

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



get pieces of beams and parts of the keel with rivets or long bolts in such pieces. At that time there was no top works or the cabin left. It had been removed to make canes as curios for tourists. If the hull was taken away, whoever took it forgot to take the keel because I pulled up a piece four feet long, eight inches by eight inches. This piece was, as all other wood, below water, perforated by teredos [teredos] and that was about 1913. That same year I also pulled up an anchor which was one belonging to the "Beaver," or the same as was used on her. This anchor was completely covered by very large barnacles. We notified the Museum at the time. Someone took it away later but nearly all barnacles had been removed and it did not look so imposing.

You asked if any part was left in 1914. The only remaining part was a small section of the keel just level with the sand and rocks. The rocks would break away from the Prospect Point cliff and roll down and cover all the remaining evidence of anything that was embedded there. The sandstone all along Stanley Park is continually washing away and it has deposited many tons of sand into the Narrows and English Bay. This sand covers everything rapidly.

I sincerely hope this will give you the information you wished. If in future I can be of assistance, please call on me. I remain

Yours truly,

W.L. Grove

CONVERSATION, 11 APRIL 1946, WITH JOHN WARREN BELL, PIONEER OF BURRARD INLET, WHO CAME HERE ON S.S. BEAVER, 1871; WENT TO SCHOOL AT MOODYVILLE (MRS. MURRAY THAIN, TEACHER); AND WAS A FREQUENT VISITOR TO GASTOWN.

Major Matthews: Please read this, in the *Province*, April 9th. (He reads.) What do you think of it?

Mr. Bell: "I shouldn't like to say."

Major Matthews: Why not?

Mr. Bell: "She is a lady of repute, I presume."

Major Matthews: School Teacher. But why not say what you think.

Mr. Bell: "It wouldn't be wise."

Major Matthews: Well, throw discretion to the winds for once, and tell me what you think of it.

Mr. Bell: "Well, in the first place, Gassy Jack would be a fool to do it" (tie a man to a tree), "and in the second place he couldn't do it.

"Yes, see, they didn't do those things in those days. Unwritten law wouldn't allow such a thing; it couldn't and wouldn't be done. The people would get up in arms; you see, the whole fraternity; everybody knew each other; they wouldn't allow any man to be treated in that manner; there were unwritten ethics of the day, they wouldn't allow any citizen to be tied or strapped up—unless they were having some fun, and did it in a joke, but not any serious ..."

Major Matthews: How did they treat their drunken man?

Mr. Bell: "Leave him alone; as long as he didn't encroach; he had his freedom. So long as he didn't make a nuisance of himself; then they might throw him out of the hotel, or wherever he was. Don't bother with him; tell him get out."

Major Matthews: Did you ever see them do anything of the sort as stated in the *Province*.

Mr. Bell: "Never did; never heard of it. I remember, up at Maxie's, two men got into an argument, and one would tell the other to do what he would do to him. They were privileged to settle their differences outside, squaring away, and settle it, shake hands—you're a better man, the drinks are on me, and all hands would go up to the

bar. Sometimes men would say, 'Let's put him to bed,' and next time it may be you they put to bed. There was never any malice or ill feeling."

Major Matthews: Do you think Constable Miller would stand for it? He lived next door.

Mr. Bell: "Constable Miller was a very fine man; he was human; he understood them. He showed kindness and consideration for their weaknesses, and love of the flowing bowl and over-indulgence. Miller was a fine fellow."

Major Matthews: Did you know John Deighton?

Mr. Bell: "No. I was too small. I've seen him, but cannot recall much about him."

Major Matthews: Did you ever hear of him being accused of tying a man to a tree?

Mr. Bell: (with disgust) "Oh, heck" (after a pause.) "He wasn't that kind of man. Why would he do a thing like that. It would ruin his trade. His livelihood depended upon those men. He'd be the loser."

As he was leaving:

Major Matthews: But you didn't tell me what you thought of the article. Listen while I read. (Reads) "Drunks tied to tree in city's early days."

Mr. Bell: "Ridiculous. She doesn't know what she's talking about. Don't let them get away with that sort of stuff."

[LETTER FROM J.S. MATTHEWS TO MISS HELEN BOUTILIER.]

10th April 1946.

"Drunks ... in City's early days"

Dear Miss Boutilier:

"DRUNKS TIED TO TREE IN CITY'S EARLY DAYS"

"This was one of the highlights of Miss Helen Boutilier's talk on 'Vancouver's Earliest Days' before the B.C. Historical Association meeting, etc., etc., 'pugnacious inebriates'"—from "Province" Tuesday, April 9th, 1946.

Some time ago, following an address which I believe you made in Victoria, comments of an adverse character reached me upon the tone of your address, but I have refrained from mentioning it to you.

Quite recently you submitted to me a manuscript, which I took home and went over. I spent a lot of time on it. You will recall I objected to some of it and made pencil notations.

Just what action will be taken in connection with the report of your address as given in the "Province" I am not yet in a position to say, but from what I gather, it is likely representations will be made to the School Board. In some quarters the account has been very severely commented upon.

I have the honor to be,

Your obedient servant,

J.S. Matthews
City Archivist

Miss Helen Boutilier,
Vancouver.

Note: Miss Boutilier was president of the British Columbia Historical Association in 1945. See "Vancouver's Earliest Days," pp. 151 to 170, *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, Vol. X, 1946. A.W.