

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

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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"I am afraid there was some strange administration until the estate came into our hands; it was in an awful tangle when we took it over."

CITY OF VANCOUVER, BUILDING DEPT.

Record of building permits issued.

"8th July, 1905. G.F. and J. Galt, Lot 6, Block 1, \$21,000.

"17th August, 1917. Addition, west twenty feet, Lot 6, Block 1, \$17,000."

Note: prior to 1 January 1928, the firm known as Blue Ribbon Limited, tea merchants, etc., was known as G.F. and J. Galt, tea merchants and vendors of the "Blue Ribbon" brand, well known throughout Canada.

COPY OF LETTER DATED 18 AUGUST 1932, RECEIVED FROM BLUE RIBBON LIMITED, VANCOUVER, B.C.

Dear Major Matthews:

Replying to your letter of August 12th. We have checked carefully the description of our property as outlined in your letter and find that your information is correct, excepting that our building on Lot 6 is 56' wide instead of 66'. Our portion, therefore of Lot 6 is the west 56'.

The property is described as Lots 6 & 7, Blk 1., D.L. 185. It is now owned by Blue Ribbon Limited, as G.F. and J. Galt sold out their interests to this Company over four years ago.

The first part of our building was put up in 1905, and the addition of 20' to the west, in 1917. All of our building stands on Lot 6, Lot 7 being at the present time vacant.

Yours very truly,

BLUE RIBBON LIMITED,

per Fred T. Moore.

NARRATION, JOSEPH MORTON, ESQ., 2116 YORK STREET, KITSILANO, TO MAJOR J.S. MATTHEWS, ARCHIVIST, 3 MARCH 1932.

(Proof subsequently corrected and approved by Mr. Morton.)

"Father has told me, upon many occasions, the story of how fate brought him to Vancouver. I am his only son. This is how it was.

"Father was born in Yorkshire, at a little village called Salandine Nook, three miles from Huddersfield, famous for its pottery. Father was a potter, so was his father. The firm of Joseph Morton and Sons, that is, my grandfather and his sons, still functions. You will see later how this avocation of Father's had much to do with his subsequent fortunes and his establishment at Vancouver.

"Father was born on the 16th April 1834, so that he must have been about 27 or 28 when he left England for the Crown Colony of British Columbia on that famous leviathan of the nineteenth century, the paddlewheel steamer *Great Eastern*, the vessel which laid the first Atlantic cable. It seems to me that Father told me that he came out on her on her first trip, but I don't see how that could be, as I think she made her first trip in 1858. Anyway, he came to British Columbia in the spring of 1862.

"Sam Brighthouse and Father were first cousins, travelling together to make their fortunes in the Cariboo goldfields, and they met William Hailstone, also on his way to the Cariboo, on the *Great Eastern*. Father has never intimated to me that they knew Hailstone before they met on the ship.

"The three travelled together to New York and from there by way of St. Louis and the Union Pacific Railway, then under construction, down to the coast to Panama. Father told me that, whilst travelling on the Union Pacific, it was necessary upon one occasion to stop the train for a quarter of an hour to let the buffalo pass, or rather, to work through them. The buffalo were crossing the track and were strung out as

far as he could see in all directions. The buffalo must have been travelling north as it was springtime. He also told me that, whilst waiting at St. Louis, they were walking together one evening and saw a man lying in the street gutter. Examination proved he was dead. They stayed near and presently drew the attention of a passing stranger, who remarked, 'Oh, that's nothing; he's only a nigger.'

"They made two trips together to the Cariboo; one in 1862, and one the next year, each time walking the whole distance 400 miles in and 400 miles out both trips, 1600 miles in all. I presume they took a boat to Yale, but what I do not quite understand is how they took up land and held it and at the same time went to the Cariboo as well, for a preemption requires someone to live upon it. They had not the means to travel to the Cariboo by stage. Father told me that while they were on their way in on one of their trips, I do not know which one, he took a little pail to get some fresh water for supper from the lake, and just as he was dipping the pail into the water, noticed a corpse in the water. After examining it he moved off to one side to another place to get some clean water. He got his water, took it back to their bivouac, told his two companions of what he had seen, and they all returned to the corpse to view it.

"It was then noticed that the head had been smashed in, so they looked around for further evidence, finding two more bodies, three in all, all with their heads smashed in. There was a lot of lawlessness about at that time.

