

Early Vancouver

Volume Six

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

2011 Edition (Originally Published 1945)

Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1940-1945.

Supplemental to volumes one, two, three, four and five collected in 1931, 1932, 1934, 1939 and 1944.

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.

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. 6 (Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 2011), 33.

Bibliographic Entry:

Matthews, Major James Skitt. *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 6. 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



MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH MRS. DANIEL SNELL, WIDOW OF THE LATE DANIEL SNELL, 301 EAST 17TH AVENUE, WHO CALLED AT THE CITY ARCHIVES ACCOMPANIED BY HER ELDEST SON, DANIEL JOSEPH SNELL, JEWELLER, 2690 TRIUMPH STREET, 2 JULY 1941.

DANIEL SNELL. FIRST SALVATION ARMY.

Mrs. Snell said: "My late husband, Mr. Snell, was the first sergeant-major of the Salvation Army, Vancouver, when it was formed; they held their meetings on Water Street over Oscar Brown's old fruit store, that is, on the northeast corner, Abbott and Water streets. We used to enter it from the rear, going up a flight of steps, and the room was just a bare room with a platform slightly raised at the entrance. The building was over the beach.

"Mr. Snell joined the Salvation Army in Carberry, Manitoba, when they opened there first, and then I went with him, although, actually, I belonged to the Methodist Church, and had been married in the Methodist Church on Whitehouse Street, Bedminster, Bristol, England. We had a membership of about, say, fifty, and the meetings would vary up to seventy-five, mostly waterfront workers, and people from the downtown district. We were in there about a year, perhaps not that long, then they moved to much better quarters on Carrall Street, just across from the Europe Hotel; they had a nice big place at the top of a very high flight of stairs, and the building was right at the end of Powell Street, about next door to the Alhambra Hotel. Mr. Snell was a longshoreman, and had the job of throwing out the interrupters and other bad actors, and many a time I have seen him take them to the top of the stairs and give them a shove, and they would go clear to the bottom."

"TEN NIGHTS IN A BARROOM."

"While he was working down on the waterfront some of the boys used to kid him about being in the Salvation Army, and they said, 'We will get even with you, tonight, when you are out on your march,' and Mr. Snell, being sergeant-major, was on the lookout for something to happen and sure enough it did, or tried to. After being out on the march, and finished their open air meeting, and having started back to the hall, my husband happened to notice something across the road, so he stepped out of line and taking his knife from his pocket, he cut a rope that these boys had been holding across the street about four inches from the ground, to trip up the lady officer-in-charge, Miss" (Captain) "Frith.

"She 'got after' my husband for getting out of line, but afterwards she heard what it was, and that she was saved from being tripped. It was Mr. Snell and myself, and my children Dan, Carrie, Nellie, just the three, all five of us, put on 'Ten Nights in a Barroom' on the stage in the Carrall Street Hall. Mr. Snell was the actor who came home drunk every night in the play."

HALLELUJAH POINT. SALVATION ARMY PICNICS.

"Speaking of Salvation Army picnics, I recall one so well, leaving the upper end of the C.P.R. dock, the east end, the City Wharf I think it was at the foot of Carrall Street, in the" [blank], "a little steamer, and which the Salvation Army had chartered for the picnic. I think it must have been Dominion Day, I'm not sure. We chartered a steamer because it was only a short trip, and to get to Brockton Point any other way we should have had to go all the way around the park. There was a big crowd for the small steamer—all I can remember was the one trip—there was a big pier over at Brockton Point, but it was so high that we had quite a job getting off the boat onto the pier. But after we got there we certainly had a wonderful day on the clearing by Brockton Point, where the Nine O'Clock Gun is now.

"The reason we went to the clearing where the Nine O'Clock Gun is, now called Hallelujah Point, was that it was about the only place where there was a clearing; we made tea and ate sandwiches, and ran races, and had a lot of singing and a short service, and my husband used to play the drum, and my son used to stand on top of the drum and sing a chorus."

BROCKTON POINT GRAVEYARD.

"There were some grave boards and crosses in the trees close by; there were quite a few little head boards; wood, rounded on the top."

MOUNT PLEASANT. FALSE CREEK BRIDGE.

“Mr. Snell and I went to Mount Pleasant in 1890; here is a certificate issued to us by the Mount Pleasant Chamber of Commerce in 1936. The first house we lived in 1890 was the third house on the east side of Westminster Avenue, just across the old False Creek bridge, and was two-storey with a store front, and the water came right up underneath the house; we had a row boat, and used to tie it to the back verandah.”

DRIFTING SHINGLE BOLTS.

