

Early Vancouver

Volume Six

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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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Footnote or Endnote Reference:

Major James Skitt Matthews, *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 6 (Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 2011), 33.

Bibliographic Entry:

Matthews, Major James Skitt. *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 6. Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 2011.

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GENEALOGY, PLOYART.

"I have six children. Vivian, Athol, Louie" (not Louis), "a girl; Marjorie, Claud, and the last one is John.

1. Vivian is farming in Oyster River, married, and has one daughter, who also married and has one child, my great-granddaughter.
2. Athol is married and is living in Seattle, but there are not any children.
3. Louie married a Mr. Spaetgens, who fought in the Great War, 1914-1918 with the C.E.F. and went from Saskatchewan, and they have two children; the son in the Navy now, and the daughter is still going to school; she's sweet; she's a lovely girl. They call her Patsy but that is not her name.
4. Marjorie married an American gentleman, Mr. Rogers, and lives in Las Vegas, Nevada, and is without children.
5. Claud; he is a physician; he is overseas now with the 3rd Canadian Division as a medical officer, rank of captain. He used to be at Lillooet, and practiced there; was up at Atlin one time. He married an American lady, Deborah Paulson, and they have two children going to school.
6. John is unmarried; he is in the army here, office work up at the military camp on Little Mountain.

CONVERSATION WITH WILLIAM BRIERLEY SHAKESPEARE, SON OF NOAH SHAKESPEARE, ESQ., M.P. FOR VICTORIA, B.C., OF 1350 ST. ANDREW'S STREET, NORTH VANCOUVER, WHO KINDLY CALLED AT THE CITY ARCHIVES THIS AFTERNOON AND REMAINED FOR AN HOUR'S CHAT, 29 APRIL 1943.

NOAH SHAKESPEARE, M.P. SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD.

Major Matthews: Did you get those copies, photostatic copies, of the telegram your father sent to Sir John A. Macdonald, June 15, 1886, asking financial assistance for the people of Vancouver who had been burned out in the great Fire of June 13, 1886.

GREAT FIRE, 13 JUNE 1886. ICE CREAM.

Mr. Shakespeare: "Yes, thank you. I came over to Vancouver the morning after 'The Fire,' came over on the old steamer *Amelia* from Nanaimo. I was a very young boy then, about seven, and there was only one building left standing, just a temporary shack of new rough lumber, which had just been thrown up, and where refreshments were being served to those who came near it; it was somewhere in the neighbourhood of where Granville and Hastings Street meet now; somewhere there. There was not a building in sight other than that one; nothing but charred stumps. I was a boy, and accompanied Mr. Blakeway; he was a druggist in Nanaimo, and he volunteered to buy me as much ice cream as I could eat, with the result that I ate about, well, I should think I must have had twenty, more or less, with the usual results—I suffered; this was in Vancouver after we arrived. Mr. Blakeway afterwards moved to Vancouver and established a drug business here, and was burned out in the second conflagration" (1887.)

"You see, in those days, there was no such thing as ice cream factories; everybody made their own ice cream, and it was infinitely nicer ice cream in consequence. I am sure it was the day after the 'Fire,' but I am not so sure where the ice cream came from; it is possible that we brought it over with us on the *Amelia*; quite likely, or it might have come from the numerous parcels of stores which were rushed to the distressed of Vancouver from New Westminster, Victoria and elsewhere. I don't recall the *Amelia* stopping in Vancouver long; just a few hours; there was no place where we could stay; there was nothing to do save stroll around, and no place to stroll; everything was black stumps; so we went back again to the *Amelia*. You see, the people at Nanaimo got word by telegraph that Vancouver had been burned, and next morning they were curious to see it, and I suppose, humanely, do their part in sending over food and stores, so they put the steamer *Amelia* on, and those who wished to, came over; the boat was crowded; she was only a small boat. You see, it was impossible to stay here; it was impossible to get anything to eat, so they all went back again on the boat."

