

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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ACROSS FALSE CREEK, TOW THE PIECE OF THE 1897. From top of tree stumps opposite at what is now the southeast corner of Seventh Ave and Main St. This is the "New Road," formerly "False Creek Road," latterly Westminster Ave and Main St, but west of the present location. To avoid Steeper grade, Seventh Ave crosses between two street, pier of Seventh Ave appears in lower right hand corner. House on right believed to be Blair's, first in the town. Cordwood stacked on tall trees, and beside big burned stump. Surveyors at work, perhaps fixing location, Westminster Ave, or making contour map made about that date. Log (two white patches) of tree, fallen across road, cut away to permit passage, beyond which road is cordwood, perhaps wet ground, where skunk cabbage grows. "Bob" Spink's cottage (white tent) is on pile, and over water of false creek, present location. 1805 Main St. (see photo PAF 8, N 817). W.E.B. travel, conversion, is May 1933 May "Bob" Spink's my partner (swampy) Spink's, had a house on pile opposite the bungalow; we said him the land, before the fire for \$200. The bungalow was beside the road, east side, just across from Spink's, and what was afterwards Front St (first Ave). Those who fled Great Fire, bivouaced here night of 13-14 June, and fled by New Westminster (sandwich). Photo illustrates how "The Knick in Main St" originated. In trail along top of projecting point of land, observe narrow sidewalk from bridge, see in end, Bridge Hotel, north end.

Photo presented, 1946, by Mr. John Leask, re Hamilton, Colingwood, Ont (letter, 8 Hamilton). City Archives, 2-3-01. Lens 3, black & white building is on N.W. cor. Hastings St., City Hospital, and Regina Hotel (see directly before Brockton Pt., Compare with photo Bailey Bros., X 188. "Anticover" from the Swick, First Baptist Church (left) was already over Bridge Hotel.



Item # EarlyVan_v6_020

[photo annotation:]

Across False Creek, now Mt. Pleasant, 1887. Probably April 1887. From top of tree, stump or pole at what is now the South East corner of Seventh Ave. and Main St. This is the "New Road," formerly "False Creek Road," latterly Westminster Ave. and Main St., but west of the present location to avoid steeper grade. Seventh Ave. crosses between two nearest poles, part of Seventh Ave. appears in lower right hand corner. House on right believed to be Blair's, first in Mt. Pleasant. Cordwood stacked in tall trees, and beside big burned stump. Surveyors at work, perhaps fixing location Westminster Ave., or making contour map made about that date. Log (two white patches) of tree, fallen across road, cut away to permit passage, beyond which road is corduroy over swampy wet ground where skunk cabbage grows. "Bob" Spinks cottage (white lean-to) is on piles, and over water of False Creek, present location, 1605 Main St. (see photo P.G.F. 6, N.G.F. 1.) W.E. Graveley, conversation, 16 May 1933, says "Bob" Spinks, my partner, Graveley & Spinks, had a house on piles opposite the bivouac; we sold him the land before the "Fire" for \$200. The bivouac was beside the road, east side, just across from Spinks', and what was afterwards Front St. (First Ave.) Those who fled Great Fire, bivouacked here night of 13-14 June, and fed by New Westminster (sandwiches.) Photo illustrates how "The Kink in Main St." originated in trail along top of projecting point of land (observe narrow sidewalk from bridge, south end). Bridge Hotel, north end.

Photo presented, 1940, by Mrs. John Leask, née Hamilton, Collingwood, Ont. (sister L.A. Hamilton.) City Archives. J.S.M. Long black and white building is on N.W. cor. Hastings St. City Hospital, and Regina Hotel immediately before Brockton Pt. Compare with photo Bailey Bros. X 608 "Vancouver from the South." First Baptist Church (white roof) directly over Bridge Hotel.

