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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at Skidegate, Queen Charlotte Islands—logging. Oliver used to come around the camp, but the fellows didn't pay any attention to him. He used to come to the logging camp. He had a boat of his own."

Major Matthews: The *Udal*?

Mr. Bell: "I don't know if she had a name. About, say, 1930, he came along to the camp one night and wanted the fellows to come to his service, but they all knew about him—how he had deformed himself—so they just took no notice, and by and bye he started up his engine and went off. There was no meeting; no one went."

Major Matthews: Must have been fanatical or something.

Mr. Bell: "I don't know. Maybe."

(And Mr. Bell shook his head as though he didn't know what to think and was puzzled that any man in his senses should take an axe and deliberately cut off part of a member of his own body, and do it under the delusion that the Bible told he could not enter the kingdom of heaven otherwise.)

DEEP COVE.

Nov. 23rd, 1948.

Major J.S. Matthews,
Archivist, Vancouver, B.C.

My dear Major:

JACK SCALES.

You phoned me the other day and admonished me for not writing more memoirs of my early life, "Few are living who were in B.C. prior to Confederation 1867. Jack Scales recently passed away—I was at his funeral. You suggest I write what I know of Deep Cove, particularly regarding the ox-team days of logging—camps—how they lived—transportation—how they got their logs to the mills."

There is little to chronicle that would interest you or the public of today. I read articles in the Magazine sections of our daily press by Cheechako would-be historians, photographs and pictures. Some are so fantastic and ridiculous—yet so colorful and exciting that for me to even attempt to state what few simple facts that still remains in "memories storehouse" would be of little interest and less understood. You are an exception Major—so I bought this green covered copy book for ten cents—sharpened my lead pencil and will scribble away in an effort to convince you how little there is to write about.

MOODYVILLE. COTTREL'S OX-TEAM CAMP. LYNN'S CREEK. ROGER'S CAMP. JERICHO. HASTINGS MILL. HAND-LOGGING ON BURRARD INLET.

In my Memoirs I wrote of my life at Moodyville—Cottrel's Ox-team camp at Lynn's Creek, and Roger's camp at Jericho, just those two camps in 1870. Neither the Hastings mill or Moodyville had large daily out-put—not over an average 40 m. ft. My grandparents and family lived on the flat, west of Lynn Creek as well as my parents, sister and myself.

All were engaged in hand-logging on Burrard Inlet—a most primate way of logging suitable only for mountain sides with slopes steep enough so the full length tree would run by gravity into the "salt-chuck."

Only a small percentage of the total timber could be logged in this manner, a tree here a tree there—after figuring out where to fall it so as it could run into the water. Sometimes a small stand in a draw, could be run down the same runway—but usually each tree made its own path to the beach.

Another drawback to hand-logging was a shallow beach on the shore where the log would stick. Then there were bluffs and rough broken ground, even if there was choice timber they would be smashed or broken in falling.

Deep Cove. "Cottonwood" Smith's bluff. "Selalacum Sign."

Deep Cove, as you know, is a sheltered cove on the North Arm of Burrard Inlet, sheltered from wind and out of tidal currents. It was in that sheltered spot my folks had their booming ground and camps on log floats from where they operated along the north shore, above 'Cottonwood' Smith's bluff on which was painted the 'Selalacum Sign' by the Indians, a warning not to trespass in that vicinity on penalty of death.

Warren DeBeck. Pitt Lake.

The houses or shacks were of sawn lumber with usually a roofed verandah for fire wood, tools, etc. V troughs of 1" x 6" caught the rain from the shake roof which was caught in a barrel—augmented by a trough from a nearby stream during a dry spell. I recall Warren DeBeck's camp on what was called the Big-flat at Pitt Lake—not having lumber—poles of 4" to 6" dia. had a V trough, cut by axe, the full length that supplied a basin hewed in a good sized log where the crew washed themselves.

Usually one of the women—(they were Grandma DeBeck, Warren's wife Annie, Nora, Josephine and my mother) would take turns cooking at the camp at Deep Cove. Food consisted, in the main, of home-made bread, vegetables and wild game, such as grouse, ducks and geese. Clams and crabs in abundance, mowich (deer) were plentiful. Saturday the hounds were put out at some favorable point and one person would watch in a row boat or canoe to shoot the deer when he took to the water to throw the dogs off the scent. Boy like, I still remember their names, Gypsy, Delores, Wallace and Bruce. There was no law at that time against hunting with dogs, or season limits. The carcass was hung in the shade of the verandah. Saturdays nearly everyone rowed home to Moodyville taking fresh venison and any birds they may have shot.

