

Early Vancouver

Volume Five

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

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

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"But the spot where she lay, where she disappeared, was on the west bank of the Pitt River about three quarters of a mile below the present C.P.R. railway bridge, and about two hundred yards up river from the McLean dwelling."

EARLY CATTLE.

"But this story about 250 head of cattle is all a yarn; he had nothing like that number. I remember he had a bull, but he never brought 250 cattle on the *Rob Roy*."

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH JOHN MURRAY OF PORT MOODY (SON OF JOHN MURRAY, ROYAL ENGINEER), ONE OF THE CHILD PASSENGERS OF THE *THAMES CITY*, 1859, SATURDAY, 20 AUGUST 1938.

He was at the City Hall waiting when I arrived this morning at nine; he had just come from Port Moody.

ROYAL ENGINEERS, UNIFORM.

Mr. Murray said: (holding leather pouch with pointed flap, 4" x 3", pipe-clayed, brass button, and button hole, and stamped 814, D. BRA) "This is one of the pouches belonging to the Royal Engineers. I imagine they carried it on their waist belt, and I think it was to hold the percussion caps; they used large, very large, percussion caps; used them on the Enfield rifle; short Enfield rifle; it is one of the Royal Engineer pouches; I swear it is. Father had a whole lot of them in a barrel."

Major Matthews: Well, when the R.E. went away, didn't they take all their accoutrements with them?

"THE CAMP," ROYAL ENGINEERS. SAPPERTON. ENFIELD RIFLES. SCABBARD (SWORD BAYONET.)

Mr. Murray: "Those who went back to the regiment did. But there was a whole lot of uniforms, accoutrements, short Enfield rifles, stores, which were left behind; that remained at 'The Camp.' All the equipment they left behind remained at 'The Camp' for years. We lived next door; that was why Father was looking after those stores."

Major Matthews: Well, I thought he left the Royal Engineers when they went back.

Mr. Murray: "So he did, but the uniforms and equipment was in the old store next to our place; in the old abandoned Royal Engineer store building. Some of the stuff got stolen; I don't know how; nobody did, but the Indians, somehow or other, always managed to get a rifle, but when we found them with one, we always took it away from them; that is, the rifle someone had stolen out of the old store building. I have part of a scabbard belonging to Father's sword" (old name for bayonet); "I cut the tail off it, and made it into a hunting knife scabbard."

SEYMOUR ARTILLERY UNIFORMS. B.C. GARRISON ARTILLERY.

(Holding a leather belt, pipe-clayed, square brass buckle with broad arrow, W.D., 8, also B.C.G.A.)

Mr. Murray: "No. This is not a Royal Engineer belt left behind. I don't know exactly what it is, but it is not a Royal Engineer belt."

"Just previous to Governor Seymour arriving, there was a company formed called the Seymour Artillery, and the belts, pouches, sword" (bayonet) "and rifle formerly belonging to the Royal Engineers, which had been left behind, were served out to the Seymour Artillery. I know, because Father was one of the principals in the Seymour Artillery, and I saw it done."

SEYMOUR'S ARCH, 21 APRIL 1864.

"I remember when the uniforms were made by one of the tailors in New Westminster, Tommy Walsh, Thomas Walsh, who had been in the R.E., and they" (Seymour Artillery) "were the ones who received Governor Seymour on his arrival at 'The Camp'; that was where the arch was erected for him to pass under; they made it all kinds of flags, evergreens, but this is not one of the Royal Engineer belts."

(Note by J.S.M.: The belt, and the pouch were given me by L.B. Lusby of New Westminster. He told me the belt belonged to the B.C. Garrison Artillery in New Westminster, and the pouch he obtained from an outhouse adjoining John Murray Sr.'s home at Port Moody; he found it there whilst they were camping

one summer, and whilst John Murray was away for some time from his home; he just picked it up and kept it. Further, Judge Bole told me about 1908-1910 that the Seymour Artillery wore the uniform of the Royal Artillery [of England] with the exception of the shoulder ornaments—he was an officer in the Seymour Artillery.)

ELECTRIC LIGHT AT MOODYVILLE.

“Well, about the electric light at Moodyville. You see, I left Gastown in 1880, 13th July 1880, and went to Nanaimo, then to New Westminster and to Port Moody in 1882. As near as I can say, this lady, Mrs. Crakanthorp, I knew her when she was a little girl; she lived over at Moodyville, and I think she is as good an authority as anyone. I have a neighbour up at Port Moody, and he tells me he sailed out of Moodyville Mill on the *Don Nicholas* in 1886, and he says they were still using oil lamps then, but I know Mr. Randall, S.J. Randall, was the foreman.” (Electric light at Moodyville in 1885 or earlier. J.S.M.)

