

Early Vancouver

Volume Five

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

2011 Edition (Originally Published 1945)

Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1936-1945.

Supplemental to volumes one, two, three and four collected in 1931, 1932 and 1934.

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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MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH MRS. ALICE CRAKANTHROP, 1205 BUTE STREET, WHO KINDLY INVITED ME TO TAKE TEA WITH HER AND HER DAUGHTER MISS MURIEL, 22 MAY 1940.

Mrs. Crakanthorp has completely recovered from her accident three years ago.

“ROMANCE OF VANCOUVER” SERIAL, *SUN* NEWSPAPER.

Mrs. Crakanthorp: “I don’t like the stories the *Sun* newspaper is publishing every day about pioneer days in Vancouver; it’s too exaggerated, and silly; we didn’t do those things.”

MAXIMILLIAN MICHAUD. FRISADIE. MARY NAHU. JUMBO NAHU.

“Frisadie, whom he writes about” (7 May and 11 May) “was sister to Jumbo Nahu’s mother. Jumbo’s mother was Mary Nahu, and a good woman; I liked her; her mother was an Indian woman. Mary, before she became the common-law wife of Nahu, had been married by a priest to a whiteman. She saved up her money, and put it in a bag, and the man ran away and left her; he filled her money bag with water or something, and went off with her savings, and she never heard of him again. She wanted to marry Nahu, but the priest said she was a married woman, and as she was a Roman Catholic, he would not marry them, so she went and lived with Nahu. I remember once we had a meeting to get rid of the school teacher, and there was a vote, and someone objected to her voting because she was not married to Nahu, and they did not let her vote. I thought it very unkind of them to bring that up. And there was another one they objected to for the same reason, but he said he was married, and threatened them; said he had been married in New Westminster. Jumbo does not know that his mother had been previously married, and I don’t want him to know. He was, and I suppose still is, a good boy; he was ‘king of the kids’ at Moodyville; not a bully, but he always took charge, and the children did what he said; he was a great big boy. He was Mary Nahu’s son. Jumbo’s father ‘ran’ that race” (Kanakas.)

MOODYVILLE. BEN SPRINGER. LAWN TENNIS.

“That little place in the trees back of the tennis court at Mr. Springer’s house was not the barn; that was the gardener’s cottage.” (See photo C.V. N. Out. 96, P. Out.)

PIONEER PICNICS. LONSDALE GARDENS. HARRY GORDON. NORTH VANCOUVER.

“There was a little place west of Moodyville, oh, about a quarter of a mile I should think, where we used to hold picnics; it was such a nice little place; just a short walk from ‘Knob Hill,’ as we called it, above Moodyville; there was a little Indian trail which led to it from Moodyville, and we children used to walk over there whenever we felt like it. Harry Gordon, an old man-o-warsman, lived there; had a little shack, and used to let us go in and make tea; there was a little creek there. We often went over there; there was a little beach, and we used to go there to bathe; it was just a short walk from Moodyville. We had to wait until the tide came in, because the beach shelved off; right down; very steep, and there was a little low cliff, oh, about three or four feet, at the back, and logs all about, driftwood and such, on the edge of the shore. It was just off the Indian trail going west.

“It was a lovely little spot, beautiful grass, and there were big trees, cedar, spruce, and lots of maples; and if it had been cleared it must have been a long time ago. And there was a capstan in the middle of the grass. I have often wondered why that capstan was put there, and who put it there. The whole place looked as if it had been cleared sometime. It was so clear, and so secluded; but you could hardly call it a glade. We used to lay our table cloth down on the grass, and go into Harry Gordon’s and make tea for ourselves, and after we had done we would leave him the cake we did not eat. That must have been for years; between the time I was about 18 and 26” (i.e., 1882-1890.)

“Harry Gordon’s cabin had two rooms and a cook stove, and it was clean; he had been an old man-o-warsman. The capstan was just in front of his shack, in the middle of the grass, and the little low cliff was beyond that, and the creek was a few yards to the west, and the whole thing was in a curve of the beach, sort of little bay; you could toss a ball from the cabin to the beach, and could hear people in a boat talking, and what they said.

