

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 125th anniversary of the City's founding. The project was made possible by funding from the Vancouver Historical Society.

Copyright Statement

© 2011 City of Vancouver. Any or all of *Early Vancouver* may be used without restriction as to the nature or purpose of the use, even if that use is for commercial purposes. You may copy, distribute, adapt and transmit the work. It is required that a link or attribution be made to the City of Vancouver.

Reproductions

High resolution versions of any graphic items in *Early Vancouver* are available. A fee may apply.

Citing Information

When referencing the 2011 edition of *Early Vancouver*, please cite the page number that appears at the bottom of the page in the PDF version only, not the page number indicated by your PDF reader. Here are samples of how to cite this source:

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.

Contact Information

City of Vancouver Archives
1150 Chestnut Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 3J9
604.736.8561
archives@vancouver.ca
vancouver.ca/archives



pace, unhurried, to some remote area on the outskirts of settlement where the City Engineer wanted a street or lane in the virgin clearing, formed by "crowning," or some stumps taken out. Their "chains" consisted of two ankle cuffs, two links about 18 inches long and a ring, and in addition a stout leather waist belt to which the ring was affixed. The links connected the ring to the ankle cuffs. When walking, the links were suspended from the waistbelt and ring and the links lay inside each leg, perpendicularly, so that it could scarcely be seen as the trousers hid it. When at rest, seated on a log or root of a stump, the waist belt was unfastened and the links thrown on the ground, so that no weight of iron whatever was felt by the prisoner. There were no chains, and there was no noise of clanking as there was nothing to clank.

Clough and O'Grady both carried rifles but there is no record of either one ever having used one. O'Grady and Clough were very lenient; would allow prisoners to smoke freely once beyond general sight; would leave the "gang" to go to a nearby home for water to make hot tea for lunch at noon; gave the gang a rest period of 10 to 15 minutes about 11 o'clock, and again about 3 p.m.

No one stood on street corners to gawk at them. Even when necessity compelled the passage of a main thoroughfare, the chain gang wagon, with its load of men all seated together, went by so inconspicuously as to be scarcely noticed by sidewalk pedestrians, and, even if it was noticed there was little to indicate it was not a gang of workmen going to or coming from their work.

It is unreasonable to suppose that unskilled labourers were put to work on public buildings, as stated, because prior to the abolition of the chain gang in 1907, the City of Vancouver hadn't public buildings where unskilled labourers could work, and, even if they had, men of the character of the men of the chain gang were unsuitable for such work.

The chain gang was sufficiently useful that it was retained for more than 21 years. Frequently, men arrested and sentenced were improperly and scantily clothed when they joined the gang, but were properly clothed when they left it. John Clough had seen to that. Mr. Clough was, originally, a member of the chain gang himself, but made himself so useful that he was sworn in as city jailor.

J.S. Matthews
City Archivist

City Archives,
Vancouver.
16 November 1948.

CONVERSATION WITH F.M. CHALDECOTT, ESQ., PIONEER, WHO CAME TO VANCOUVER 1 MAY 1890, NOW OF 1174 WEST HASTINGS STREET, AT THE VANCOUVER CLUB, ON WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON, 18 AUGUST 1948, WHEN I HAD THE HONOUR TO BE HIS SOLE GUEST AT AFTERNOON TEA; WE TALKED FROM 3 TO 5.

Mr. Chaldecott, in whose honour Chaldecott Park, Chaldecott Street, and Chaldecott Road, now West King Edward Avenue, are named, is now bent with the years, walks in a stooping position, but is very alert, and his hand writing very steady, and much more legible than that of many persons half his age. But time has taken his vigour physically; he does not rise until noon; visits the Vancouver Club in the afternoon; goes home soon, and, as ever, is extremely polite. He sat smoking a cigarette, on and off, until at 5 p.m. I was reluctantly compelled, on account of sickness at my home, to leave him.

SAM BRIGHOUSE. WM. HAILSTONE. JOHN MORTON. D.L. 185. WEST END.

