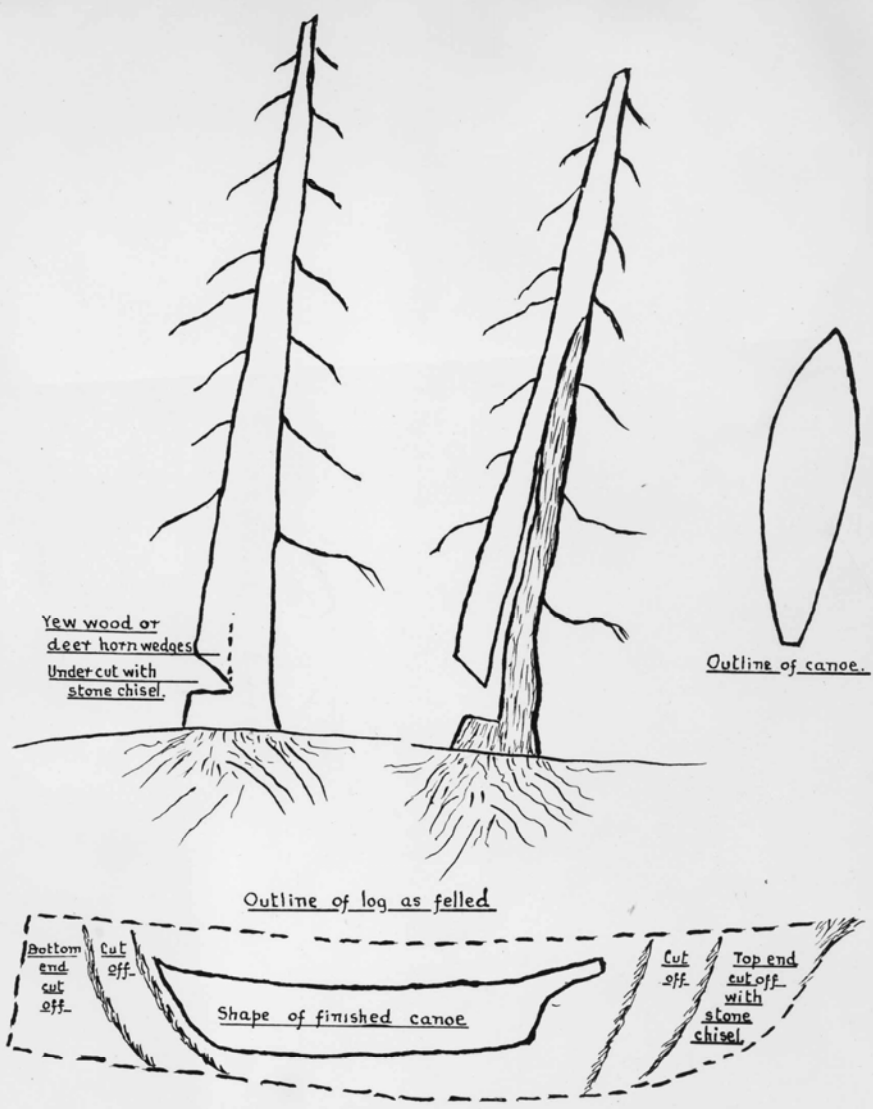
August: "Any place where there's a good tree. When the canoe made, take it to the beach; not take the log to the beach. No horse, no mule, all hand power."

NOTE BY J.S.M.

Mr. Khahtsahlano (August Jack Khahtsahlano is his legal name, and as such is registered under the Change of Names Act, Vital Statistics Record Office, Parliament Buildings, Victoria) shows in his drawing that, after a suitable tree was selected, a cut was put in severing the trunk to a depth of about half way through or more. Wedges were then driven in at a point where the cut was deepest, on both sides of the trunk, with the result that, due to the weight of the leaning trunk on the uncut portion of the tree, assisted by the force of the wedges in creating the commencement of a split, the split ultimately ran up the trunk and this caused the half which had been cut through to swing out, at the bottom, and the top of the tree to lean still more until finally, it toppled over. The uncut portion broke near the top when the pressure and weight exceeded its strength to resist. At the conclusion of the operation, the log lay on the ground with most of the branches of the tree still attached, and the uncut portion still stood upright as a tapering spike broken at the top.