“One time, we had the boat and also a big Indian dugout, and Mr. Snell was quite a swimmer, and I remember one time, in going out in a canoe, paddling away out in the centre of False Creek and he dived off the end of the canoe, intending to swim back to the canoe, but it was caught in the current, which was very heavy in those days through the narrow opening under the bridge, and the canoe was caught in the current, and he thought he could not regain it, so started to swim back to the shore, which was a good long swim, and then, another incident, one day, after a very stormy night, a lot of shingle bolts had been thrown adrift from the mills lower down the creek, and quite a number had got up through the bridge; they were eight feet long and had only been cut once, and Mr. Snell and my son Dan went out and pulled in about a dozen of the bolts, and had tied them at our landing. There was an empty lot right beside our place, and after getting those logs all tied together, the owner of these shingle bolts happened to come along, and wanted to know who ‘in hell’ had taken his bolts, and proceeded to untie them, and I went in and called Mr. Snell who had gone to bed on account of just getting through a night’s work on the wharf on account of his longshoring, and he partly dressed and came out, and I’m sure I don’t know how he did it, but he got out on the shingle bolts and got a hold of this fellow who was taking the bolts, and after breaking an oar on him, got a hold of him by the shoulder, and kept on ducking him under the water. You see, this fellow swore so much, and my father was trying to make him take back what he said, which he finally did. Then the man went up and reported the matter to the Chief of Police, and the next we saw was the man coming back with Officer O’Grady of the chain gang, and after my husband explained what had happened, Office O’Grady thought that the man had been punished enough, so advised Mr. Snell to let him have the shingle bolts.”

CORDWOOD. LEAMY AND KYLE. WILD DUCKS.

“We never used to buy firewood in those days; we were there for years before we bought firewood; we used to take the old boat down to Leamy and Kyle Mill, Cambie Street, and fill it with slabs; they were glad to have us take it away. We used to go out in the boat and catch all the tommy cod and whiting we wanted under the False Creek bridge, and the street cars at that time had not really started; they were just starting; we rode on the first one. Ducks! There was all kinds of duck shooting up on False Creek, mallards, teal, and so on, east of Westminster Avenue, and there used to be the old slaughter house which drew a lot of birds. And we used to go swimming; we used to go in by Caroline Street, beside the slaughter house; the boys wore bathing trunks, but not all the time; sometimes the boys used their birthday suits.”

NORTH ARM ROAD. BLACKBERRIES. WATER FROM WELLS.

“After we moved from there we went out on the North Arm Road—they call it Fraser Avenue now—and stayed there about a year; we were between 25th and 26th Avenue, on the North Arm Road, and we had quite a little place there; Mr. Snell was still working on the wharf, and had to walk to his work, and the children had to walk to the little old wooden Mount Pleasant school, the red wooden one, and we used to go picking blackberries, tons of them, right out of the back yard, and we got our water from a well, pulled it up in a pail by sheer strength; the water was down thirty-five or forty feet and to pull a pail up was quite a task; there was no windlass.”

STRATHCONA SCHOOL. D.L. 301.

“Then, about 1898, we moved back to the city, which was Keefer Street, and my son, Dan, went to the Strathcona School, the old part, just after they moved from the Oppenheimer School, and I used to go up and sweep out the school; I worked that for about a year. Then after staying there, Mr. Snell heard about some cheap property out in D.L. 301, what they called ‘No Man’s Land’ afterwards; and the street car at that time was running as far as Ninth Avenue, and he and his son-in-law, my oldest daughter’s husband,

built the first house in that district, on Seventeenth Avenue East, the number approximately would be about 375 East 17th on the fourth or fifth lot from our present home, No. 301."

CHINA CREEK. TROUT. BEAVER. GROUSE.

"When we went there was all forest around us, and a little cow trail which came out about Fourteenth Avenue. Westminster Avenue was opened as far as 16th Avenue; just a trail you could get through, and the lumber came in across country. We got our water, first of all, from a creek through the back end of the property, until we could put a well in, but we struck water at about twenty feet. There was real good fishing in that creek, trout. I have seen beaver, even; too small a creek for salmon. It is now China Creek, and still runs to the present day."

MADDAMS RANCH.

"Maddams was down at the mouth of it." (See Maddams file.) "We had lots of wood, enough for ten years without buying, and there was lots of grouse in the woods."

SEVENTEENTH AVENUE EAST.

"At first we had three lots, three wide lots; for the corner lot we paid \$75, and for the inside ones about \$50, and a small payment down, and about \$5 or \$10 every month; you see, at that time they wanted to get that part settled up. No telephone, just walk when you wanted anything; even when we lived on the North Arm Road, we had to walk."

We had talked enough. Mrs. Snell, who is about 83, may have been overtaxing her strength, although she did not appear to be, so, as it was about 4 p.m., we sent for afternoon tea and fancy biscuits.

J.S.M.