"Father also remarked to me on how they slept in the snow, and how, in the morning, the first one up would see two mounds of snow on the ground, 'like a graveyard,' to use Father's own words.

"On the second trip out Mr. Hailstone got a job as blacksmith's helper, and remained behind, I believe, at Clinton."

THE FAMOUS JOURNEY TO BURRARD INLET.

"I feel quite sure it was before they made the first trip into the Cariboo that Father made the celebrated journey to Burrard Inlet. He has told me that they were looking around New Westminster. They were recent arrivals, all things were strange to them, they were curious, looking at anything and everything, and waiting to start out for the Cariboo.

"One day Father wandered past a cobbler's shop in New Westminster and saw a piece of coal in the window. He entered, and was told by the cobbler that an Indian had brought it to him wrapped in a blanket. Possibly the Indian had heard of the coal at Nanaimo, knew that the White Man was interested; perhaps he had seen coal used by the Royal Engineers in New Westminster.

"Father's interest was excited. As a potter he knew that certain kinds of clay are found near coal. The cobbler promised to locate the Indian, and soon after the Indian and Father were brought together in New Westminster.

"An arrangement was made for the Indian to guide Father to the coal deposit, and so they started off one day and came by forest trail to the head of False Creek. Just what trail they took I do not know; there must have been many trails through the forest known to the Indians, and, from what you tell me John McDougall says, the growth of trees was so prolific over that country that the tops shut out the light, and there was very little growth of any sort near the ground. Anyway, Father told me the Indian led him to the head of False Creek, that they then skirted the head of False Creek, and after that cut through the trees to the Inlet, somewhere about Carrall Street now, and the Indian got a canoe. The Indian showed Father the coal seam, but whether the one at the foot of Burrard Street or the one at Prospect Point, or both, I do not know. Father told me he did not think much of the coal.

"You must remember that, as the years pass, the locations of places to which names are applied change a little. For instance, the head of False Creek today is a very different place to that which Father and the Indian circled around, which was at the foot of the Grandview slopes. Then again, the Coal Harbour of today is a mere section of the Coal Harbour of 1862 or 1863. What prompted the Indian to take Father out of the First Narrows I have no knowledge, but whatever it was, they went out of the Narrows in the canoe and circumnavigated the peninsula. Perhaps it was that the tide was rushing out, and it was easier for them to come back to English Bay than to re-enter the Narrows; that would be quite like an Indian. Anyway, the facts are that they went out of the Narrows and clear around until they finally landed on the English Bay bathing beach at the foot of Denman Street.

"Father has distinctly told me many times that it was near the foot of the present Denman Street. It is quite reasonable he should know, for, as you yourself recollect, the sand of the English Bay bathing beach was, until quite recent years, but a very short strip of perhaps no more than one hundred yards.

"They jumped ashore from the canoe, and the Indian then began to behave strangely. He pulled the canoe high up on the beach and into the bushes, led off on a trail into the woods, and beckoned Father to follow. Father demurred, and stood still on the sand. He had no knowledge of Chinook at that time, so, gesticulating, he pointed to the sun, suggestive that it was getting late and time they were getting back to New Westminster.

"The Indian was obdurate, and Father had nothing to do but to follow him. To his astonishment, after a short walk, they arrived back on Burrard Inlet. The Indian was saving the long trip back around the peninsula. Just what happened before they got home again to New Westminster I do not at this moment recall having been told.

"Father next informed Sam Brighthouse and Mr. Hailstone, and persuaded them to come back with him and see the fine piece of land with a natural harbour. He was struck with the site, with the beauty of the spot with the sea on one side and a magnificent natural harbour on the other. In the land and its location more than in the coal and the clay, neither of which impressed him greatly, was his greatest interest."

THE "THREE GREENHORN ENGLISHMEN."

"Father told me that when some of the New Westminster people heard that they had agreed to purchase or preempt the land at one dollar per acre, *payable to the government*, that the three of them were dubbed the 'three greenhorn Englishmen,' and some people enjoyed a great laugh at their expense. Of course, the land was covered with dense forest, some was swampy, and it was twelve miles out in the woods without access save by trail through the trees.

