

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.

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CARRALL STREET. R.C.M.P. ANDY LINTON'S FLOAT. MOODYVILLE.

"Texas' was another queer character; he used to whistle down on the docks. Then, they used to load logging oxen down at the foot of Carrall Street, by the R.C.M.P. and used to put them on a scow and take them up the coast. It was all hand logging and logging oxen before they got the horses. And we used to get on the old *Senator* at Andy Linton's float, and go over to Moodyville picking blueberries. Years after, Pete Larson moved over there and built an hotel; you only had to go up the hill half a block and you could pick all the blueberries you wanted. The Indians used to come over in canoes and sell blackberries in little basket; you could get a great big basket full for about fifty cents; and that was a lot of money in those days; And in those days, it was interesting to see these big sailing ships loading big timber at the Hastings Sawmill."

Narrated as I typed. J.S.M.

CONVERSATION WITH THOMAS WILLIAM ROBERTS, OF 1147 TRANS-CANADA HIGHWAY, ABBOTSFORD, WHO CALLED AT THE CITY ARCHIVES, 31 OCTOBER 1949.

ROBERTS CREEK.

Mr. Roberts: "I came here in December 1889 from a place called Redditch" (sic) "on the Midland Railway, 14 miles from Birmingham, England; came C.P.R. by myself; worked at a place called Crowfoot, west of Medicine Hat. I was there in November. I was 22 then as I was born the 24th of November, 1867. My father's name was Thomas Roberts, and Mother's was Harriet. I shall be 82 on November 24 next.

"After I got here in 1889, I worked for Mr. M.S. Rose, the plumber, on Abbott Street, for a while. My parents, that is, Father, Mother, and also two sisters, came out the next year, 1890. One of my sisters, Mrs. Minnie Langley, lives in San Francisco, and the other, Mrs. Alice Steinburner" (sic) "lives in Squamish. He, Steinburner, is buried at Roberts Creek. My brother, Frank Roberts, came out afterwards, about 1900."

ANDY LINTON. TOM CAMPBELL. ROBBY MITCHELL. ROBERTS CREEK. MARK ROSE.

"Well, you see, I wanted a home for my people; we all thought we could find a home away from the town most anywhere. Mark Rose found out from the Land Office that there was land up the coast for preemption. He was a pretty good sailor and we—that is, M.S. Rose and myself—went up the coast. We went up in a clinker-built boat, about thirty feet long—double-ender. We hired the boat from Andy Linton at Carrall Street. It had sails. We sailed both ways; first time I was ever in a sailboat. There were other settlers up there—Tom Campbell and Robby Mitchell. They had two claims there right next to Roberts Creek. Of course, at that time, the creek hadn't any name at all. Johnson Brothers—they surveyed the claim for me—and for the other two people who had staked. Mitchell and Campbell lived there for a few years. They were fishermen, but where they are now I don't know; none of their descendants are there. I don't think they were married. Mitchell and Campbell had staked half a mile—that is, one-quarter of a mile each—along the beach to the west of the creek. So I staked half a mile along the beach on the east side of the creek, but only half a mile back in place of a mile like the other two. I made application, then got it surveyed, and I got my preemption records. I lived there a few years until about 1896—got my certificate for improvement—and finally my crown grant about 1896."

Major Matthews: Well, did your father and mother and sisters go up there to live?

Mr. Roberts: "Not my sisters. They worked in town here for Pat Carey at the Brunswick Hotel on Hastings Street, where the Rex Theatre is now. About 1897 they started calling it Roberts Creek. Exactly when ought to be easy to find out from the Post Office. For a long time we got our mail at Gibson's Landing.

"I went back to Colorado, and then to the Klondyke in 1901. When I came back from the north I got married. We have five children; all are married—three boys and two girls. Two of them served in the last war.

"I helped to build the" (J.M.) "Browning House on the northwest corner of Burrard and Georgia" (afterwards Glencoe Lodge.) "There was a man nearby; he was blasting stumps, and he broke the

circular windows which Browning had had brought out at a cost of thirty dollars. The big glass window panes were semi-circular and it took a long time to replace them.”

FIRST DIVINE SERVICES, BURRARD INLET.

From the diary of Rev. Ebenezer Robson, as copied by Rev. W. Lashley Hall, White Rock, B.C., 16 February 1940.

Sat., Dec. 10, 1864: Got as far as Holmes' Camp, 9 miles from town [*i.e.*, *New Westminster*] and turned in as it was dark and my feet were wet and cold.

Note: Mr. Robson's field was New Westminster, and surrounding points, such as Langley, Maple Ridge, Yale, Chilliwack, etc. A marginal note tells that he was travelling on foot.

Sun., Dec. 11: Preached at Barber's Camp, having walked over from Holmes' Camp, starting at daylight in company with Pyke. At breakfast had Kilgour, brother of Rev. J. Kilgour, on one hand, and Barber, cousin of two reverends and son of a local preacher, on the other. Had 24 hearers, all in camp except four. [*Preached at Holmes' and Nicholson's on way back.*] In town to about 38 tired, as there was snow on the ground and many logs to cross.

Note: correction added later by Mr. Robson says: "See '64, Dec. 11th, for service at Barber's Camp, which was within few rods of Inlet where Hastings now is." Hastings, Burrard Inlet.

Mon. June 18, 1865: Rode out to Burrard Inlet and crossing over in a canoe preached to 15 persons at Moody and Co.'s mills after supper; good attention and invitation to come again. Rode back after dark, arriving home about 10 p.m. This was the first sermon on the Inlet.

Note: a marginal note tells that he was travelling by horse and canoe.

Sun., July 9: In the afternoon rode to Burrard Inlet and preached at Moody and Co.'s mills. Capt. Howard of the barque "Metropolis" and some others from his ship were present. Gave them tracts after service, as to a camp of men by the way who were repairing the road. Travelling 24 miles.

Sun., July 30: Rough time going to Stamp's mill. A large tree across the road. Had hard time getting the horse around it. Horse went down on his head while trotting, rolled over and gave me a bruising in the dirt; scraped a large batch of skin from his own forehead. Very strong wind on the Inlet, and only one Indian with small canoe. Spray over our heads; got quite wet; worked hard an hour and a half in making three miles. Only 6 of the 14 men attended. Sailed back to Scott's road. Horse came better home.

Sun., Aug. 13: Only 5 at Moody's mill but 3 of whom belong to the mill. The blacksmith hammering away during service. Was tired at night.

Note: Mr. Robson made his first visit to Coal Harbour on Saturday, 30 December 1865.

Wed., July 30, 1890: Arose shortly after 5 A.M. and went down to Hastings Mill, where I took breakfast with the hands in the cookhouse where I preached the first sermon within the present townsite just 30 years ago.

Note: the above entry was incorrect as to the length of time since Mr. Robson's first sermon in the townsite. See entries for 11 December 1864 and 19 June 1865. When this entry of July 1890 was made, Mr. Robson was serving his third pastoral term in New Westminster.