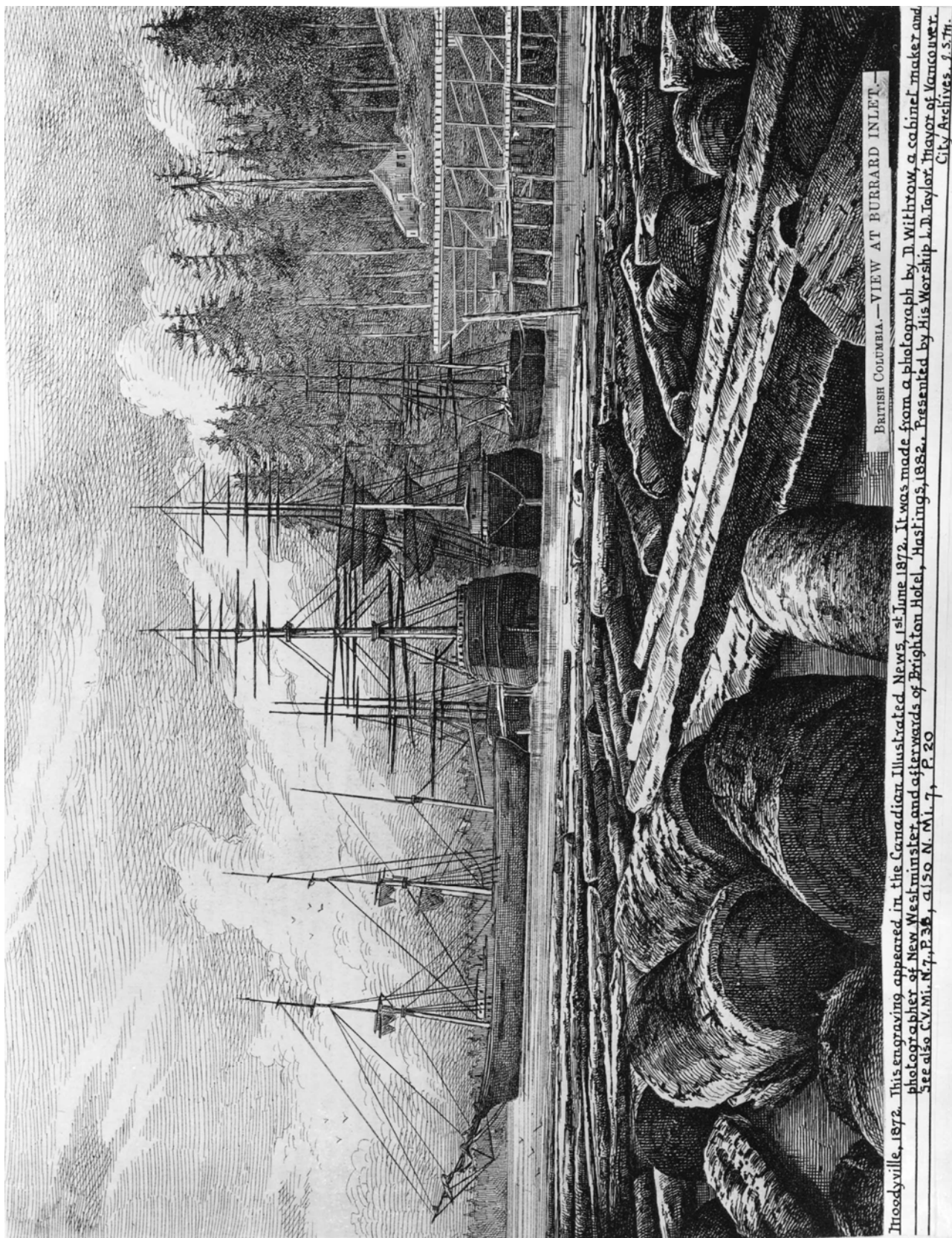
“And just east of Harry Gordon’s was another little cabin, quite close, but that cabin was right over the beach; and they used to put the canoes under it; they used to tie the canoes to the verandah; the canoes

came in right under it when the tide was in. Jimmy Boyce lived in it; he had an Indian wife, but no children."

GRAHAM AND HICKS.

Major Matthews: Do you suppose, Mrs. Crakanthorp, that the capstan was put there when they established the first little sawmill at Moodyville; the first one. Do you suppose that as the shore was steep, and the water deep for boats, that they used the capstan to haul up the material to start the mill; or do you suppose there had been an early logging camp there, and they used the capstan for some purpose in connection with that.