THE FIRST HOTEL VANCOUVER. "AWAY OUT IN THE CLEARING." GRANVILLE STREET.

"One day, fully four years after—I was just a youth at the time—I came over again; got off the boat and went for a walk. I walked up Granville Street; it seemed an awful long way; Granville Street was a well-defined roadway with a wood plank sidewalk; anyway, I kept on walking and walking, when to my surprise right in front of me I saw the old, the first, Hotel Vancouver, and I said to myself, 'Why on earth did they put this away out here?' It seemed so far away from any other activity."

Note by City Archivist: Memory is a treacherous thing. It was probably 1890 when Mr. Shakespeare came the second time, and, as for the ice cream, there is a possibility that the shack of which he speaks was in the hollow directly below the corner of Hastings and Granville streets, where there was a "draw" which came up from the shore, and it was in that "draw" that the C.P.R. contractors, who were making the first Cordova Street, sheltered their horses and wagons from the fiery blast; they were back of the Fire, as it were, and it may have been that they had a shack for their tools there, and, naturally, it would soon be converted into a food station. Or it may have been near Spratt's Oilery, at the foot of present day Burrard Street, which had a wharf where a steamer could tie up, and which was being used as a shelter by the homeless people. J.S.M.

SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD. NOAH SHAKESPEARE.

"But, back to Sir John A. The first time I saw Sir John A. was in Victoria; it was several years after he was elected member of parliament for Victoria, and at that time my father was M.P. too. Sir John laid the cornerstone to the new addition to the Methodist Church—we were Methodists—on Broad Street, Victoria. Sir John had become a member of parliament for Victoria some years previously; he had been defeated in his own constituency of St. Catharines, Ontario, and the Victoria constituency had been 'opened up' for him, and he went in without even appearing in the constituency he was to represent. There were a great number of fine people in Victoria in those days; I often think about them."

NOAH SHAKESPEARE.

"Father had one Christian name only, Noah. My second name is Brierley; that was the name of the place where he was born in Staffordshire, South Staffordshire. He came to British Columbia around the Horn in a sailing ship, and six months later arrive at Esquimalt, which was then a naval station, and at Victoria there was only a fort. I don't recall the year or the name of the ship, but one way of finding it would be that Mother came soon after, and came on the same ship as Mrs. David Spencer, of the big department store."

NANAIMO. MRS. SHAKESPEARE.

"Nanaimo was then the only settlement, so Father proceeded there and found employment at the Vancouver Coal Company; he was something above ground; he was not down in the mine, and then, in about a year, he sent for Mother and his only son, Fred, who died in Victoria about six months ago, aged 82. The home in Nanaimo where Mother was domiciled was constructed of logs; it would be, I think, on Chapel Street now, anyway, right near the water, not far north of the Court House, over the water where the C.P.R. steamers dock now. All the furniture in the home was made by Father; made it himself. Some years later, he moved to Victoria and remained there the balance of his life.

"At Victoria he went to work for some pioneer photographer, and after about twelve months, his employer visited the Old Country, and before going sold out to Father who continued the business of photography for some years; his photographs were mostly portraits; then he too sold out and entered the real estate business."

MAYOR OF VICTORIA. MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT.

"He was mayor of Victoria for two terms, then he was elected to the House of Commons at Ottawa, and after serving eight years, and passing through two elections, he became postmaster at Victoria for thirty years until his retirement in, I forget the year. He died at the age of 84, and is buried in the Ross Bay Cemetery, Victoria."

MRS. NOAH SHAKESPEARE COMES ON SAILING SHIP.

"Mother was Miss Eliza Jane Pearson, but I do not know much about her father except that she, too, came from Brierley Hill, same place as Father, and that they were married in Brierley Hill, and that she

was Methodist, so that the records of that church would show. She, too, came on a sailing ship, with my brother Fred, who was then about a year old, and it must have been about 1859 or 1860, somewhere about there, anyway; it was the same ship that Mrs. David Spencer, of the David Spencer department stores, came.