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH MR. CHRIS WINSKILL, 575 EAST 24TH AVENUE, WHO VERY KINDLY CALLED AT THE CITY ARCHIVES—HE WAS PAYING HIS TAXES—THIS MORNING, 19 OCTOBER 1943, AND STAYED TO TELL US, AND LAUGH AT, EARLY DAYS IN VANCOUVER, ESPECIALLY IN MOUNT PLEASANT.

BEARS IN MOUNT PLEASANT, 1896.

Mr. Winskill said: "I am still there, 575 East 24th Avenue, been there, well, I moved there 10th April 1896. Bought it in my wife's name so that if anything happened to me she would have a home. Guess I wouldn't have had it now if I had not done that.

"Talking about bears. She" (Mrs. Winskill) "was hanging out her washing on the line, and the oldest boy called her attention to the bear sitting on the stump watching her putting out the clothes, so she picked up a stick of stove wood, and threw it at the bear, and said, 'Shoo.' Then the little dog, the little Scottie terrier, he came out, and he went after the bear to heel him, and the bear went over the fence with the dog after him. It was a rail fence, a snake rail fence. Then the dog, he was heeling the bear, and was underneath him" (the bear) "and cutting the bear's feet, so that the wife thought the dog might get hurt, and she went over the fence, the rail fence, too, after the dog. The wife was after the dog, and the dog was after the bear." (And he laughed.) "Those little Scottie dogs are heelers, and she was afraid the dog might get hurt.

"Then, while she was going over the fence one way to assist the dog, the bear came back over the fence another way to go after her, she went back over the fence, but when the bear got on top of the fence and he found he was clear of the dog, he decided to stop there, on top of the fence. So the wife called the dog to come into the house, and she went to the window to see what the bear was doing. He stayed there awhile, on top of the fence, and found that the dog was gone, and he spied a hen and her brood of chickens on top of a stump. I suppose they had gone there because they were frightened; it was the highest place they could find, but it was not high enough. So the bear gets down off the fence, and sneaks over slowly and carefully to the stump, and reaches up. Bears go very stealthily, and can stretch and reach a long way.

"So he sneaks closer and closer to the hen roosting on top of the stump with her chickens—half grown little things—and then, like a flash, he shoots out his paw, opens his mouth wide and sweeps in a chicken; in goes a chicken, feathers and all. Then he did it again. He got three of them altogether. When I got home, the wife told me about it, and I laughed, and she got 'mad' at me."

BEARS. BEAVER DAMS. BEAVER. 23RD AND 24TH AVENUES EAST. CAROLINA STREET. ST. GEORGE STREET.

“Later on, well, the dam, the beaver dam, was right down below the house, 500 block, between 23rd and 24th avenues, near Carolina Street, though at that time it was called Frederick Street. I think Frederick Street was one way and Edmonds Street the other; changed now, and St. George and Carolina streets and 23rd and 24th avenues. So one morning the bear came again after the chickens, and I heard him, but there wasn’t a gun in the house.”

HATCH’S, MOUNT PLEASANT.

“So I went over to Hatch’s in the next block to get my gun, but coming back with the gun the bear heard me, but I saw him, but too far away to shoot with small shot, with a shot gun. So I sent word down town to Charlie Hoffman—I don’t know how you spell it; may be Haughman; anyway, a German name—to bring out the hounds—these fox hounds, you know they are used for timber wolves, spots on them—and he came out and put them on the trail of the bear. The bear had been seen that morning sitting on the beaver dam” (note: where the women did their washing) “and in fifteen minutes I got three bears.”

Major Matthews: What did you do with them?

BEAR MEAT.

Mr. Winskill: “Took them down town to the butcher shops, down to McIntosh’s butcher shop on Cordova Street, and sold them for meat. They were good bears, not too tough, and at that time Vancouver people were not afraid of eating bear meat like I hear they are now.”

WILDCAT. HERBERT GINGELL.