GASTOWN BEFORE 13 JULY 1880.

“This photo of Gastown” (from the end of the Sunnyside wharf; original in Provincial Archives, marked “Gastown, 1884.”) “This window here is my bedroom, in the peak of the butcher shop roof.”

SUNNYSIDE HOTEL. ALEX MCCRIMMON. JOSEPH GRIFFITH. JOHN DEIGHTON.

“Alex McCrimmon built the Sunnyside Hotel about 1875, before I went to Gastown; Joe Griffith leased the Sunnyside from him and built the float, oh, about 1878. Gassy Jack did not have a float in this location, he had no float; besides, he was over to the east a bit, out near the back. I don’t know what this building adjoining the Sunnyside is; it’s not the kitchen; I don’t recall it; it must have been built after I left in 1880; it was not there then. This boat, lying on the beach here, between the building and George Black’s cottage, is Constable Jonathan Miller’s boat; he always kept it tied up there, in front of his house.”

GEORGE BLACK’S COTTAGE. GEORGE BLACK’S BUTCHER SHOP. JERRY ROGERS. S.S. MAGGIE. MANNION’S WHARF.

“The next place, where the clothes are drying, is George Black’s cottage; a high platform all along there, and the next is George Black’s butcher shop, with my bedroom window in the gable. You see this high platform here, in front of the Granville Hotel, that’s where Jerry Rogers built the *Maggie*, on that flat top of the platform, oh, about 1873; I don’t know the date. Next to that, on the beach, you can see the” (white) “slant of Joe Mannion’s wharf; many’s a quarter of beef I’ve carried down that float to the end.”

GEORGE BREW. JIM BLAIR. TERMINUS HOTEL. DEIGHTON HOTEL. MOUNT PLEASANT, FIRST HOUSE.

“I don’t know what the little bit of a place may be” (with the door and window) “but this next place is George Brew’s restaurant; at least it was when it was running, when he wasn’t in jail; it was often closed up.” (See evidence in “Street End Case, 1905.”) “Blair had it afterwards, as the Terminus. Blair came down from Chilliwack, and leased the Deighton Hotel, and lived in a little cottage beside it. Tudor Blair was Jim’s brother; his daughter, Ada Blair, married Calvert Simson of the Hastings Mill Store. Jim Blair built the first house in Mount Pleasant; it was next door to Campbell’s, east side, between 6th and 7th; it’s there yet, with a little shop built in front of it now.” (See photo of Campbell’s house, No. P. Bu. 134.)

GIN TEI HINT. WAH CHONG. ISAAC JOHNS.

“This little place with the peak roof, very black roof, two windows and a door, is Gin Tei Hing’s wash house and general store. I don’t know what the next place is, the square top next to Arthur Sullivan’s; I don’t remember it being there in 1880; it might be Wah Chong’s; I don’t know. Ike Johns lived behind Sullivan’s, near what we call Cordova Street; you can see the chimney, here, over Gin Tei Hing’s place.”

ARTHUR W. SULLIVAN. LOUIS GOLD. PETE DONNELLY. JOHN A. ROBERTSON. “HOLE IN THE WALL.” DR. ALFRED MASTERS.

“Sullivan’s is this two-storey place here; general store, built 1878 or 1879; I remember it being built. Then there is a vacant space, and the next square white top building is Gold’s store; there are two or three of them, and I don’t seem to remember them all; there seems to be more stores than I recall; they must have been built after 1880, but the next with the peak roof is Pete Donnelly’s ‘Hole in the Wall’” (also called John A. Robertson) “and the next, the lean-to against the ‘Hole in the Wall,’ is Dr. Masters’ office. Dr.

Masters came here from San Francisco on the bark *Columbia*, and stayed a while, and died in New Westminster about 1884 or 1885.”

JOHN A. ROBERTSON’S HOUSE. BLAIR’S HOUSE. “PORTUGUESE JOE.” GREGORIS FERNANDEZ. BEN WILSON.

“I don’t know what this two-storey building at the end here is; it was not built when I left in 1880, 13th July 1880.” (See photo No. N. Dist. 6, Rev. C.L. Thompson, marked “1882.”) (Also see same photo for Blair’s house.) “And what this house here, between the two-storey and ‘Portuguese Joe’s’ is, I don’t know; it was not there in 1880; of course, the next is ‘Portuguese Joe’s’ old place.

“I remember Ben Wilson taking over from Portuguese Joe before I left in 1880; at least, I think I do.”

SUNNYSIDE WHARF OR FLOAT. MOODYVILLE FERRY. MANNION’S FLOAT. SPARS. GRIFFITH’S FLOAT.