Deer. Hunting dogs.

My uncle Clarence DeBeck said that Cottonwood Smith had a young hound that he was anxious to break in, so, according to Smith, he turned them loose on the mainland. The deer to escape swam to one of the small islands in the Third Narrows. Smith, thinking of his young hound's first hunt, loaded the dogs in the boat, put the dogs on the island and sat in his boat, which he had run to the shore, and waited results. It was not long before the hounds took up the scent. Soon a young doe came running toward the boat. "I sat still," said Smith, "and she jumped into the boat, put her head in my lap as if for protection. In a couple of minutes the hounds came giving tongue. I turned the boat around where they piled in the stern. I put the doe in the bow so they could not get to her. If you promise you will not tell the boys I'll tell you the truth. I pulled over to the mainland—put the deer ashore and took the dogs home." What about the pup's first lesson? "I know I am a fool but those soft brown eyes pleaded to me for protection—don't tell anyone DeBeck."

Decker's Bay, Bidwell Bay now. Hall's Ranch, now Belcarra.

Steve Decker's float was moved in Decker's Bay (Bidwell Bay now). John Hall at Hall's ranch now Belcarra. There were others I remember—Bill Sharp, Archie McCorvy and old Bill Hancock with a cross eye.

It was the usual thing for hand-loggers living alone to have a squaw to cook, wash and run the shack—Squaw Men? Yes, they were squaw men. For $50.00 you could buy a squaw and all she would cost was her keep. You could quit her at any time or sell her but the buyer had to again pay the father or nearest relation at whatever price he asked.

"Fishing" with dynamite.

In addition to those on Burrard Inlet, the Indians did some hand logging up Howe Sound and even as far as Sechelt. Moody would supply the tools to the Tyhees who, by virtue of their high positions, persuaded the tribe to work and "iscum hi-you chickamen" (get lots of money). To

curry favor with the Tyhee of Sechelt, Moody showed him how to get fish by throwing a stick of dynamite with a lighted fuse into the salt-chuck. Sure enough dead fish came to the surface. Moody gave him a charge ready to light. Alone he paddled out in his canoe—lit the fuse. In his haste and excitement he threw it in front of him but it fell into the bow. The Indian did not hesitate a moment but jumped overboard and swam ashore just as the charge exploded splitting the canoe to smithereens. I did not see it, but heard my uncles laughing over the result of Moody's way "to curry favors."

TOWED LOGS TO MILL.

"How did they get their logs to the mill?" From Deep Cove Warren DeBeck towed ten full-length sticks (110 feet) by boat; with the help of one of his brothers and a long rope with a light anchor, pulled along the shore until they got into the ebb tide—hugging the shore until they passed through the Second Narrows where they run the line out, dropped anchor, and pulled logs into the shallow water, out of the current where they could use poles and so land safely.

When possible to obtain the assistance of the ferry boat or any other, arrangements were made beforehand to have the boat pick the boom up at the Second Narrows and tow it to the mill.

BEAVER. ETTA WHITE.

Moody at times would hire the "Beaver" to tow logs from Howe Sound and Sechelt, but it was not until later years that he got the "Etta White," Capt. Smith, that the hazard and delay was overcome.

After Grandpa DeBeck's accidental death, the sons lost 400 m. feet of logs they attempted to take to the mill by hand power, losing a long cable and two anchors they hired from a sailing ship. They went through the First Narrows out to sea—a total loss.

It was not until 1922 or 3—over fifty years—that I went to Deep Cove for MacKay, Barns and Horton to drive piles for a cutting up plant of cedar logs for the Jap market.

There was a substantially built wharf (not extensive) at the head of the cove, deep water, and a log dump where a logger by the name of Buck had his boom. Buck told me about his four-wheel drive truck and trailer that he used to haul his logs from his camp, which was away up the mountain side about three or four miles distant, where his donkey logged and truck loading machines were. He did not have any trouble coming down except it was hard on the brakes. Going back was what took power hence the four wheel drive—the first used in B.C. so he said.