"The original boundary of the Morton-Brighthouse-Hailstone area was, on the eastern boundary, the western side of what is now Burrard Street, and extended north and south from water to water. The western boundary was the present Stanley Park. Father related to me that they were told that they were entitled to a preemption of 160 acres each, that if they staked out too little it would be their own fault, and that they could not come back for more, but that on their western boundary they could go as far as the Naval Reserve, now Stanley Park, only. Ultimately they got in all about 540 acres, or 180 instead of 160 acres each. My understanding is that they took up the land in 1862; certain it is that Father had some sort of a cabin at the foot of Burrard Street in March 1863." (Interjection: now in the shadow of the most pretentious building in Vancouver, the Marine Building, 22 stories high, 541 feet above C.P.R. tracks. "True enough," said Mr. Morton.)

"Well, the three of them arranged with the Government that one of them could live in the cabin and that his residence would qualify for the whole three. That arrangement allowed the other two to go out to work; they were all poor. They took it turn about, a month at a time each. In later years they had a milk ranch up there, and sold milk in Granville."

INCIDENTS WITH THE INDIANS.

"Father told me of an exciting incident which took place during one of his turns to stay on the preemption.

"One morning he was aroused from sleep—he was alone at the time—by a tremendous shindy. Listening, he made out that it was the noise of Indians, and he thought for sure they were going to clean him off the Inlet, scalp him, kill him, do something to get rid of him. He slipped out of bed and dressed quickly, put his gum boots in the bed and covered them up, and, arranging the bedclothes to make the bed look as though it was occupied, someone sleeping in it, sneaked out into the bushes to await developments.

"Nothing happened, but the big shindy continued in full force, kyhying, jabbering and yelling in loud Chinook in a very excited manner. Then, out of curiosity, he went through the bush to investigate all the excitement.

"Going down to the head of Coal Harbour he saw there a great crowd of Indians excitedly dancing, throwing up their arms, and yelling about the place where now is the 'Zoo,' at the entrance to Stanley Park. Hanging to a tree and swinging and swaying, he could see a body, and approaching more closely,

keeping well out of sight and well concealed, got so close that he was able to discern that the swinging body was that of a klootchman (Indian Woman).

"His curiosity was satisfied, but not knowing the reason, he immediately headed for New Westminster and reported the incident to the authorities. They in turn investigated and brought some of the Indians to Westminster to give evidence.

"The Indians said that the Indian woman had killed another woman's papoose and that they thought it was a fit instance in which to exercise the King Georgeman's law, so they had taken her and hanged her.

"They were warned not to do it again; that the King George men would attend to that in the future, and that they, the Indians, would be severely punished if they took the administration of justice into their own hands.

"Another incident: I don't know where it was, but it was soon after they came out and before they learned to talk Chinook. They had a cabin somewhere that they had built themselves; I presume it was the cabin on their preemption, but am not absolutely positive. Anyway, one day an Indian came along and brought with him two young women. They did not know much about the habits of Indians, and were very suspicious of the visitors. I do not know if all three preemptors were together, but anyway there was someone with my father at the time. The Indian and the two klootchmen approached the cabin and started to talk Chinook. They did not understand the Indians and could not make the Indians understand them. They were sitting on a form or bench outside the cabin. This may not be exact but it is so near as I recall it. The Indians were trying to impart some information but could make no headway, so at last, how they managed it I don't know, but the Indians got them to leave the form and set it out a few paces from the cabin wall. Then the two Indian girls started bouncing about, jumping in the air backwards and forwards over the form like two wild things, and they could jump like deer. This went on for about fifteen minutes with the White Men very much puzzled, not understanding what it all meant. Eventually the girls tired themselves out and had to give up the performances. Neither succeeded in making themselves understood, and by and by the Indians walked off in disgust.

"When Father made enquiries as to the meaning of such a peculiar performance the old timers, with much merriment, told him the Indian was simply trying to hire out a servant, one who was young and supple, and who proved it by her agility.

"Another incident afterwards was when my father and the two others had more or less overcome the difficulties of speaking Chinook. A Yorkshireman came out to New Westminster and made their acquaintance, Jim Holroyd by name, and was staying with them at their cabin on Burrard Inlet. Holroyd, later of Victoria, of course knew nothing of Chinook, but had read a great deal about the scalping proclivities of the North American Indian.