Major Matthews: You were solicitor for Mr. Brighouse, weren't you, Mr. Chaldecott?

Mr. Chaldecott: "Brighouse, Hailstone and Morton owned District Lot 185; that's the 'West End'—west of Burrard Street—and they nearly lost it for non-payment of taxes. Of course, the amount of money owed was small when compared with sums of today, but if the taxes were only one hundred dollars, and you had not got the hundred dollars, the position is no different. So they borrowed money to pay the taxes. Charles E. Hope, he's up at Deep Creek Farm, Fort Langley, now, was agent for the Yorkshire Mortgage; not Yorkshire Guarantee, which was a different thing altogether, and I was appointed solicitor. The

Yorkshire Mortgage loaned their money to Morton on the condition that they were to handle the land sales.

"Well, things improved, and, before long, Brighthouse and Morton and Hailstone were able to sell sufficient of their lots to pay off the mortgage, but, for a time, it was touch and go as to whether or not they would lose the whole thing."

GEORGE BLACK OF HASTINGS. SUICIDE OF MAGEE. C.E. TISDALL.

"George Black's daughter started to drink. She married a chap, I think his name might have been Magee. Magee committed suicide in Tisdall's gun store. I was in the store at the time. Magee went and asked Tisdall to show him a revolver, so Tisdall got one, explained how it worked, how to put the cartridges in; put one in and handed the revolver to Magee to examine. Magee took it. Then suddenly he put the muzzle in his mouth and blew his head off. There was a loud bang and Magee dropped. Tisdall 'ducked' behind the counter. Presently I saw his pale face gradually rise from below the counter. It was quite an experience," said Mr. Chaldecott, with a smile.

RUDYARD KIPLING. WEBLEY. A. ST. G. HAMERSLEY.

Major Matthews: Do you remember Kipling passing through Vancouver?

Mr. Chaldecott: "Webley and I boarded at the same place. Webley's brother was editor of *The Scotsman* in the British Isles, and wrote his brother that Rudyard Kipling was to pass through Vancouver on his way to India, and the brother spoke to me and asked what I thought we ought to do about some sort of welcome to Kipling when he arrived here. Kipling was a member of the Inner Bar" (London.) "So was Hamersley, the City Solicitor. I was not. I was a member of Lincoln's Inn" (London.) "Webley knew that Kipling and Hamersley belonged to the Inner Bar.

"So I spoke to Hamersley about a welcome. He looked puzzled, waited a moment, and then ejaculated, 'Kipling!! Kipling!! Who the devil's Kipling? Never heard of the man!'"

Major Matthews: Kipling was here in 1889. That was before you came. He was here several times—the last, I think, in 1907. What year was it?

Mr. Chaldecott: "Well, it was after the 'Empresses' came."

Major Matthews: Did they give him a welcome?

Mr. Chaldecott: "If they did I don't recall it."

VANCOUVER CLUB (OF WHICH MR. CHALDECOTT IS A LIFE MEMBER.) BALL ROOM. RUBBER FLOOR.

"Gradually the Club grew and finally the ballroom was built. I asked if it would be possible to have the floor built apart from the walls. The contractor said it would. Then I asked if it would be possible to have it on rubber supports underneath, so as to relieve the jar when dancing. The contractor said it would. And that was how it was built. The floor was on rubber supports, oh, about eight inches square, and about the same high, and at eighteen inch or two foot centres—something like that. But it was a wonderful floor to dance on—the only one I ever heard of supported on rubber."

Major Matthews: Is the present ballroom floor in this building built that way?

Mr. Chaldecott: "No."

As we had been talking for two hours (though it seemed no more than twenty-five minutes) and as it was 5 p.m., I rose to go. Mr. Chaldecott accompanied me to the door, and I regretfully concluded a delightful visit with one of the few remaining "builders" who helped to lay the "foundation stone" of this great metropolis and port—Vancouver.

J.S. Matthews

City Archives,
City Hall, Vancouver,
19 August 1948.