City Archives, J
City Hall, 9
Vancouver.

.S. Matthews,
August 1943.



Indian method of felling cedar tree with stone axe and stone chisels; yew wood or deer horn wedges.

I asked August Jack Khaktsahlano if Indians cut cedar slabs from standing tree. He grasped this sheet of paper on my desk, and with a lead pencil, drew these few hasty strokes. After he had departed I traced over them with ink August neither reads nor writes.

Sketch to go with conversation of 9th July 1943.
City Archives Vancouver

J S Matthews

[photo annotation:]

Yew wood or deer horn wedges.

Under cut with stone chisel.

Outline of canoe.

Outline of log as felled.

Bottom end cut off.

Cut off.

Shape of finished canoe.

Cut off.

Top end cut off with stone chisel.

Indian method of felling cedar tree with stone axe and stone chisels; yew wood or deer horn wedges.

I asked August Jack Khahtsahlano if Indians cut cedar slabs from standing tree. He grasped this sheet of paper on my desk, and with a lead pencil, drew these few hasty strokes. After he had departed I traced over them with ink. August neither reads nor writes.

Sketch to go with conversation of 9th July 1943.

City Archives, Vancouver.

J.S. Matthews.

MEMO OF CONVERSATION, 12 JULY 1943, WITH MRS. W.B. IRVINE, OF MONTRÉAL, WHO HAS BEEN VISITING AT SIDNEY, VANCOUVER ISLAND FOR THREE MONTHS, AND IS NOW SPENDING A MONTH IN VANCOUVER BEFORE RETURNING TO MONTRÉAL.

She is staying at the residence of Mrs. N.F. Mussenden, 2915 West 37th Avenue, Kerrisdale, Kerr. 0725-R, and very graciously visited the City Archives today and remained for two or three hours conversing on old Vancouver, and looking at the Hamilton documents and paintings.

Note: Mrs. Irvine, née Bodington, is the daughter of Dr. George Fowler Bodington, M.D., pioneer physician of Vancouver, first honorary secretary of the Vancouver Reading Room, now Vancouver Public Library, and granddaughter of Dr. George Bodington, M.D. of Sutton-Coldfield, England, world renowned as the first medical practitioner to advocate the open air treatment for tubercular sufferers. About two months ago the *Vancouver Daily Province*, Saturday magazine section, published a half-page illustrated article on her grandfather and father. Her sister is Mrs. L.A. Hamilton of Toronto, widow of the late Alderman L.A. Hamilton of the first City Council, C.P.R. Land Commissioner who laid out the site of the City of Vancouver, upon whom the freedom of the city was conferred in 1938. Her son is Ronald Irvine, Esq., manager, Fairchild Aircraft (manufacturing) Company of Longueuil, Québec.

VANCOUVER, THE BEAUTIFUL.

Mrs. Irving said: "As I came west on the C.P.R. this spring, I was overjoyed to be back in beautiful British Columbia, and enraptured with Vancouver again. I was born in England, not far from Sutton Coldfield, and spent part of my girlhood in Vancouver. I was eleven years old when I left Vancouver to go to eastern Canada, and do you know I cried when we had to go away and leave it. I think Vancouver is the most beautiful place I know of, with its mountains and the sea and the green trees. Victoria is nice, very nice, but my heart is with Vancouver."

L.A. HAMILTON.

(After spending half an hour viewing the originals, in frames, of Mr. Hamilton's watercolours, and the album of photographs of the same paintings) "My brother-in-law was quite an artist, wasn't he? I sometimes wonder why he does not get more credit as an artist." (Note: his other accomplishments overshadow.)