"There was a grindstone set out in front of the cabin for grinding axes and tools, and as my father and the others were very friendly with the Indians, the Indians were allowed to use it, a privilege which they appreciated. Early one morning before anyone was out of bed a noise was heard outside the cabin, and Holroyd asked somewhat anxiously, 'What's that? What's that?' Father replied, 'Don't pay attention; I expect it's some of those Indians around. Go to sleep.' But no more sleep for Mr. Holroyd if Indians were in the vicinity. He got out of bed and got ready for action. He opened the door about an inch, peeped out, and saw the ugliest looking Siwash with an axe in his hand standing beside the grindstone. The Siwash grinned, which made matters worse; it was enough to scare any greenhorn from Yorkshire. Holroyd slammed the door and bolted it and called out to Father, 'Indians, John, and they've got their tomahawks and are ba'an going to scalp us.' Knowing that there was no danger, Father smiled and said to Jim, 'They're only going to grind their axes.' But Holroyd was not so sure and had made up his mind that there was going to be no axe grinding by savages while he was lying in bed. His faith in Father's assurances was completely outbalanced by the blood-curdling yarns he had read. He got quite excited and said to Father, 'What have I got to say to those fellows? They've got to go.' Father said, 'Open the door and say, "Mika Clattawah," which in Chinook means "Go away."' Holroyd opened the door about one inch, peeped through the crack, and roared with the full force of his lungs, 'Michael, Clatter away, damn thee.' The Indians enjoyed his speech immensely; they grinned still more and went on grinding."



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SALE OF THE "CITY OF LIVERPOOL," I.E. "WEST END."

"The details of how my father and his two comrades afterwards divided the property I do not know, but I do know that the C.P.R. got one lot in every three. It was surveyed and set out in lots before it was deeded to the C.P.R., then each of the three took his own section, minus those for the C.P.R., and every third lot was deeded to the C.P.R."

THE KNOLL.

"I was walking down Seaton Street, now Hastings Street West, with Father one day about 1905 or earlier. We had met downtown and were going home to his residence at 1151 Denman Street together, and for some reason unknown to me now we had gone down Seaton Street on our way. Father halted, and we peered over a rail fence onto a vacant lot. He pointed his finger and said, 'Do you see that knoll? That is where we built *our* cabin.' Be careful to note that he said, 'where we built *our* cabin,' not 'where I built *my* cabin'; I recall his words very distinctly. The location of the knoll is where the Galt people, now the Blue Ribbon firm, have their tea warehouse, 1043 Hastings Street West. On the other bank of the gully, the west bank, you can still see the ruins of the basement walls of the old Williams and Barker Brewery, and at that time there was an old, narrow, disused wagon track which led up the hill between the brewery and the knoll."

FAMILY GENEALOGY.

"Father was born on April 16th, 1834, and married in England to my mother, Jane Ann Bailey, born at Old Lindley, near Salandine Nook, Yorkshire, about 1878. She was the sister of James Bailey, Councillor and Justice of the Peace at Blackpool, and of Sam Bailey, tea merchant of Blackpool, with whom she was in business partnership, a partnership which she retained until her death. A daughter, Lizzie, was born to the union in 1879 at Blackpool, Lancashire. In 1880 Father returned to New Westminster, and Mother came with him, and I was born in New Westminster on the first of February 1881. Two days later Mother died, and was buried in the Oddfellows Cemetery, Sapperton. My sister is now Mrs. W.E.A. Thornton, of Sardis, B.C.

"At the time of Mother's death Father was in limited financial circumstances, and did manual labour such as digging ditches on Lulu Island, for which I am told he obtained government scrip which went to pay for the preemption, and also 'peddled' milk on a milk round in which, I understand, he had an interest. Under these circumstances it was necessary for we two children to be taken care of. My sister was placed in the Roman Catholic Convent at New Westminster, and I was placed in a private family. Father purchased a farm at Mission in 1884, and shortly afterwards, married again to Miss Ruth Hunt, now his widow, and still living. There is no issue of the second marriage.

"The farm at Mission, purchased in 1884 from a Mr. Passmore, was 363 acres of land on the north bank of the Fraser River and immediately west of the C.P.R. Fraser River bridge. It was used for general farming. I have heard my stepmother say that on the night of 13 June 1886, they could see in the sky the reflection of the burning of Vancouver. I was but five at the time, and have no recollection of it. I left Mission in 1898; Father followed in 1901 and came to Vancouver but retained the farm, which his executors sold after his death.

"After leaving Mission he lived at 1151 Denman Street, leading a retired life. Then, at the end of 1911, moved to his new home in the 1900 block Pendrill Street where he died the following April. It has been stated in the press that Father went back to England. This is not true. He made several trips to England, but they were all business trips of limited duration. One trip was that of 1888 when we all went, and came back in 1892, to find that the C.P.R. had built a bridge across the Fraser River at Mission, close to our farm, during our absence. His last trip was in 1905.

