

### **THE FIRST STEAMSHIP (CLAIMED) TO BE BUILT IN VANCOUVER.**

Conversation with Captain William Watts, pioneer, now 86, 1590 West 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue, who called this morning for a chat. He is remarkably well preserved—looks 66—and brought an eastern Canadian newspaper giving an account of his visit, which I clipped and pasted on thick white paper.

(I have failed to record date, but it was an early day in September 1947. J.S. Matthews.)

### **MIRAMICHI, STEAM LAUNCH. WATTS AND TROTT. G.I. WILSON, PIONEER. GEORGE CASSADY.**

Capt. Watts: "I built the first steamship in Vancouver."

Major Matthews: Are you sure?

Capt. Watts: "Positive."

Major Matthews: What about the *Maggie*, built on the Granville beach, you know, Water Street, by, who was it, Jerry Rogers?

Capt. Watts: "That wasn't in Vancouver—that was in Granville. Mine was the first in the City of Vancouver. She was about thirty feet long, seven feet beam, single steam cylinder, four inch stroke, and her engines and boilers built in Talton" (perhaps Carlton) "Place, Ontario, by the Porcupine boiler people. Ever heard of a porcupine boiler?"

"I arrived here about 15<sup>th</sup> December 1888, and started the boat building business at once—Watts and Trott, outside the piling of the C.P.R. main line between Cambie and Abbott streets. I built the boat for G.I. Wilson and George Cassady, father of George Cassady, lawyer, New Westminster. She was built in the summer of 1892. When she was ready they had a grand launching. G.I. Wilson's daughter, now the wife of Jim Allan of the Post Office or Customs—she is still alive; so's Jim Allan—she christened the boat with champagne and all the trimmings. Christened her the *Miramichi* after the Miramichi River in New Brunswick—regular christening and wasted the champagne. I claim she was the first steamer built in Vancouver. She was cedar planked, oak ribs, straight stem and elliptic stern, yacht counter, open sides and awning top supported on standards all around, seats all around, and the fuel was coal or wood. She was a pleasure yacht—never registered—nothing under ten tons registered at that time. G.I. Wilson and George Cassady used her for hunting trips up the North Arm—anywhere. G.I. Wilson was quite an important fellow in those days.

"She ended her days on Dog Lake below Penticton. Dr. Bob Mathison, of Kelowna, told me where she ended. They must have taken her to Okanagan Lake on a C.P.R. flat car and then steamed her down the lake to Penticton and down the river. Anyway, Bob told me she ended her days down by Okanagan Falls and Dog Lake."

### **PORCUPINE BOILER.**

"The porcupine boiler was just an ordinary iron round boiler all studded with one inch pipes about six inches long sticking out at right angles; they were blind one end. They stuck out like spikes on a prickly pear—sort of semi-tubular boiler—and the flames played on the pipes as well as the boiler; just what it was called—porcupine—porcupine boiler."