

Early Vancouver

Volume Seven

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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.

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hastening busses and motor cars; the window was the first to let light into a Vancouver home; and the plants—vegetables—were our first.

Today—and one hundred years have not yet passed—one city and four municipalities surround that vanished cabin on the Fraser River bank, and the residents number nearly half a million busy people.

With best wishes

Most sincerely,

J.S. Matthews

F.A. Hardy, Esq.,
Parliamentary Librarian,
Ottawa, Ont.

CONVERSATION, 5 APRIL 1949, WITH MRS. ROBERT MACKIE, FRENCH STREET, MORE COMMONLY KNOWN AS “MISS MCCLEERY,” WHICH NAME SHE STILL RETAINS DESPITE HER MARRIAGE SOME FOUR OR SIX YEARS AGO.

She has been to the City Hall on business in connection with her property on Marine Drive, and, as is her invariable custom, always at the City Archives before going home.

FITZGERALD MCCLEERY. D.L. 315.

Miss McCleery: (showing a blueprint map marked .575 acres, D.L. 315. Parcel B, between lots 6 and 9) “That is the last of it. I am not even on the voters’ list as a property owner now. Sold. Sacrificed. To meet and satisfy my city’s growing needs; the city needs more, more; the employees want more wages; the last subdivision is sold.”

“Let me tell you” (and she chuckled a little laugh.) “Away back in or about 1934 the mortgagees of our property foreclosed and our land was taken for taxes, interest and mortgage.”

Major Matthews: Who bought the six acres?

AUSTIN TAYLOR. MRS. HARRY LOGAN. SOUTH WEST MARINE DRIVE. MRS. B.T. ROGERS. “SHANNON.”

Miss McCleery: “Austin Taylor did. He did not want my home, so I picked it up and moved it onto my sister’s” (Mrs. Harry Logan) “bush land. That was before Marine Drive was named.”

“Then, when South West Marine Drive was made they raised a wall eight or ten feet high on my northern boundary, cutting off my access to the road. My present outlet is by a lane on the southern boundary of Lot 6, known to me as ‘Wee Lony Lane.’ Austin Taylor cleared the six acres and put it back into a subdivision. He never lived there but bought Mrs. B.T. Rogers’ place, ‘Shannon,’ and lives there yet—on Granville Street.

“When the mortgagee said he was coming from Florida to see the land I just put up a prayer to Almighty God for help and said I was willing to give up everything. Inside of a week a buyer was sent, Austin Taylor. I thought he would want the house but he said, ‘No.’ He paid cash for the land. It nearly struck the mortgagee dead to find he could not take possession. He had a man all hired to take the land over. He did not know I had the good Lord for my partner.

“So, the money Mrs. Logan and I got from Austin Taylor paid up all the taxes and mortgage. As Austin Taylor did not want the house I put up another prayer. I took my share in farm land, known as Parcel A, and went to the Vancouver Mortgage Corporation and asked them for \$4,000 on the sixty-nine acres. I went home and then next day went to see them again. I kept my eyes open, and on his desk was a paper saying, ‘Keep her to \$3,000 if possible.’ The gentleman was not in. I was told to sit down and wait and, as usual, I used my eyes. I read the paper, relaxed, and waited for him to come. When he did come he said to me, ‘I think we can let you have three thousand.’ I replied, ‘Gentlemen, I read that note—three thousand is no use to me. If I cannot get \$4,000 I’ll go somewhere else.’ I got the \$4,000.

"I moved my home down onto a piece of land my sister, Mrs. Logan, let me have—that is now 2610 South West Marine Drive. There was no Marine Drive then; it was high ground bush land. Marine Drive was made after that. It cost me \$1,000 to move the house, put a cement foundation—the rest went for taxes."

MRS. S.F. JAMES, NÉE McCLEERY.

Conversation (over the phone) with Mrs. S.F. James, 6561 Macdonald Street, 17 September 1952.

Major Matthews: Mrs. James, who was your father?

Mrs. James: "John Bailey McCleery. I was born in Killalee" (sic), "Ireland; we came out later. I was born Catherine Jane McCleery; *youngest daughter* John B. McCleery."

Major Matthews: Oh, that explains why you are not in my *Early births, Vancouver and Vicinity*. I was alarmed that I had missed you. Was your birth ever registered in Ireland? Are you over 70?

Mrs. James: "Two or three years yet."

Major Matthews: Well, they are paying \$40 Old Age Security pension now. I'm taking mine. I pay well for it. Tobacco which used to cost me 65 cents a tin is now costing \$1.45, plus 3% sales tax. I don't know why they wanted to pension me (over 70), but they did, and I am taking it and just putting it in a little Savings Bank account and leaving it there.

29 SEPTEMBER 1952.

Scene: The City Archives, City Hall, Vancouver.

Personae: The City Archivist, seated at his desk and a pioneer lady facing him, born on North Arm, Fraser River, near Musqueam Indian Reserve, 1880. She married late in life—about 65.

Pioneer lady: (accusingly) "They tell me you are the man who gets the Queen to cable her congratulations when people have been married sixty years."

Archivist: Oh, I just send their names and the particulars to the Governor General's Secretary—that's all I have to do with it.

Pioneer lady: "Well, I don't see what there is to be congratulated about in being married *sixty* years. I've been married *four* years and I've had all I want of it."

The lady used to be Miss "Greta" McCleery, youngest child of Fitzgerald McCleery, one of the two first settlers, 1862, on the site of Vancouver. About 1945—thereabouts—she married Robert Mackie, another old-timer. In 1952 both are living. Robert Mackie is a very fine fellow with fixed habits. He likes to turn on the radio. "Miss McCleery"—we still call her "Miss McCleery"—likes to get up about dawn, and "Bob" doesn't. And she hates the radio.

J.S.M.

Note: both Mr. and Mrs. Robert Mackie died in 1955.

A.W.