

**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 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the City's founding. The project was made possible by funding from the Vancouver Historical Society.

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platform had its quota of heads and arms and swinging hats. Everyone was yelling. The engineers shuts the engine off, and I thought she was going to stop, but just as he got to us, he opened the cylinder-cocks and the steam shot clean up to the feet, of the waiting natives. With one hand, he pulled the throttle wide open and with the other the whistle hard-down. What a frightened bunch of people. There was no stopping that crowd, from getting away from that monster. I myself was frightened. I slipped and fell and over the top, bollus-bollus, went the whole crowd. Thank God, they were bare footed. I struggled to my feet, to find myself in the embrace of that wonderful man Hicks, while he yelled in my ear, "Didja see-er." "She's come." "She's gone." "She went out of here like Hell beatin' tan bark."

Yours truly,

T.P. Wicks.

Dear Major Matthews:

While I have my daughter here, I will use her, once a week, to pen my letters, to you. I am asking only one favor of you and that is, under no condition, allow our friend, the sidewalk historian, to partake of these remembrance notes and use the contents of them, to make saleable filling, for his stories of early days. I never did like that featherless biped, in spite of hiss quill. I wish I had control of grammar, like you have.

Tell me what do you do, with these worthless things I write you, after you read them? Do you throw them in the waist-basket, to be used as kindling, for the furnace?

Just write me a short note, to let me know you got it and what you'll do with it.

Yours truly,

T.P. Wicks.

**COPIES OF LETTERS BY "SKOOKUM TOM," ALIAS "THOMAS P. WICKS," P.O. Box 248, NANAIMO, CANADA.**

Note: "Skookum" boasts no school roll on earth ever included his name. As he approached 78, he was almost blind. An operation has restored his sight. His nerves have something wrong with them; his hand is almost constantly shaking. When writing he takes a large sheet of paper, a blunt lead pencil, and "goes at it." It is my claim that I am the only person living who can decipher his manuscript. J.S.M.

(Typed as written)

Jan. 1948  
Nanaimo, B.C.

Just back from Victoria and find your letter of the 6 of Jan I would like to meet that wise bird that longs for a controversy and whence cometh he not from the east for he giveth no words of wisdom neither doth he carry mirth or the insence of the gods but rather he is haughty and his mouth is filed with the bitter alloes veraly I say the knave knows more about that than what else I do not nor never did like shadow boxing who is this rat that knows so much some decadent preacher or sectarian that sees nothing but himself.

We all know that Captain Oliver did not pass deeds to the soul he followed but he gave his time and yoused his boat that the gospel he lived might go to those before that same gospel came to him until he or his boat he yoused was wrecked then the Mishion by subscription built him another to carry on the work and he took charge.

My knowlage of Capt Oliver ended 1915—33 years ago, and our friendship for around thirty years before that was very satisfactory. I am not *[too much for me, but may be "deserting"—JSM]* deserting my old friend long dead with this man.

I am not well just now have to write this letter with a carpenters lead pencil. Will see you after a while.

As ever,

Thos P. Wicks

(Letter to Major J.S. Matthews.)

Another letter—typed as written:

Feb. 3rd-48  
Nanaimo, B.C.  
Box 248

Dear Major Matthews:

I have just got out of bed I shore have had a pull first the hospital then home and the flue some day I will be over I want to hear about that farse [*farce*] seems to think he is so wise if he can talk first hand and go back sixty years and more he might interest me otherwise I do not care to waste my breath with some chap that talks of knolage he has aquired from others.

Now Oliver was my old friend and never passed my home without stoping blowing a big old fashioned tin dinner horn if he did not come in he called droped his anchor and I would go out and have a chat. I can tell you a lot, but nothing that would defame him. I donated money and time which you have letter in your files to prove I done for this M.E. costal mision there never was a record asked nor expected by the old timers for the donations or time given and I do not expect Oliver asked for or received any remuneration as long as his little craft was afloat.

I was the main stay in the building of the Mishion church at Alert Bay and had a freewil contribution of hands for church and parson age deeds for which can not be found lost as I presume in the head filed but which to my knolage were placed in the hands of Dr White of Sardis, B.C.

My adviser and coach was none other than Oliver and to his guideing hands credit the success of effort and to the men of the fishing crew who elected me the chairman gave \$600 to go before the board and ask for preacher and a church through those trying days it was on Oliver who I leaned on for his advice and whose friendly council I had found so welcome both by mail and in person for many years before and tonight I can see his little bark and hear him as oft he had said every wind was a fair wind and every tide a fair tide and a thousand little bays are home sweet to me.

Why shouldnt I know this man who came into my life so many years ago I expect before the hat man was dry back of his ears and no matter who he is or what.

If he insists that Oliver did not give of his service and his boat in the early days of the M.E. Mishion on the B.C. inland coast he is a dam liar and the truth is not in him no matter who he is

I will give you what you ask for when we elimnate the hat man.

As ever

T.P. Wicks

I am not well these days two calendar months and I am 80. 66 years ago Jan 30<sup>th</sup>—1882 I headed for Boston, slap that on the ass of the hat man.

Note: the “dam liar” is Ireland, Provincial Archivist.