

## **Early Vancouver**

### **Volume Seven**

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

**2011 Edition (Originally Published 1956)**

*Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected between 1931-1956.*

### **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 125<sup>th</sup> 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. 7 (Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 2011), 33.

Bibliographic Entry:

Matthews, Major James Skitt. *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 7. Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 2011.

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## **LOGGING WITH OXEN.**

Cottrell logged with oxen up Lynn Creek Valley in 1871—My folks lived there at that time and being loggers cruised the whole of Burrard Inlet.

## **MOUNTAIN GOATS.**

In later years I cruised the valley as far up as the mountain goats live and never saw or heard of such a sized tree of any species. For years I was scaler, cruiser and log buyer in B.C. and Washington. One of the finest and largest fir I can recall was the one that grew where the Burns Block stands. Cuts from that tree stood at the C.P. Ry. Station for show purposes. Others were shipping to Eastern Exhibits. Its photo and size you have. I have heard of reports of fir trees being fifteen feet in diameter. That is quite possible—but twelve feet is the largest butt I recall having scaled in the log. Ground measurement is quite different from butt or stump measurement which varies from three feet and up from the ground. That makes a great difference in the diameter. That's about all I know about the Big Fir—nothing—a hoax.

J. Warren Bell.

## **AFTER SEVENTY YEARS.**

By John Warren Bell, pioneer.

In his usual abrupt voice Major Matthews, of the City Archives, phoned me and asked if I knew an old-timer, Mrs. Crakanthorp, who lived on Burrard Inlet in the early seventies.

"No," was my answer, "never heard of her." "I want you to meet her," he resumed. "Come up to the Archives on Wednesday, at 3:00 p.m. Good, I'll be expecting you. That's all—good-bye," and he hung up the phone.

Crakanthorp! Crakanthorp! Who in the world is Mrs. Crakanthorp? I pondered. The Major must have gotten his dates mixed, for I knew or heard of all the people on the Inlet in the early seventies as I had come up on the steamer "Beaver" from Victoria in 1871. I will see Mrs. Crakanthorp—someone who came to Vancouver after the fire, when a child, I'll bet—early seventies! The Major is all mixed up in his dates.

Promptly at five minutes to three p.m., I strolled up to the City Hall. Just ahead of me was a little old lady accompanied by a young lady, well-dressed, alert and attentive. Not very young for I noticed a few grey hairs among her abundant black tresses. I also noted her clear, fresh, natural complexion and her vivaciousness. The elderly lady was neatly dressed in black, skirt a little longer—with more of a reserve in her demeanor, yet a natural confident air. A dear sweet old lady like those I remember in my youth.

They also went to the City Hall and took the elevator. Not caring to appear to be following I took the next elevator going up.

I was admitted by the young lady in attendance and saw the ladies sitting at the Major's desk.

"Come here Mr. Bell—let me introduce you to Mrs. Crakanthorp and her daughter—you are all old-timers."

"How do you do, Johnny," she asked as she smilingly extended her gloved hand. "Do you know me—do you remember me?" I exclaimed, as I retained her hand in mine.

"Certainly I remember you and your sister Emelene, your brother Ward, your mother, aunt Nora (Mrs. Hughes) and all the DeBeck family. I am one of the Patterson girls—you remember them of course."

"Sure I do, there were three of you—all pretty with black eyes and black hair. Yes, I remember you by your eyes just the same twinkle as they had or one of your sisters, you were so much alike."

"Be seated, please," suggests the Major, "You can talk just as well sitting."

I wanted to talk so kept right on and told about the time I made a trip on a steamer with one of the Patterson girls—it must have been in seventy-five—I was about eight years old. Can not remember where we came from or where we were going, nor the name of the steamer—nothing but a Miss Patterson and myself the only passengers on board. She was a year or two older than I and so dog-gone pretty and attractive that I stayed with her all the time until finally she went below, layed on a settee, and went to sleep.

Now I am going to tell a secret I have kept over seventy years, just for fear of being reprimanded and asked, "if I was not ashamed."

I got so lonesome I went below and found Miss Patterson asleep. I dare not disturb her. Quietly I tiptoed up close. The words of a song I had heard came to my mind and I muttered:

"Beautiful girl with beautiful eyes,  
Bright as the morning and blue as the skies  
Beautiful hair and teeth as well,  
Beautiful, beautiful Nell."

Her eyes were black, not blue—anyway it expressed my thoughts. As quietly as a mouse I leaned over and kissed her on the cheek. Noiselessly I went on deck again, and from that day to this have kept my secret. Fear at first kept my mouth shut. Later on I—well, I just didn't tell.

