

Early Vancouver

Volume Six

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

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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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CONVERSATION WITH MR. THOS. P. WICKS, BOX 248, NANAIMO, NOW RESIDENT WITH HIS SON, JOHN WICKS, 406 EAST 45TH AVENUE, WHO KINDLY CALLED AT THE CITY ARCHIVES THIS MORNING BRINGING WITH HIM A BROWN PAPER PARCEL, WHICH HE OPENED, AND PUT A SMALL COPPER KETTLE ON MY DESK, 21 NOVEMBER 1944.

JUDGE BEGBIE'S KETTLE.

Mr. Wicks: "This little kettle, according to the best information I have, belonged to Judge Begbie.

"You see, Judge Begbie was the only judge in British Columbia, and he had to travel long distances in horse-drawn vehicles, and they were slow, and sometimes when he was travelling on his way to hold court at some remote place, he would stop on the roadside and have a cup of tea, or a meal. He used to travel all the way from New Westminster to the Cariboo, and there were places where it was a long distance between stopping places.

"Judge Begbie did not travel alone; he had with him a constable by the name of Kirkup, a sort of sheriff, and I think he also acted as Clerk of the Court. Well, when they stopped by the roadside they had to make a little fire, and in bad weather, rain or snow, and everything on the narrow trail through the west forest was soaking, there was no dry material to start a fire. And further, there was no coal in the interior of B.C. at that time, but there was lots of charcoal. There were blacksmiths with forges to shoe horses, or oxen, or to make any other iron work, and they used charcoal; there was plenty of charcoal in the blacksmith's shops at stopping places. So the two men, Judge Begbie and Constable Kirkup, carried a little sack of charcoal with them, and when they stopped they would put the little kettle on a little brazier, which I have not got yet, and put in a little charcoal, and in no time had a cup of something warm ready.

"Well, up at a place about three miles east of Chilliwack there lived an old friend of Judge Begbie's called Kitchen; he lived near the river, and they named the road he lived on after him, 'Kitchen Road,' and as Begbie went by he would stop with his friend Mr. Kitchen. Kitchen had come out to the gold mining in California over the Panama route, and there was some close friendship between Begbie and Kitchen. And so on one of Judge Begbie's trips, he left the copper kettle and the brazier with Mr. and Mrs. Kitchen, because settlement had got thicker, and he did not want it any more. I knew old Mr. Kitchen, but I knew his son and his son's wife better because I worked for them, especially in the flood of 1894 when I helped to clean up his farm after the flood had destroyed his rail fences. I worked, voluntarily, to put them up; we all turned out in New Westminster to go up and straighten the farms out, and I was one of the volunteer workers. Mr. Kitchen, junior, was afterwards a member of parliament somewhere.

"So one day, about 1927 or 1928, Mrs. Kitchen—she had become a widow in the meantime—she was a very fine woman; well, I hauled her a fine load of vine maple wood, all split up and ready for the stove. She paid me for it, but she said that I charged her only such a small amount, 'I'm going to give you Judge Begbie's little copper kettle.' I was living in a little shack by myself at Vedder River, and she thought I could make good use of the little copper kettle.

"And that's the end of the story."