

Early Vancouver

Volume Seven

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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.

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CONVERSATION WITH MRS. NEVILLE J. TOWNSEND, DAUGHTER OF HENRY J. CAMBIE, CELEBRATED CIVIL ENGINEER OF CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY IN BRITISH COLUMBIA, FRIDAY, 19 AUGUST 1949.

Mr. A.P. Horne, of 4025 Granville Street, pioneer, 1889, had invited me to afternoon tea on his lawn, and Mrs. Townsend was also a guest—just three of us. I accompanied Mrs. Townsend, by electric bus, part of the way to her home in the “West End,” where she resides at 2050 Barclay Street, the old Sir Charles H. Tupper home. While we were having tea, Mrs. Townsend made several historical remarks.

STEAM BOAT ON THE FRASER. THE SKUZZY. “HELL’S GATE.” CAPT. J.W. TROUP.

Mrs. Townsend: “I was a girl at the time, but I can remember it very, very distinctly. People say I cannot, but I say I can. They say there never was a steam boat on the Fraser *above* Yale, but I know there was because I was there when it was launched. I don’t know where it was, but it was above a big tunnel, and Captain Troup was there. They had built it right there and were launching it. Afterwards they had a terrible time getting it up through Hell’s Gate. They got ropes and tied them to the rocks or trees, and they pulled her through Hell’s Gate at last. I cannot remember her name.”

Major Matthews: That was the *Skuzzy*, I think.

Mrs. Townsend: (ejaculating) “Yes, that’s the name! *Skuzzy*. *Skuzzy* was her name. I did not see her go through Hell’s Gate, but I saw her launched.”

Major Matthews: I read about the wedding at St. Francis-in-the-Woods, Caulfield the other day. Was the groom your only son?

Mrs. Townsend: “My only child.”

TUCK, OF TUCKS, LULU ISLAND.

Proceeding towards town in the bus, we passed the home of Mrs. D.C. Tuck, at 1490 Balfour, whose son, Douglas Tuck, also was recently married. Mrs. Townsend pointed to the house and remarked:

“Father and Mr. Tuck were in the House of Commons at Ottawa when the bill passed by which British Columbia joined Confederation. They were in the gallery, and as soon as it passed, they, and others of their group, began to sing ‘God Save the Queen.’ Father told me all about it. Mr. Tuck was a civil engineer—so was Father, as you know. Well, the Sergeant-at-arms, or someone in authority, came up and arrested them. Word down below was that men in the gallery were drunk and disorderly, so they were arrested. After they were taken downstairs, the Sergeant-at-arms said they were not drunk, and Father and Mr. Tuck admitted it was so. They explained that they were engineers on the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway through British Columbia to the Pacific, and that the passage of the act, joining British Columbia to Canada, meant years and years of work for them—hence their jubilation. So the Sergeant-at-arms said it was all right and let them go.”

Major Matthews: Do you mean D.C. Tuck’s father or grandfather? D.C. Tuck died recently—you must mean his grandfather.

Mrs. Townsend: “No, not his grandfather, his father. Mr. Tuck was only the same age as I am.”