

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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MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH MRS. RUBY M. BOWER (OR BAUER) WHO CALLED AT THE CITY ARCHIVES, 17 JUNE 1942, THIS AFTERNOON TO MAKE SOME EXCERPTS FOR AN ARTICLE ON BARRARD INLET ABOUT 1882.

She is the daughter of Benjamin Springer, Esq., J.P., manager, Moodyville Sawmill Co., Moodyville.

AN INDIAN RETORT: A WOMAN'S.

Mrs. Bower said: "I must tell you a story. Mother" (Mrs. Ben Springer) "used to know all the Indian women; they used to do the laundry. The Chinamen" (household help) "did not like doing the household laundry, so the Indian women used to do it, and were up at the house when it had to be done. One of the women was Louise, a fine woman, and she had children, and sent them to the Protestant school." (Note: I neglected to ask Mrs. Bower what "Protestant school," but suggest that she meant Protestant Sunday school on Sundays.) "Louise was proud of her children, and looked after them, and did her best for them.

"Well, the Roman Catholic priest met Louise. Louise always called the priests 'she' for some reason, perhaps because they wore cassocks. And Louise told Mother what was said.

"It seems the Roman Catholic priest did not like Louise sending her children to the Protestant school, and shook his head; told her it was 'bad' business, and gently admonished her. And as a final argument added," (Priest) "'She say, 'You know where you'll go, Louise? You'll go to hell, surely.'"

"So Louise replied, 'Ah, ah; lots of nice people go to hell nowadays.'"

Note: the conclusion must be that the Indian klotch felt that a Protestant hell was preferable to a Roman Catholic heaven; there can be no other conclusion.

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH MRS. JOHN LOUIS PLOYART, 1661 HARWOOD STREET, WHO VERY KINDLY CALLED AT THE CITY ARCHIVES THIS AFTERNOON, 27 NOVEMBER 1942.

JAMES AUGUSTUS HALLIDAY. W.M. HALLIDAY, ALERT BAY. SIMON FRASER.

Mrs. Ployart said: "My father was James August Halliday; he came to British Columbia from Ontario in 1873; he came part way by the Grand Trunk to Omaha, Nebraska, and then by Southern Pacific to San Francisco, and then up the coast to Victoria. Mother was with him and five children, myself, aged three, included. Two boys and three girls then" (added to afterwards, all still living.) "Mother was a Miss Henderson who came from Grimsby, Jane Henderson; she was born there, but Father was born in Glasgow, Scotland, and came to Canada when he was eight. He was born in 1838, so that he must have come to Canada in 1846. Mother and Father were married when they came to Victoria, and the eldest child was then, in 1873, nine years old. But where they were married I cannot tell you. My father's uncle was a cousin to Simon Fraser.

"The first thing I can remember was in Yale. There was a snow slide, or there was a heavy snow storm, or something, and all the houses were covered with snow, and they had to dig from house to house; you know how children enjoy something new, even if it was horrible. We were living in Steve Tingley's house. Mrs. Tingley had been killed in an accident with her husband, but he survived, and the children had been sent east to New Brunswick to be educated. One was only six months old. The elder one died this last summer in Vancouver. The two boys have lived in Vancouver for a long time."

STEVE TINGLEY'S ACCIDENT. CAMELS IN CARIBOO.

"The cause of the accident which killed Mrs. Tingley was that she and her husband were driving on the Cariboo Road east of Yale and the horses shied at a wheelbarrow, and the horses went over the bluff, killing Mrs. Tingley. Steve Tingley's second wife was Miss Laumeister, and her father was one of the early Cariboo men; he was the one who took the camels in there. Mrs. Steve Tingley is still living, here in Caroline Court."

DAVID OPPENHEIMER AT YALE.

"Other notable residents of Yale at that time were David Oppenheimer and his brother, there were two of them, and the Leisers of Victoria, and Marcus Wolf—he committed suicide in Nanaimo—and there was Mrs. McMicking there too.

"I did not go to school because I was only three. I afterwards went to school in New Westminster. You see, Father went straight up the river to Yale from Victoria in 1873, and we did not leave there until 1874 and came down to New Westminster where he was again teaching, and stayed there for six years. Then in 1880 he went to Victoria."

INDIAN CANOES CROSS FALSE CREEK. ISAAC JOHNS, FIRST COLLECTOR OF CUSTOMS. BATHING ON FALSE CREEK BEFORE 1880. FALSE CREEK BRIDGE.

"When we were living at New Westminster, we used to come out on a Saturday, because it was not a school day, and bathe in False Creek; just where it was I am not sure, but there was a bridge, a rickety bridge, a very rickety bridge which crossed False Creek; that was before 1880. The bridge was broken in places and they could not use it; they used canoes to cross. I have an idea—I seem to think—that when we went bathing we did not cross the bridge, but bathed on the south side of the creek at the foot of Mount Pleasant Hill. There was several of us girls. There was the daughters of Isaac Johns, the first Collector of Customs in Vancouver, that is, Maggie Johns and Jennie, the eldest Johns, and some friends of theirs. We bathed in the tide, and I remember the tide came in and took some of the girls' clothing away altogether.

"Father died in Vancouver in the General Hospital, April 1, 1917; he was a great man to play pranks, and I could not help thinking, April 1, 1917. Mother had died the year before, the night before the Parliament Buildings were burned in Ottawa, February 3, during that terribly heavy snow storm. She died at Comox. Father is buried in Comox; so is Mother.

"We were living at Comox at the time. Father had retired in 1890. He took a small school after 1890, but he did not intend to teach; he did a little relief work. My two youngest brothers who were born in British Columbia had a thousand acre farm in the Comox district, on the Campbell River Road, about a mile and a half from Courtenay, and had an experimental farm of forty acres there. But Father was not living at the farm; he was living in Comox District.

"After Father and Mother arrived in B.C. three more children were born, making their total family eight, four boys and four girls. All are living still, all married, and all have children. Two of them just have one child.

1. The eldest, Mary, married George Smith, a government agent at Alberni. They had five children, and she is now a widow in Los Angeles, and four are living with them in Los Angeles, and one is married to the liquor commissioner in Quesnelle.
2. William, he married [blank] and they adopted two children, a boy and a girl, and his wife died four years ago in Victoria.
3. Ernest Augustus was third. He married a Lilly Kirby, an English bride, and they had seven children; two are dead.
4. Grace, that's myself, I married Mr. John Louis Ployart, Canadian born in Québec; he was on the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway. We were married in Comox. He was Anglican; I was Presbyterian, so we were married in the Presbyterian church and attended the Anglican and my six children—all still living—were baptised in the Church of England, at various places.
5. Ida, became Mrs. Charles Moss, of Vancouver, and she had six children, but only four now.
6. Merle, a boy, he has the farm at Comox with Dick; he married an English girl, and they have three children, but only one living. He is six feet four.
7. Dick, or Richard; he married an English girl, too, and they have one daughter; he lives at Comox. He and Merle are partners.
8. Lucile—one L—a daughter, she became Mrs. Prendergast; likewise, an English woman, and they are in Victoria. They have four children.

"I was going to tell you that George Smith, my eldest sister's husband, was born in the Manse at Thrums, in Scotland. Mr. Smith's father was the Presbyterian clergyman of Thrums. Mr. Prendergast, his brother, was organist of Winchester Cathedral for about thirty years."

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."