I took soundings along the beach about two or three hundred yards up the beach so as to have enough water to float the cut logs at all stages of the tide and be able to assort them in pockets for size and grade. They were all cut 13½ ft. long—short ends and chunks were sold to the shingle mills.

There were a few shacks where somebody lived—who I do not know. The crew of four or five I employed mostly lived at Dollarton. When I had the drag-saw (on a log float) driven by a 14 h.p. diesel engine running satisfactorily and crew broken in I left. I have never been to Deep Cove since—that's some twenty-five years ago.

Now you know how it is I know so little of Deep Cove. The place is associated only with sad memories of my boyhood days when it was all primeval wild and awesome—dark and dismal. It was there the Selalacum dwelt. My grandfather met his death. He was found sitting on a log holding his head in his hands, by his son Clarence who had returned after towing a tree they had fallen, breaking its top off and running into the water, a stumper they called it. Not a mark, bruise or injury of any kind was found on his body.

My cousin Wm. McDougall, a brother of Mrs. Andrew Haslam, was drowned—found among the logs in the boom at the camp. Uncle Warren DeBeck had his leg broken—how I do not know. His wife Anne died suddenly.

No wonder, Major, they left the place. They did not believe in the Selalacum. Nor do I—yet as I recall the sorrow and tears that were shed, their losses and hopes shattered I, too, never care to return to Deep Cove. Let the Selalacum dwell undisturbed.

I have complied with your request and from what I have written you personally may get a glimmer of what the conditions were like in the early 70's. As for the public of today they prefer things more spectacular and exciting—blood and thunder.

So long Major,

Yours

J. Warren Bell

SALMON-BELLIES.

December, 1948.

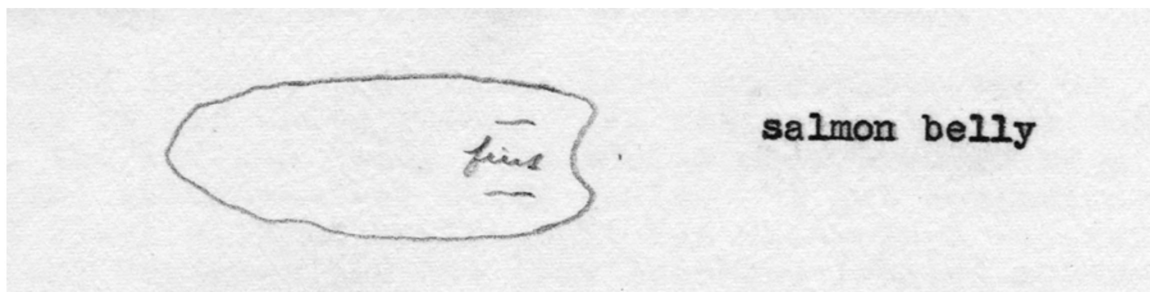
Major J.S. Matthews,
Archivist,
City Hall,
Vancouver.

My dear Major:

You asked me, "What do you know about Salmon-Bellies?"

I know the word Salmon-Bellies is frowned upon by ladies of culture. At a lacrosse match many years ago between the Tecumsahs of Toronto and the New Westminster Salmon-Bellies played at New Westminster, a fashionably dressed lady was sitting behind me on the grandstand and when she heard the Salmon-Bellies announced as they came on the field, she said, addressing no one in particular, "What a vulgar name for a team—simply horrible—could they not get a more suitable name—most ridiculous—indecent, etc." At last I turned and told her that the team was the choicest picked from the city. The Salmon-belly was the choicest—the best part of the fish. That's why they took the name Salmon-Bellies. Of course Salmon-Abdomen might be more refined but we are not cultured folk for we were brought up on Salmon-Bellies and love 'em. "What rot—perfectly ridiculous" and she ignored me. I guess it is a crude word.

Getting back to the subject of Salmon-Bellies, I remember how the canneries used to salt the bellies when they had a surplus of salmon, and could not use them. They would cut off the bellies in one piece from the back and tail leaving the two lower fins which are the richest and most tasty part of the fish. The belly looked something like this when flattened out.



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The rest of the fish was dumped into the river. What a waste, what a great waste! Yes, it was a waste, but there were millions of salmon—millions uncaught would spawn and die. Right or wrong that's what was done.