“Any wild cats. Sure, great big fellow; a wildcat is a big animal; bobbed tail. Lynx, I think they’ve got long tails; anyway, we always called them wildcats; bobbed tail. The wildcats used to get the wife’s chickens and ducks. Herb Gingell shot one within a block of the house one day, and wounded it, but he had no more shells so came over to my house to get a gun and some shells. Everybody was out, but the back door was unlocked, but he didn’t know it. So he tried the front door, and then he pushed on it with his shoulder to try and push it in, but the panels gave way, and he broke the door instead, and didn’t get in.” (Mr. Winskill laughed.) “So he went back to the wildcat, the cat, and found he had shot it over the small of the back; it was disabled, so with a dog and a club he managed to kill it.

“He was a big one; about four feet and a half from tip to tip, and mind you, the wildcat’s tail is short; it is a bobtail.

“My wife used to shoot at them with a gun and scare them away, to keep them from the ducks. I shot at one there one morning with a gun I was not used to, but I missed him; I was not used to that gun, so I went and got my own, and chased that wildcat; did not go to work that morning, not until 10 o’clock, but I didn’t get him.”

GROUSE. PHEASANTS. (MAYOR) MILLER’S.

“There were lots of grouse around there. I got seventeen one day out in the old Tea Swamp, out in the marsh. There was a little knoll, a sort of mound, behind Miller’s place, about 17th and 18th avenues. I got seventeen grouse in an hour one day; I got them all in a bunch. Why, I’ve shot grouse from my house, sitting up in the tree from my house; it was all wild around there at that time.”

Major Matthews: Done the same thing, almost, myself. Down at the foot of Ash Street, just west of it, at the mouth of the creek; shot duck from the verandah of my little white cottage.

Mr. Winskill: “You see, I was always a hunter, always. I liked to be where the game were. I remember when the pheasants came. It was against the law to shoot them. The pheasants came to Mount Pleasant up the old North Arm Road, now Fraser Avenue, and got in the gardens. Herb Gingell had a partner by the name of Major, and he used to raise vegetables, and when he saw the pheasants, the birds, in his garden, he did not know what birds they were, so he came over to my house and called me over. So I took a gun.

“Herb Gingell’s dogs would put grouse up, but the dogs wouldn’t work on the pheasant scent; I suppose the dog thought they were chickens. So I told Herb there was nothing there, but he said there was. It was all bush, and the pheasants were in the edge of the timber. So I walked up, and up jumps a bird, and I shot. It was a hen pheasant” (and Mr. Winskill laughed.) “I saw the bird sideways and it looked like a grouse to me. I told Herb it was a heck of a thing to bring me over to shoot tame pheasants, so we had a bird on our hands. I took it home and my wife cooked it, and I told old Major he had better keep quiet about it, about me shooting out of season. It was queer, but the dogs wouldn’t work on that pheasant scent.”

KNIGHT ROAD. HENRY STREET.

Conversation, 23 [or 26] October 1943, with Calvert Simson, third storekeeper, Hastings Sawmill Co., and executor of the estate of Robert Knight.

“Bob’ Knight, I buried him in my plot on Mountain View Cemetery. He was born in Scotland August 3rd 1829, and died in Vancouver April 21st 1913. Old Cariboo miner. Came to Canada via Panama, and walked across the isthmus—I think Bob said it was 29 miles—then up to Victoria.

“He had a clearing out in South Vancouver, 10 acre clearing. I used to go out there and visit him. He sold it to Henry, the nurseryman. Knight Road is called after Bob Knight, and I suppose Henry Street, the next street, is after Henry, the nurseryman” (Mr. J. Henry.) “Here is a photo of Bob, and his bushy white whiskers.

“And this is a tax notice for the land, Municipality of South Vancouver, 1895.

“Robert Knight. D.L. 391-2, Blk, 17, 10.4 acres, \$200.00 per acre, Impmts. \$600.00. Total \$2680.00.

“D.L. 302 Blk. 60 Lot 6-11 \$50.00 per lot, wild land \$300.00.”