

## **Early Vancouver**

### **Volume Two**

**By: Major J.S. Matthews, V.D.**

**2011 Edition (Originally Published 1933)**

*Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1932.*

*Supplemental to volume one collected in 1931.*

### **About the 2011 Edition**

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## MOLASSES FOR STIFF LEGS.

"Then whitemans on schooner give molasses, same time biscuit. Indian not know what it for, so Indian rub on leg" (thighs and calves) "for medicine. You know Indian sit on legs for long time in canoe; legs get stiff; rub molasses on legs make stiffness not so bad. Molasses stick legs bottom of canoe. Molasses not much good for stiff legs, but my ancestors think so; not their fault, just mistake—they not know molasses good to eat." And then August Kitsilano laughed heartily.

There are, at this moment, well over 6,000 white families supported by "relief" in Vancouver, where formerly three to five thousand Indians lived off land, water and beach.

# INDIANS OF ISLAND FEARED FIRST SHIP

PROVINCE ————— 1934

## Thought Rice Dead Worms And Used Molasses to Repair Canoes.

NANAIMO, Nov. 30.—Moses Ward, native son of Nanaimo Indian Reserve, unfolded an interesting story, handed down to him by his late father, at the annual banquet of Nanaimo Pioneers' Association, commemorating the arrival of the historic Princess Royal eighty years ago, that brought the first coal miners from Staffordshire, England.

"Well, Till'cums," the Indian said, "when the schooner was sighted by my ancestors, they thought it was a big anima. One hundred skookum Redmen were selected to paddle out to meet it. They were frightened when they saw the smoking clay pipe in the captain's mouth and his 'toeless' feet, clad in shoes. The captain called 'Charko,' meaning 'Come.' The Indians refused until a box of biscuits was thrown to them. Climbing

aboard ship they were given presents of rice, which they thought were dead worms, and molasses, which they used for pitch to repair their canoes. A shining axe blade was attached to a cedar bough and worn as an ornament by the chief."

When its use was explained the following day, the new axe was rented to the Indians for a blanket, which collected enough blankets for a potlatch. Two thousand Indians were encamped at Departure Bay at that time, the speaker said.

Ex-Mayor Busby, the chairman, introduced Mrs. Tom Glaholm, first white child born here, and John Meakin, who came to Canada on the Princess Royal.

John Shaw reviewed the history of the society, which started with thirty members three years ago, and now has two hundred.

Folks of all ages joined lustily in community singing, led by J. Bertram, and Mrs. H. Freeman, D. Manson and R. Robertson took part in a programme that followed the supper.

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