

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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"Then the next morning after Josephine was born they brought me home, Mrs. Trim and Mrs. Smith (I've got a good memory, haven't I?) on Bowen Island, and the little baby, my sister Josephine, was on a pillow."

Major Matthews: Harry Trim came down from the Cariboo, after he got through with mining, in 1868.

Mrs. Walker: "That's what my father, Joe Silvey, did but he came down before he got very far up the river because the Indians chased him away."

[MASK.]

Feb. 19th, 1947.

RECEIVED from Major J.S. Matthews \$15.00 for mask.

[signed] August Jack Khahtsahlano.

This mask was made by August Jack Khahtsahlano; was made without an order for it. He wants to go to Squamish; needs the fare, expenses, and his method of getting the money is to make something, bring it to me, and say that the price is such and such, knowing that the amount will be immediately forthcoming.

He tells me it is a duplicate of the mask which was placed upon the head of His Excellency Lord Alexander, Governor General, when he was made an honorary Indian chief at Kitsilano Beach about 13 July 1946. But when I pointed out the markings were different—as shown in the photographs of Lord Alexander—he explained that he did it from memory, which is "very good" as seven months have elapsed. I asked if the mask made me a chief. He laughed and exclaimed, "Skwa-yoos," which, being interpreted, means that as I live at "Skwa-yoos," that being the Indian name for Kitsilano Beach, I am Chief Skwayoos.

The mask is in the shape of a huge bird's beak, is worn on top of the head and does not conceal the face. See Photo Port. P. 1194.

J.S. Matthews

CONVERSATIONS WITH KHAHTSAHLANO, MATTHEWS, 1955, PAGE 137.

Conversation with August Jack Khahtsahlano, son of Khay-tulk, grandson of Chief Khahtsahlanough, in whose honour the suburb of Kitsilano is named. August came, unheralded, to the City Archives, carrying a big brown paper bag, which he set upon the floor, 20 February 1947.

INDIAN IMPLEMENTS. INDIAN MASKS. MAJOR J.S. MATHEWS. CHIEF SKWA-YOOS. LORD ALEXANDER, GOVERNOR GENERAL. KITSILANO BEACH.

Major Matthews: (seated at his desk) Hello, August!! Sit down.

(August, smiling but silent, seats himself at the other side of the desk. He looks tired. His face is pallid, almost white. For some extraordinary reason, August has been losing his Indian brown complexion. For years it has gradually been getting whiter and whiter, until he is now whiter than many Europeans. August remains silent, just smiling.)

Major Matthews: What have you been doing to yourself, August, you look pale. Have you been using whiteman's soap again and wash all the brown off your face. That's what you've been doing, August. You've been washing yourself with soap and you've washed all the colour off; washed your face white. How do you feel?

August: (smiling) "Oh, all right sometimes."

Major Matthews: What are you up to now, August? I'll bet you're up to some trick. What's in the paper bag?

(August goes over, picks up the bag, lays it on the table, and, delving into its depths, brings forth an Indian headdress, new; one he has made himself, a thunderbird's beak adorned with coloured markings and cedar bark for hair down the back.)

Major Matthews: (with much intelligence, he knows by experience the proper thing to say) How much?

August: "Twenty dollars."

Major Matthews: (protesting) Oh! August, have mercy, only fifteen last time.

Miss Nina King: (interjecting) "Will you have a cup of tea and some cake?"

August: "Please."

Major Matthews: (trying on headdress) Miss King, have a cheque for fifteen dollars made out. August, this is like the one they put on Lord Alexander, Governor General, down at Kitsilano Beach last summer. Miss King, bring me a photo of the mask they gave Lord Alexander. (Miss King brings it.) Look, August, not quite the same markings; same shape, different markings. I'm glad; I don't want the same as given Lord Alexander; not right.

August: "I make mask from memory. If I have that photo I make same as Lord Alexander. I work from memory; six months."

Major Matthews: (holding mask on his head) When I've got this mask on, August, am I a Chief?

August: "Skwa-yoos." (All present laugh.) ("Skwa-yoos" is the Indian name for Kitsilano beach where Major Matthews lives.)

Major Matthews: (holding mask on head, rising and walking about) All right, August, after this, when I've got this mask on, I'm "Chief Skwa-yoos."

CONVERSATIONS WITH KHAHTSAHLANO, MATTHEWS, 1955, PAGE 139.

1 May 1947.

AUGUST JACK KHAHTSAHLANO.

This afternoon I asked my assistant, Miss Nina D. King, to call on Mrs. Armitage-Moore, i.e., "Maisie," at the Standard Bank Building, and pick up some *Native Voice* newspapers, the new publication of the native Canadians (Indians). When she arrived, my old friend August Jack Khahtsahlano, was sitting there waiting. Miss King spoke to him. He was just sitting in his calm quiet way, "wearing" as usual a most benevolent smile. Miss King tells me the conversation was interrupted by someone who asked of Mr. Khahtsahlano, "What are you doing these days?"

August answered, slowly and softly, to this common-place question, "Eating, sleeping, working." And then he smiled again.

(The old Indian, a born gentleman, is always very lucid, wise, precise and concise. He has been busy lately—"these days"—"eating, sleeping and working." Which is precisely what he has been.)

J.S. Matthews