“She went up to Nanaimo where Father had the house ready for her. Fred may have been two years old. Mother died about 1937, and is buried beside Father at Ross Bay Cemetery.”

SHAKESPEARE FAMILY.

“After her arrival, six children were born; we were a family of seven, six sons and one daughter, and of these there are living today Maria, now Mrs. F.T. Berryman, of Vancouver, and Percy S. Shakespeare, of Victoria, and myself, of North Vancouver.

“The eldest, Fred, he died, as I have told you, about six months ago, leaving four children. The son is now resident in Seattle, Washington, and the daughters are Mrs. Patton, wife of a Victoria barrister, and Miss Hazel, who is in Victoria, and Miss Una, now on war duty in England.

“Harry, the next son, died unmarried many years ago; he was drowned in Seattle; and the others died young, almost infants, and then came Percy, now retired in Victoria. I was the sixth child, William; Percy was the youngest and completed the seven.”

WILLIAM B. SHAKESPEARE. JOHN S. SHAKESPEARE.

“I married Miss Winnifred Gertrude Raymond of Victoria, 1904, and at the Centennial Methodist Church, Gorge Road, Victoria. Miss Raymond was the daughter of John Raymond, also of Victoria, a London, Ontario family, who had lived in Victoria a number of years, but were not what Victoria people exactly call pioneers. Our family consists of two sons and one daughter.

“Raymond Noah Shakespeare, the barrister, is of the legal firm of Killam and Shakespeare, barristers, Royal Trust Building, partner of Cecil Killam. John Sidney Shakespeare is also a barrister, and practiced law for seven years in Vancouver with Griffin, Montgomery and Smith, then one year with the Toronto General Trust Company in charge of the estates department, and then became manager for Vancouver of the Montréal Trust Co., and was recently called to the head office of the company in Montréal, where he is now. Raymond is married but there are no children. John is also married, and has two children, Mary and Sydney, spelt differently to his father. John married Miss Marmo Cross of Calgary, a very old pioneer family of Calgary.

“My daughter is Betty, not Elizabeth but Betty, and strange to say, she never had a name until she was old enough to choose her own, which was when she was about twelve. Her birth was never registered, at least, not until her brother Raymond—he was a lawyer and knew about these things—he was astounded when he found out it was not registered, and he registered it. This is what happened.

“When she was a very small baby, when her brother Jack first saw her, he said, ‘Why, Mother, she’s no bigger than a bunny,’ and she went by the name of Bunny until she reached the age when she resented it; she didn’t like other girls calling her ‘Bunny.’ So the outcome of it was when it was registered she selected her own name, and she changed it herself, and Raymond registered it. Afterwards, she married John A. Coleman, partner in the Consolidated Coal Company, Vancouver, and today, Mrs. Shakespeare and myself, and Mrs. Coleman, that is, Betty, are all living together in the same big house at 1350 St. Andrew’s Avenue, North Vancouver.”

WILLIAM B. SHAKESPEARE.

“As for myself. I was educated in the public schools at Victoria, and afterwards spent a year in England at Prospect College, Storbidge” (sic) “I think it is in, or just out of, Staffordshire. My grandfather was alive at the time, and he was quite an old man, and he had never seen any of the family, and my people thought he would like to see me before he died. I was born January 24, 1877, and went over to England when I was fourteen. I came back and was apprenticed to the jewellery business, Pennock and Clayton, in Victoria, and afterwards opened up a business of my own in Victoria, and after seven years, sold out to W.H. Wilkerson. Then I came to Vancouver about thirty years ago—I am poor on dates—and took a position with W.B. Saunders, the jeweller, and after that, during the real estate boom days, went into the real estate business, ‘on my own,’ as they say, and finally formed a partnership with Arthur Nelson, and

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 KHAHTSAHLANOUGH, 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?