“The Sunnyside float was of four sections of two logs to each section; say two hundred feet long; it was about seven feet wide; that is, about five feet in the clear. The Moodyville Ferry tied up at Mannion’s.”

Major Matthews: Was that because the water was deepest there?

Mr. Murray: “No. Don’t think so. I think it was more because the ferry started there years before the Sunnyside wharf was built.

“You see, you can tell this photo is after 1880 because there was no shed on Mannion’s wharf when I left for New Westminster, 13th July 1880. Nor was there a shed on Griffith’s float; no shed on any float.”

INDIAN TRAILS. INDIAN RANCHERIE.

“West of ‘Portuguese Joe’s’ and the ‘Parsonage’ was the Indian rancherie; just a few Indians, not many, just a few. Then there was an old trail leading on to the west, down to the west end of Coal Harbour; there was another trail down from what is now about the south end of Carrall Street, towards the present C.P.R. Roundhouse, that the Indians used to use.”

“CRAZY GEORGE.”

“‘Crazy George’ was a fine gentleman; I liked him fine, and no one knew him better than I did; he worked for me time and time again. He was a real gentleman. But, as for who he was, we never could find out; we did hear that he was a former Royal Navy officer, but we never actually knew; he was queer, but quite harmless.”

LOUIS GOLD. SOUTH VANCOUVER.

“Louis Gold was taking up a piece of land out on the North Arm Road; he was preempting it, out by the Tea Swamp, and Gold, to hold the land, used to get Crazy George to go out and sleep in the cabin, so as to hold his preemption. But it was a long way out, and one night, it was very wet, Crazy George asked me to let him sleep in the pig pen, down by the slaughter house on False Creek; the slaughter house was on False Creek, just about the end of Columbia Street, or a bit more south. I was frightened he would strike matches and set fire to the place, but that night, there was no sheep in the pen, and it was a wet night, so I let him sleep in the pig pen. Well, during the night, the famous bear got loose, and George had to get up. He came in to me and said, ‘I didn’t strike a match, though,’ and he started to walk out to Gold’s place out on the North Arm Road, but by the time he got there it was time to come back to start to work, so he didn’t get any sleep.”

PORT MOODY, 1886. THE GREAT FIRE, 1886.

“The afternoon of the big fire in Vancouver, 13th June, we were at church in Fraser Bros. store at Port Moody, and the ashes fell on the hymn books as we were standing up singing the hymns.”

BEARS. S.S. BEAVER. CAPT. PAMPHLET.

“Now I must tell you about the bear. I had charge of him from the beginning. There was an article in the magazine section of the *Province* last Saturday, 13th August, about how George Black shipped a bear to Victoria on the *Beaver*, and how it was manacled with leg irons; that story is not correct; it never happened that way; part of the story is true, the rest is ‘bunk.’”

Mr. Murray continues: "I know more about that bear than anyone. We kept the bear here, on this platform, over the water, just west of the butcher shop here in Gastown. I know all about that bear."

Major Matthews: How do you put leg irons on a bear?

Mr. Murray: (irritated) "I don't know."

"That bear's mother was shot on the south bank of the Fraser River, across from Westminster, below the present Westminster bridge, in March 1877. George Black got one of the young ones, and George Bennett, butcher at New Westminster, got the other. The bear was brought over to Gastown by George Black, I suppose; I did not bring it over, but I looked after that bear for a long time, a very long time, until about, say, the 20th December 1879, when we put him on the *Beaver* and shipped him to Goodacre and Dooley, butchers, in Victoria. This story about the leg irons is all bunk. You couldn't put leg irons a bear. We had a chain and collar on him for years, and we led him up to the Hastings Mill; Angus McArthur" (or McCarther) "and I, we two led him up to the Hastings Mill wharf, and put him on the *Beaver*; we had had him for about three years. It would take me a whole day to tell you everything about that bear. During the time we had him, he killed forty-two pigs."

Major Matthews: Forty-two pigs!!!

PIGS. BEAR. SLAUGHTER HOUSE.

"That's quite correct; he killed forty-two pigs. You see, we had him on a chain down at the slaughter house, and the pigs used to run around loose, around the slaughter house, and eat up all the offal; the bear would slack up on his chain, and back up, and the pigs would come near, and he would make a bound and catch a pig; we never got one away from him, not one, and, queer thing, he would always start to eat a pig from the left side.

"The pigs used to run around indiscriminately, around the slaughter house; there were no fences, and they used to have their young out in the bush; we must have had eighty or one hundred pigs running around. There was a little private road running down to the slaughter house, somewhere down at the end of Columbia Street to the edge of False Creek."