All the time I was telling my story Mrs. Crakanthorp was listening intently, and, when finished, she said, smiling, "I remember—I am the Miss Patterson. I am Alice. I was about eleven or twelve. We were on the steamer "Maude," Captain Holmes, going from Nanaimo to Moodyville."

"What was wrong about a boy kissing a girl?" asks the Major.

Mrs. Crakanthorp answered him. "In those days, Major, it was different from the present time. 'Necking' and such like was unheard of. Women and girls were held in such high esteem that liberties were not taken."

"I know that, Mrs. Crakanthorp," I admitted, "that's why I never told anyone. After all these years you'll forgive me, won't you?" She laughed, and I knew she was more pleased than angry.

"Miss Klemm, how is the kettle getting along?—time we had tea and refreshments for these two gossips," the Major calls out. Still we kept on.

Says Mrs. Crakanthorp, "After the DeBecks went to Westminster we moved into their house at Moodyville—attended Mrs. Thain's school on the hill above the mill. There were the Lynn family, the Springers, Cottrel, Sullivan boys—Charlie was musical, played the piano but later just a barroom thumper. Arthur, though a negro, was a good citizen. The Lynns were never noted for anything, except Hugh who murdered Jack Green on Savary Island. He was a Squaw Man and preferred to live with the Indians. Outside of a few we were pretty respectable citizens."

"Did you know Wilcox, the man who did card tricks?" asked Mrs. Crakanthorp.

"Yes, I remember him—a little man with one glass eye that he would take out and scare the Indians. He was clever; at an entertainment in the Hall he cackled like a hen and an egg fell out of his mouth into his hand," I narrated. "Pick money up anywhere, disappear, return it again right in front of you."

"Mrs. Crakanthorp, please stop long enough to drink a cup of tea. Do you take sugar? Help yourself to the cookies. Pull up your chair, Mr. Bell." Our host was not as interested in recalling the past as I was.

"Have you never seen each other since '75? That's over seventy years ago?" asked the Major.

We both answered "No" and he chuckled to himself, saying, no wonder we wanted to talk.

Mrs. Crakanthorp started again by asking if I ever saw Mr. Dietz, one of the owners of the mill, and his Indian, Charlie Scow, who carried him about on his back.

"I do," I replied, "in fact I mentioned it in my Memoirs," which I got and read from page 15—"I saw him (Dietz) being carried on the back of an Indian from the ferry boat to the store." (At Moodyville.)

"What was the matter with him?" asked the Major.

"I think his legs were paralyzed," answered Mrs. Crakanthorp. "Anyway he could not walk. Charlie Scow was his valet I guess you'd call him. Wherever Dietz went he took Scow with him."

"In San Francisco, where those who could afford it went during the winter, Dietz always took Scow to look after him and after Charlie Scow got Dietz to bed about nine o'clock Charlie would dress up in Dietz's Prince Albert coat, silk hat, and take in the City."

"Do you mean to tell me the Indian went out dressed in Dietz's clothes? Ridiculous!!" says the Major.

"Indeed he did, Major. Of course, he did not tell Dietz, but that's what he did. Most of the business men in San Francisco wore Prince Alberts and top hats to their place of business, offices and clubs. That was a common costume in those days."

"That's a fact, Major, for I spent 1887 and '88 winter in 'Frisco. There was no bank notes in circulation—it was all gold and silver coin, and men dressed as Mrs. Crakanthorp says. They were noted for their dress. We in B.C. always wore white kid gloves at balls and even club or home dance. Like some of our birds and animals, they disappear when civilization overtakes the country."

"The women never went out with bare hands—always wore gloves, Major," joins in Mrs. Crakanthorp. "Neither did men go bare-headed like they do today. Seldom you see a gentleman lift his hat upon meeting a lady these days." "How can they, when they have no hat on?" I asked.

We chatted away for an hour or so, recalling to mind events and people of long ago. The Roger's family (of Jericho)—only one left now, Louise, and Capt. Perry Rogers, a cousin. All the DeBecks of the first generation have passed on. The Lions and Siwash Rock are the same and the tides ebb and flood—twice every twenty-four hours, as they always have. Not many like we two are left unchanged by events. We still harp back to our former early days and believe our folks were the greatest on earth, with all their faults.

"I would be pleased to have you call and see me, Johnnie—at your convenience. Here is my address and phone number. It's a real pleasure to see you after all these years. I must thank you, Major, inviting us."

"You don't know what pleasure it has been for me to unburden my secret, locked up for seventy years, and to feel and know I have been forgiven. I will phone you and find out when it is convenient for me to call."

Could I have accepted her invitation in the vernacular of the present day?

"Say! it's been swell seeing yuh. Thanks a lot—sure I'll come and see you. It's O.K. with me, Bye! Bye!!"