Mrs. Crakanthorp: "I don't know; never heard how that capstan got there. Must have been put there by someone, and long ago. But after, in the early days of Vancouver, church picnics were held there."



BRITISH COLUMBIA.—VIEW AT BURRARD INLET.

Moodyville, 1872. This engraving appeared in the Canadian Illustrated News, 1st June 1872. It was made from a photograph by D. Withrow, a cabinet maker and photographer of New Westminster and afterwards of Brighton Hotel, Hastings, 1882. Presented by His Worship L. D. Taylor, Mayor of Vancouver. See also C.V.M. N. 7, P. 36, also N. M. 7, P. 20. City Archives. J. S. M.

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[illustration annotation:]

British Columbia—View at Burrard Inlet.

Moodyville, 1872. This engraving appeared in the Canadian Illustrated News, 1st June 1872. It was made from a photograph by D. Withrow, a cabinet maker and photographer of New Westminster, and afterwards of Brighton Hotel, Hastings, 1882. Presented by His Worship L.D. Taylor, Mayor of Vancouver. See also C.V. Mi. N. 7, P. 38, also N. Mi. 7, P. 20.

City Archives. J.S.M.

JAMES BOYCE. INDIAN WIVES.

"Jimmy Boyce; his wife was Indian; she was the ugliest creature I ever saw, and one afternoon we were at tea, I've told you about it, and we were all sitting—twelve or fourteen of us—on the front verandah, and she came up, called, 'Mrs. Polson, Mrs. Polson'; the Indians could not say 'Patterson,' and always called Mother 'Mrs. Polson.' Another Indian woman and Jimmy Boyce's wife had been fighting, and the other woman had bit clean through her lip. Mother went in the back and washed it, and sent her off to the doctor."

LOCHART (SIC) OF MOODYVILLE. INDIAN WIVES.

"Lochart, he was head machinist at Moodyville, a good man, he was a freemason, he had an Indian wife, but they were not married, and they had a little boy. Mr. Lochart was going to send the little boy to Scotland to be educated, but Mr. Lochart died, and I don't know what became of the little boy."

"HOG NED." NED ACTON.

Major Matthews: Who was "Hog Ned"?

Mrs. Crakanthorp: "Hog Ned"? He looked after the pigs at the Hastings Sawmill; his name was Ned Acton, but in those days, they hardly ever called anyone by the proper names; they called them 'Portuguese Joe' and names like that; seems almost everybody had a nickname."

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH MRS. JAMES WALKER, 721 CAMBIE STREET, WHO HAS JUST RETURNED FROM A THREE WEEKS VISIT TO HER DAUGHTER IN SEATTLE, AND KINDLY CALLED AT THE CITY ARCHIVES, 27 MAY 1940.

JOHN DEIGHTON. "GASSY JACK." INDIAN WIVES OF WHITEMEN. QWA-HALIA OR MADELINE.

Mrs. Walker said: "I went over to the North Vancouver Indian Reserve, and found Gassy Jack's wife, Wha-halia; she remembered me when I was a little girl. Her English name is Madeline. Madeline told me Gassy Jack was her husband, that Gassy Jack had, first, her aunt for a wife; then her aunt died, and he took Madeline, her niece, as wife. Gassy Jack and Madeline had a son, but the son died shortly after Gassy Jack died.

"Madeline must be old, about ninety I should think; her hair is snow white; she knew my father, Joe Silvey, 'Portuguese Joe,' and she knew me when I was little. She said her husband, Gassy Jack, was at first a captain at New Westminster on a sternwheeler boat going up to Yale, and then he built the saloon over here in Granville, and he had another little house in the bushes behind the hotel for her; that was his home when he was not in the hotel, but he was always, all the time, ill, and then he sent for his brother and his wife to come from the Old Country."

Major Matthews: Did the old Indian woman Qwa-halia tell you all this?

Mrs. Walker: "Yes." (Then significantly) "She should know; Gassy Jack was her husband. I remember her when I was about five years old; gee, she was a pretty lady. She told me there was money left to her and her son, but she never got it. When his brother and his wife came they took charge of everything, and she went back to her people. Then, she said, Gassy Jack died and her son died about a year afterwards. She told me that Gassy Jack left a will for her to get money, but she never got it, and they buried him in New Westminster. She got married afterwards to a Musqueam Indian, but he is dead now."