

**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.

**Copyright Statement**

© 2011 City of Vancouver. Any or all of *Early Vancouver* may be used without restriction as to the nature or purpose of the use, even if that use is for commercial purposes. You may copy, distribute, adapt and transmit the work. It is required that a link or attribution be made to the City of Vancouver.

**Reproductions**

High resolution versions of any graphic items in *Early Vancouver* are available. A fee may apply.

**Citing Information**

When referencing the 2011 edition of *Early Vancouver*, please cite the page number that appears at the bottom of the page in the PDF version only, not the page number indicated by your PDF reader. Here are samples of how to cite this source:

Footnote or Endnote Reference:

Major James Skitt Matthews, *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 7 (Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 2011), 33.

Bibliographic Entry:

Matthews, Major James Skitt. *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 7. Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 2011.

**Contact Information**

City of Vancouver Archives  
1150 Chestnut Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 3J9  
604.736.8561  
archives@vancouver.ca  
vancouver.ca/archives





Gibson's Landing, Howe Sound, B.C., circa 1900-1910. Lester R. Peterson, of Gibsons B.C. wrote, Aug. 1954, and Jan. 1955. To City Archives, Vancouver: -  
 "The store was built by George Gibson, senior around 1900. It was burned down in 1910. It stood at the head of the wharf where the John Wood Hardware store now stands. The legal description is Lot seven, Parcel A, Block C, D.L. 686. There was no such subdivision at the time it was built, or in operation. It is not the oldest store; the present Howe Sound Trading Co's structure being built by Mr. Gibson's eldest son about 1895. Mr. Gibson and his sons built their own piledriver, so I am told by our Clerk, Mr. Robert Burns, who saw it when he was a boy; it had a capstan for raising the hammer. They drove pilings midway between the present wharf and the Le Page Glue Factory, still standing, and remained in use until 1900 or 1901, when the glue factory and the first government wharf were built." Information on authority Mr's Grace Chamberlin, grand daughter, and Robert Burns, Esq., Municipal Clerk L. to R. Boy unknown; Mr White; Mr's Albert Mc Coll, nee Hattie Gibson; Mr's Patterson, nee Nellie Gibson, Tom Wells, holding Vera Th' Coll. Mr's Gibson; Mr George Gibson, and two Chinamen who worked for Mr Gibson.  
 City Archives, 9 s.m.

Item # EarlyVan\_v7\_017

*[photo annotation:]*

Gibson's landing, Howe Sound, B.C., circa 1900-1910. Lester R. Peterson, of Gibson's, B.C., wrote, Aug. 1954 and Jan. 1955, to City Archives, Vancouver: -

"The store was built by George Gibson, senior, around 1900. It was burned down in 1910. It stood at the head of the wharf where the John Wood Hardware store now stands. The legal description is Lot seven, Parcel A, Block C, D.L. 686. There was no such subdivision at the time it was built, or in operation. It is not the oldest store; the present Howe Sound Trading Co's structure being built by Mr. Gibson's eldest son about 1895. Mr. Gibson and his sons built their own piledriver, so I am told by our Clerk, Mr. Robert Burns, who saw it when he was a boy; it had a capstan for raising the hammer. They drove pilings midway between the present wharf and the LePage Glue Factory, still standing, and remained in use until 1900 or 1901, when the glue factory and the first government wharf were built." Information on authority Mrs. Grace Chamberlin, granddaughter, and Robert Burns, Esq., Municipal Clerk.

L. to R. Boy unknown; Mr. White; Mrs. Albert McColl, née Hattie Gibson; Mrs. Patterson, née Nellie Gibson; Don Patterson; Tom Wells, holding Vera McColl, Mrs. Gibson; Mr. George Gibson, and two Chinamen who worked for Mr. Gibson.

## **THE FOUNDING OF GIBSON'S LANDING.**

J.W. Bell.

