

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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The first party to climb Grouse Mountain was Sidney Williams, and Phil Thomson” (Vancouver Yacht Club); “just those two. There had been a Major Burnett here who had tried, together with the Rev. Norman Tucker of Christ Church, to climb Mount Crown and they failed to break through the underbrush, so Sidney Williams and Phil Thomson made it by following up Mosquito Creek, up on to Grouse Mountain, and over the ridge as far as Goat Mountain. They gave the names to these peaks, Grouse, Dam and Goat.”

Major Matthews: Why?

Mr. Edwards: “On Grouse, they shot quite a number of blue grouse; from the top of the next peak, which they called Dam, they could see the old intake dam on the Capilano River; and on the next, which they called Goat, they shot two goats; that was the way it was, how Goat, Dam and Grouse got their names.

“Sidney Williams asked me if I thought the names appropriate, and I thought they were very good. We organised a party about ten days later—that was in October 1894—this party consisted of Sid. Williams, who was a surveyor in partnership with Dawson, of Williams Bros. and Dawson, surveyors” (Dawson was afterwards Surveyor-General), “Ernest Cleveland, the present chairman of the Vancouver Water Board; Knox—I forget his Christian name, but I think he lived at Duncan and was quite an experienced climber; Parkinson, who was a surveyor; and myself; this is five in all. I took up a camera.

“I took a photo of the four others, and I do not know what became of the negative, but I know that Dr. Cleveland has a photo of the party. We made the trip, and blazed the trail from the waterfront to the top of Grouse in four hours; we blazed the trail from Mosquito Creek, below the falls on Mosquito, to the top of Grouse.”

MOUNT CROWN, NAMED IN 1859. “SLEEPING BEAUTY.”

“The following year, 1895, Knox, Parkinson and I think Cleveland—there were four, including myself—climbed Mount Crown. We followed the same route, climbing Grouse and over the ridge to Goat, then down Goat and up Crown. This was the latter part of June 1895. Sam Robb of the *World* wrote a most fantastic account of our trip. Sam said we had seen an avalanche, and one of the ‘Lions’ had fallen off and slipped down.”

JERVIS INLET. PRINCESS LOUISA INLET. MOUNT GEORGE EDWARDS.

“I have been up Jervis Inlet lots of times. The way it came about that Mount George Edwards was named after me was that Arthur Dalton, being an old friend of mine; I had no idea he was going to name it after me. I had climbed with his father, W.T. Dalton, the architect, but I have done no climbing on Jervis Inlet; I have climbed on Bute Inlet, the unnamed mountains back of Orford Bay, and at the head of Bute Inlet; I was just hunting for game.

“I have been up peaks in the Rockies; Mount Stephen; I did not get to the top; I started out not intending to climb it; I just wanted to take a photograph of the valley, and after taking the photograph I started going on up until I realised the shoes I had on were getting pretty thin, and by the time I got back they were pretty near off my feet.”

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH FORMER ALDERMAN F.E. WOODSIDE OF B.C. CHAMBER OF MINES, 402 WEST PENDER STREET, VANCOUVER, 23 JULY 1941.

PRELUDE.

I noticed in the *News-Herald*, 23 July 1941, this morning, that a dinner had been held to celebrate the opening of the Vancouver Airport, ten years ago, but did not see that former Alderman F.E. Woodside was present, so telephoned him at his office.

J.S. Matthews.

VANCOUVER AIRPORT. ALDERMAN FRANK WOODSIDE.

Major Matthews: I have heard, Mr. Woodside, of a man who went “ploughing” around in the muskeg on Lulu Island, got himself all “plastered” with mud and his feet wet; he was looking for an airport for Vancouver. Do you happen to know him?

Mr. Woodside: "Yes, know him very well indeed; have known him all my life.

"You see, people were beginning to get interested in airplanes; they were coming up here once in a while, oh, once a year, and there was no place where they could land, and I got an idea about an airport, that they ought to have a place in Vancouver where airplanes could land. I was on the Council at the time; it was in the early twenties. Major D.R. McLaren—he's an official of Trans-Canada Airlines now back east—he was out here, and I talked it over with him, and I took it up in the Council; you'll find it in the records.

"So I went out on Lulu Island, and tramped up and down for days trying to find a piece of land which I could show Major McLaren and ask if that would do. And by and by, I took him out there and showed him a piece of land; it was all peat and muskeg, but we thought it might be drained, but they sent a man out from Ottawa, and he said it was no good, so we gave that up.

"Then we got an idea that we could make something of the flat land at the mouth of the Seymour Creek, Second Narrows, but that turned out no use, too.

"So the end was we got a piece of land on the north side of, and adjoining, the Lansdowne race track; it belonged to someone, I forget his name" (note: it may have been Mr. Virtue) "but we took a lease on it. That was a couple of years or so after I started hunting for a site for the airport."

Note: excepting only 1920 and 1923, Alderman Woodside was on Council from 1912-1928, both years inclusive, so that it is hard, without examining records, to say what year the above refers to.

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH MR. DAN MATHESON OF 777 IRWINTON APARTMENTS, AND OF MAYO, YUKON, WHO VERY KINDLY CALLED AT THE CITY ARCHIVES, 24 JULY 1941.

DAN MATHESON. CORDOVA STREET. VOLUNTEER FIRE BRIGADE.

Mr. Matheson said: "Cordova Street, we planked it with two by ten planks, all the way from Powell Street to Cambie Street; it was very wet along there. Well, of course, we had no fire department here at that time, so there were three places where we sank wells, ten feet square by twelve feet deep, and these wells were underneath the wood planking, and there was a man hole cut through the plank to get the fire suction hose. We had an old fire pump; I don't know where it came from; it had steam, and we dropped the suction hose into the well; then, when we pumped one well dry, we had to go to the next well."

WATER FROM WELLS. RATS.

Major Matthews: Where did the water come from?

Mr. Matheson: "Seepage! Lots of rats before the fire, but the fire killed all the rats."

SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD. DUNCAN MCPHERSON. "C.P.R. HOTEL."

"About the first through train over the C.P.R. to Port Moody; Sir John A. Macdonald and members of his cabinet came along with him, and the steamer *Yosemite*, side wheeler, went up to Port Moody, and brought the party to Vancouver, and landed them at the Hastings Sawmill wharf which was the only wharf here then. Everybody in town, naturally, went down to meet the boat. Amongst them was an old Scotchman named Duncan MacPherson, who had a hotel on Hastings Street called the 'C.P.R. Hotel.' Evidently, he was an old boyhood friend of Sir John, and, of course, down on the wharf, there was a space lined off to keep the people away from the gang plank. Old Duncan persisted in elbowing his way through the cordon of police, and two police caught old Duncan and sent him back, and Sir John was standing on the front of the boat which was not quite alongside of the wharf. He recognised old MacPherson, and Sir John hallooed out, 'Helloooo, Dunc.' And Dunc. hallooed back, 'Helloooo, Old Socks.' Sir John was coming down the gang plank by this time, and old Dunc. kept on hollering, and when Sir John got up to him he gave him a very cordial handshake, and the people were rather dumbfounded to see the great friendship of old Dunc. MacPherson and the Prime Minister of Canada. You can imagine how the police released their grip on him when he called Sir John 'Old Socks.'"