

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

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CONVERSATION, 15 JULY 1948, AT MY DESK, CITY ARCHIVES, WITH MR. JOHN (COMMONLY CALLED "JACK") WILLIAMS, 376 WEST 20TH AVENUE (FAIR. 0465R), PIONEER, WHO ARRIVED HERE 30 SEPTEMBER 1888 ON THE CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY CHARTERED STEAMSHIP *DUKE OF WESTMINSTER*.

Mr. Williams has resided in Vancouver—and Victoria—sixty years, and Mrs. Williams is living. They have four grandchildren.

***BEAVER*.**

Mr. Williams: "As we came through the Narrows, the old *Beaver* was lying on the rocks. Afterwards I went out to Prospect Point to look at her. Then I blew up her engines with dynamite, and sold the old iron to a junk man."

As told to me—J.S. Matthews
City Archivist.

BLOWING UP THE HUDSON'S BAY STEAMER *BEAVER*.

Note: many have told me, at various times, that the wreck of the old *Beaver* had been dynamited by relic hunters, but, until this late date, 15 July 1948, nothing authentic came to hand.

J.S.M.

[LETTER FROM J.S. MATTHEWS TO MRS. STANLEY WILLIAMS.]

The original was in handwriting.

1158 Arbutus street
Kitsilano Beach
Vancouver 9,
Dec. 10th, 1953.

Dear Mrs. Williams:

A long stream of recollections flow as I wrap up this parcel with its annual tribute to you from me. I am not forgetful of the trials we shared in those early days of the City Archives, nor am I unmindful of your devotion through nine long years of tribulation and struggle. So long as the story of the preservation of the people of Vancouver is told, it must include the name of their faithful servant, Miss Margaret Giles.

Last month, on the 17th, by petition of thirty public groups, the City Council added my name to the roll of Freeman of Vancouver. There were fourteen, now there are fifteen, and includes names known throughout the British Commonwealth.

I accept the great honour which has been conferred as a recognition of much and to many, and, as a visible symbol was essential to demonstrate that recognition, I was found to be a suitable one.

It has been promulgated throughout Canada and beyond the seas that the people of Vancouver cherish the story of the achievements of their Founders; that they esteem their records so highly that they have bestowed high honour upon the keeper of them, and—by inference—have expressed their grateful thanks to all, including yourself, who have aided in that laudable endeavor. They have intimated to other towns and cities in British Columbia, that they, too, might find profit and pleasure to themselves by emulating our example.

I am sure you will accept this tribute to your early labors from the Citizens of Vancouver, as also from me, in the spirit of humility equal to my own, and we can join together in gratitude to Our Almighty that we were chosen for a task so useful and so honourable, and for the health and strength to perform our duty.

All good wishes to Mr. Williams, to your dear children and to you. I grasp your hand.
Good night

Most sincerely,

J.S. Matthews

Mrs. Stanley Williams,
Box 241
Edmonton, Alta.

CONVERSATION WITH LIEUTENANT-COLONEL W.J. WILLIAMS, E.D., OF 38 ROYAL AVENUE, NEW WESTMINSTER, WHO KINDLY CALLED AT THE CITY ARCHIVES THIS AFTERNOON, BRINGING WITH HIM A LARGE FRAMED PHOTOGRAPH, TOUCHED WITH CRAYON, OF THE LATE SIR MATTHEW BEGBIE, WHICH HE PRESENTED FOR SAFEKEEPING, (NO DATE) JULY 1949.

Mrs. Williams, his wife, passed away a month or more ago.

CHIEF JUSTICE SIR MATTHEW BEGBIE.

Col. Williams: "This portrait was given to my late wife's father, Mr. C.F. Moore, of Victoria. He was a great friend of Sir Matthew. They used to play cards together. As you see, it was made by Mr. Eyres, photographer, Victoria, in 1894. Mrs. Williams, my dear wife, passed away last June 4th, and it would be her wish that the portrait be placed where it will be taken care of. Will you please accept it.

"This slip of paper, upon which is written, 'And believe me, ever yours truly, Matt B. Begbie,' came with the drawing when he presented it to Mr. Moore, but, unfortunately, the remainder of the letter was cut off by someone.

"Mrs. Williams and I were married in Victoria in 1910. Her father, Mr. Moore, died during the First World War years. She was a school teacher at Big Bar Creek, Cariboo, during the 1890s."

Major Matthews: It is very kind of you, Colonel Williams. It was through Mr. W.J. Twiss that I learned that you had it.

Col. Williams: "Mrs. Williams knew the Twiss family when both lived in Kaslo."