In the early days of the eighteen-nineties, when I was superintendent at the Nanaimo Saw Mill, I became acquainted with a tall rangy man of about fifty years of age, a State of Mainer, I think, an American at any rate. This person bought lumber in small quantities, doing odd jobs and living in a cabin alone.

Being that he was of a kindly agreeable disposition, we became quite intimate, and knowing he was hard up, I was in a position to help him in many ways, even if he had an independent nature and refused credit.

"Anything I can't pay for—I can do without," was the way he put it.

One day he asked me if I knew of any place on the coast where he could take up a piece of land—preferably on the mainland—not isolated—reasonably near some town. "I have a family I would like to make a home for some place. I have not many more years ahead of me. I have not money enough to buy a place. What I would like is enough ground to raise vegetables, keep a cow, some chickens, and where there is good fishing so I can make enough money selling fish to buy necessities."

We talked about the delta of the Fraser.

"But that takes money," he interrupted. I told him there was no place on Burrard Inlet suitable. Howe Sound was not much better, nothing on the east side—just around Gower Point, inside Howe Sound was a small sheltered bay—but the country was heavily timbered, plenty salmon, cod and herring.

On and off, for weeks, I told him about the coast—Robert's Creek, Sechelt, Texada and Lasquiti Islands.

At last he decided to make a break and go some place as his son, a tall fine young man, had joined him.

"I am going to build me a boat, one I can live in and cruise around until I find a place," he announced. "How much will the lumber cost for a double-ender, flat bottom, thirty feet long?"

When I told him the price of clear boat lumber thirty feet long, he shook his head. "No, just rough lumber; the cheapest I can buy—knots won't hurt if they are sound."

He and his son built the boat on the beach. I took considerable pleasure selecting the lumber and advising economy in many ways. It was not a craft one could be proud of, but it answered the purpose. His bill for the material was as low as I dared make it without hurting the old man's feelings.

He and his son loaded all their belongings in the cabin foreward and sailed away before a westerly breeze in the direction I told them would take them to Howe Sound—no compass or charts. I never heard of or saw them after; until ten years later I had occasion to go to Howe Sound to inspect some logs for J.S. Emerson and upon landing at the wharf I met my old acquaintance who gave me a most hearty greeting—invited me to his house where I met his wife and daughter.

That evening he told me the story of landing in the little bay I had described to him. "I have been here ever since—thanks to your advice."

Gibson was a fine character, good citizen. His path was not strewn with roses—it had many thorns and rough spots, but he did make a home for his family.

Dear Major

I thought you might be interested in Gibson as he was well known in Vancouver.

I have written how it happened he located at what is now known as Gibson's Landing.

J.W. Bell.

Received the story unsigned, 18 October 1946 from my good friend, John Warren Bell, pioneer, Burrard Inlet, 1871. J.S. Matthews.

Note: since June 1947 "Gibson's Landing" has been known as "Gibsons." A.W.

## **BIG TREES.**

31<sup>st</sup> Oct. 1946.

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

Your enquiry about what I know about the "Big Fir Tree" which has been illustrated, discussed and written about in our local press of recent date is not worth comment or discussion.

I remember seeing the same picture many years ago. Who had it, or how long ago I cannot say. It was being shown among the crowd as a "Fir Tree"—Who fell it? and where? were the questions asked.

"Here, DeBeck," he said, addressing my uncle Ward, "You're an old-timer and should know—tell us about it."

"What the heck are you trying to pull off now? You know as well as I do that it is not a fir. Who ever saw bark that thick on a fir? Besides, it's stringy. Twenty-five feet in diameter alright—but it is not a fir. You can pull such stuff on cheechakoes, they like it—but you know very well no fir ever grew that large. You know it is a redwood tree of California. I have worked in the redwoods—have seen them larger—much larger. The drinks are on you—come on, boys, he tried to put over a foolish one."

That's about the size of it, Major. It was a joke they tried to spring on the boys and it fell flat.

Periodically that same picture appears in Lumber Journals and now we have located where it grew? "Lynn Creek" "fell some time about 1895?"