(Note: Mrs. Crakanthorp, narrative of 7 July 1938, speaks of the "pigs, pigs, pigs, hundreds of pigs" down at the Hastings Mill; and Mrs. R.D. Smith [Minnie McCord] speaks of how the Kanakas moved down to Kanaka Ranch, Coal Harbour, because the Hastings Mill people objected to so many pigs about the yard. J.S.M.)

INDIAN TRAIL.

"The famous bear got away one day in the month of November 1878 and went down the Indian trail towards where the C.P.R. roundhouse is now on False Creek, about half a mile down the old Indian trail to False Creek, and when we found him, about a month later, he was in a hollow tree which had been burned out; he was away for about a month in November 1878.

"There was a little snow on the ground, and he had been in the hollow tree all that time, and we saw his footmarks in the snow, and he had just been walking around the stump, close up around the stump; we saw his footmarks in the snow." (The bear was recovered about corner of Pender and Beatty Street. J.S.M.)

GEORGE BLACK. PARROT. MONKEY.

Major Matthews: What did George Black keep him for at all?

Mr. Murray: "Black just kept him; one time he had a parrot; another time a monkey." (Note: the sailing ships brought them.)

BEAR MEAT. S.S. BEAVER.

Mr. Murray: "The way it was, was this. When the bear got loose on the *Beaver*, the way they caught him was that the cook got one of the deck hands with a rope, and they reached out of the window of the galley, and they had the plate of sugar down on the deck, and when he was eating the sugar, they slipped the rope around his neck, and then they lashed the rope and the bear to the capstan so tight that, when

they skinned him in Victoria, you could tell how many times the rope was around his body. He was fat, and the rope left its mark in his fat.”

LEG IRONS.

“There was no leg irons in the melee, or whatever you call it, at all. That story about the leg irons is all ‘bunk.’ I have told you the correct history of the bear, and you can sign my name to it, if you like.”

ANOTHER BEAR STORY. DUCKS. HENS. PIGS.

“One day, R.H. Alexander, Ainslie Mouat, George Black and myself came over with some cattle, and when we got to the slaughter house, there was no poultry, pigs, ducks or anything to be seen; everything was as silent as a graveyard. The bear had got loose, and there had been a general slaughter; chickens, pigs, ducks; you could see pieces of them all over the place—and the bear was up a tree.”

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH JOHN MURRAY (THE SON) OF PORT MOODY, WHO CAME TO B.C. IN 1859 WITH ROYAL ENGINEERS ON *THAMES CITY*, 10 NOVEMBER 1938.

STAGES. STAGE BUGLES.

Mr. Murray said: “This is all nonsense about the Westminster-Burrard Inlet stage blowing horns or bugles.

“I have seen stages leaving for the Cariboo, and the stage leaving Victoria for Esquimalt, and the Westminster stage leaving for Burrard Inlet. W.R. Lewis, who operated the Burrard Inlet stage, was the only man who ever sounded a note, and he blew on a bugle, a military bugle, I suppose it was—never a horn—on the departure of the stage for Burrard Inlet, to warn the passengers the stage was about to leave.

“That was the only horn or bugle of any description in connection with stages I ever saw in British Columbia.”

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH JOHN MURRAY (JR.) OF PORT MOODY, WHO WAS BORN AT SEA ON THE *THAMES CITY*, 14 MARCH 1859, WHILST EN ROUTE TO BRITISH COLUMBIA WITH HIS FATHER, JOHN MURRAY, ROYAL ENGINEER.

He is now almost 79 years old.

Mr. Murray has served his city of Port Moody well. He surveyed the forest into streets, has been an alderman, police commissioner, and is now police magistrate, and has never taken a cent of remuneration for his public services. He is quick, active despite his age; walks with agility, clear of eye, and has quite a lot of grey, almost white, hair; in appearance and movement he appears to be ten years younger than he is. JSM.

FOREST FIRES. GASTOWN.

Mr. Murray said: “About this letter you wrote me about early forest fires. Well, I’ll tell you. The first fire of any account around Gastown was in the middle June 1880, and it was between what is now Pender Street and what was then False Creek shore, down where the C.P.R. yards are on Pender Street, and it ran up the hill we now call Beatty Street towards the Cambie Street grounds, etc. It did no property damage, but it burned for several weeks. I was working for George Black, butcher; he had a lot of cordwood stored in there in the forest, but we got it out before it was burned. I got out the last load, and then took ill with typhoid, and went home to my parents in New Westminster, until I got better. That is how I know it was in June 1880.”

FALSE CREEK ROAD.

“In the same month there was a bush fire on the old False Creek Road—what is called Kingsway—it burned several weeks too; just an ordinary bush fire; no damage done; it ran all over the country about Central Park, this side of Royal Oak, straddled the False Creek Road, and went down in the hollow towards Deer Lake; it was two miles wide, at least, across the road, or trail, as we called it.”