"Father died in Vancouver on April 18th, 1912, aged 78 years and 2 days. During his last moments he expressed a wish to me that his body should be cremated. At that time the first crematorium in Vancouver was under construction, but not completed, and it was necessary to take the body to Seattle for cremation. The ashes were afterwards deposited in an urn and then placed in a niche in the Centre and Hanna Columbarium Room, where they have remained for the last twenty years.

"His will, dated 22 May 1911, was probated in June 1912 at over seven hundred and sixty-nine thousand dollars. The will left one hundred thousand dollars to the Baptist Educational Board of British Columbia

together with some seven acres of land in South Vancouver. In 1910 he laid the cornerstone of the First Baptist Church on Burrard Street, Vancouver. He also set aside the equivalent of eleven thousand dollars to build the Baptist church since known as the Ruth Morton Memorial Church, South Vancouver, and the cornerstone of which was laid by my stepmother, Mrs. Ruth Morton.

"Sam Brighthouse married a Spanish lady of noted beauty, the widow of Captain Pritchard. Michael Brighthouse Wilkinson was a nephew who, to conform to his uncle's will, changed his name to Michael Wilkinson Brighthouse." (He died nine days after this narrative was written—12 March 1932.)

"William Hailstone married, sent his earnings to his wife in England. Then came a cable saying that she had died. Her will left her property to her two daughters, thus depriving her husband of his own earnings—a matter which was afterwards, I understand, adjusted. I heard afterwards that he fell down stairs and died of a broken neck." (Hailstone was in 1895 living in Rose Villa, Quay Road, Bridlington, Yorkshire. He had returned and was personally known to J.M. Heselton, 2248 East 25th Avenue, Vancouver. The two daughters were then about 12 or 15.)

"All three pioneers died very wealthy, and within about thirteen months of each other. Though all married, one son only was given to them; myself. My wife was Miss Florence Appleyard, second daughter of Mr. C.H. Appleyard, Town Councillor, Mirfield, Yorkshire. We have no children."

All above as recounted to me.

J.S. Matthews, August 1932.

THE ROUTE OF JOHN MORTON'S FIRST TRIP TO BURRARD INLET, "WESTMINSTER TO WEST END."

See *The First Settlers on Burrard Inlet and Early Vancouver*, Vol. 2.

Narration of conversation between Joseph Morton, son of John Morton, and Major J.S. Matthews, V.D., City Archivist, 3 March 1932, wherein Joseph Morton states:

"The Indian and Father were brought together in New Westminster. An arrangement was made for the Indian to guide Father to the coal deposits, and they started off one day and came by forest trail to the head of False Creek. Just what trail they took I do not know." ... "Anyway, Father told me the Indian led him to the head of False Creek, and after that cut through the trees to the Inlet, somewhere about Carrall Street now, and the Indian got a canoe" ... "What prompted the Indian to take Father out of the Narrows, I have no knowledge, but whatever it was, they went out of the Narrows in the canoe, and circumnavigated the peninsula" ... "They finally landed on the English Bay bathing beach at the foot of Denman Street ... They jumped ashore" ... "He" (the Indian) "pulled the canoe high up on the beach, and into the bushes, led off on a trail into the woods, and beckoned Father to follow" ... "To his" (Morton's) "astonishment, after a short walk, they arrived back on Burrard Inlet" ... etc.

MORTON'S PROBABLE ROUTE FROM NEW WESTMINSTER.

It is assumed to have been via the Douglas Street trail (now Douglas Road) to Burnaby Lake, thence via Still Creek, Trout Lake and China Creek to the mouth of the latter at the old southeast corner of False Creek, now approximately the foot of St. Catherine's Street.

AND FOR THESE REASONS.

1. H.M.S. *Plumper's* chart, No. 1922, 1859-1860, shows an unsurveyed trail from New Westminster to a large unsurveyed lake known to exist, now Burnaby Lake.
2. Excerpt, *Victoria Colonist*, 4 July 1859: "The pleasure walk" (political sarcasm) "to Burnaby Lake is completed." (Geo. Green quotation.)
3. Geo. Green quotation: "In February 1861, John Murray and Daniel Kelso contracted to open up two miles of Douglas Street Road" ... "The work was finished by July."