

Early Vancouver

Volume One

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2011 Edition (Originally Published 1932)

Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1931-1932.

*A Collection of Historical Data, Maps, and Plans Made with the Assistance of
Pioneers of Vancouver Between March and December 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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for Hilton, and afterwards for Walters, so our own office staff took charge. They were a quiet, orderly lot; one was a graduate of Cambridge University. The men themselves cleared out the 'Reds.'"

How? I asked.

"Beat them up," was the blunt response Colonel Williams gave.

He continued. "We had the usual sanitary arrangements of a military camp, with the added advantages of running water for proper latrines and for washing purposes.

"Thus it went on until a case of typhoid developed, and we had to take the patient to the General Hospital. Then the health authorities of the city stepped in, and we had to close up the 'encampment.' A body of workmen were sent down, and the whole 'Jungle' was warned to collect their belongings and clear out, and the improvised hutments, a nondescript collection of wonderfully unique architecture; old boards, sheet iron, packing cases and what not, went up in flames. Besides, the winter was coming on, and the rain was beginning. Summer was over.

"Had it not ended as it did, we have in mind getting tents from the Department of National Defense and setting up a tented camp.

"We started with fourteen; it rose to a peak of two hundred and forty, but the average roll was one hundred and sixty.

"One particularly gratifying thing was that at the conclusion the men presented the Harbour Commissioners with a rude testimonial, drawn up on a sheet of plan foils, and signed by approximately one hundred men, expressing their thanks and gratitude."

J.S. Matthews

Note: a copy of the testimonial together with a number of photographs of the "Jungle" are preserved in the City Archives Room.

19 OCTOBER 1931 - KITSILANO. ST. MARK'S CHURCH. BISHOP SOVEREIGN, B.D.

Bishop-elect Sovereign, now of St. Mark's Church (Anglican), 2nd Avenue West, Kitsilano, soon to be created Bishop of the Yukon, told me today in a conversation at his rectory, 2436 West 2nd Avenue, that when he first went to St. Mark's Church as its first rector, the whole area of land surrounding was a wilderness (1909). A single-track street railway on what had in the early days been the C.P.R. railway to English Bay ran to Kitsilano Beach, and from there the church was reached by a convenient trail, the remains of an old logging road which ran from the street car terminus on the beach diagonally across the land until it reached near the church. At night a lantern was carried when traversing the old trail.

There was but one road in Kitsilano then, the sinuous Point Grey Road, part of which is now known as First Avenue West. Point Grey Road was a narrow trail, a buggy's width wide, lined with small bushes, and with mud deep to the axles. It ran as far as Dunbar, and then turned south into the forest.

All that section west of Trafalgar Street was covered with trees, the larger of which had been taken out by loggers. Mrs. J.Z. Hall had a clearing in the bush, approached by a trail which led from Point Grey Road, where she and her family spent the summers. They had two cows, a garden, a Chinese helper, and a little pool for bathing in the creek. The little girls were not allowed to go too far away when picking blueberries which grew wild, for fear of the bears in the woods. (Photo of this clearing is in the Archives.)

East of the church there was nothing until Vine Street was reached; that street was the limit of civilisation.

"Then," said Reverend Canon Sovereign, "the boom came. At one time we counted one hundred and fifty houses being built at one time; we could count that number without moving from one spot. You could hear the hammers humming, almost like a beehive."

"We had a little 'groan box' for an organ, and we started the Sunday school with seventeen children; today we have six hundred.

"We are sorry to go," said Mr. Sovereign. "We have been very happy here. I love the place. There is no place in all Canada where I desire so much to be, but there is a great work before us in the Yukon, and we must go."

Mrs. Sovereign interjected, "You know they have no one up there; it is a missionary field. I'm looking forward to having much to accomplish."

Mrs. Sovereign is one of the daughters of the late Honourable Price Ellison, formerly Minister of Lands and Finance. She and her sister were, or are, the two first white girls of Vernon, B.C.

The Reverend Canon Sovereign gave me the *St. Mark's Church Year Book* for 1929 which includes a brief history of its history, and also an *In Memories* brochure printed in memory of Lieutenant Harold Owen, son of Reverend C.C. Owen, "Killed in Action," 31 January 1916, an especially well written historical biography of this remarkable father and son written by Canon Sovereign as a tribute to both.

JSM

SITE OF ST. MARK'S CHURCH.

"The particular location on which St. Mark's Church stands," said Canon Sovereign, "was selected on account of its commanding position; it is the highest in Kitsilano; the ground slopes in all directions downward. If there is any one man more than another who selected it, it would be Mr. H.J. Gilbert, now living at 2425 West First Avenue. The surrounding area was a wilderness of stumps, and Mr. Gilbert searched around until he found this location, then called on others to come and look at it. We selected it on account of its eminence; we hoped that some day, we should build a church with a tall tower or spire which could be seen for miles around; a landmark."

"I remember," said Mr. Calland of Point Grey Road, "the Reverend Mr. Sovereign coming to me one day when I was sitting on my lawn here, and asking me what I thought of the corner of 2nd Avenue and Larch Street as a site for the new church. I told him I thought it would be a very good site. I was on the committee for selecting the site."

JSM

FOSSILS OF EARLIER AGES IN VANCOUVER.

My attention to the fossils on Kitsilano foreshore was first brought to my attention by Dr. S.J. Schofield, professor of geology in the University of British Columbia, and who lived for several years at the corner of McNichol Avenue and Arbutus Street. One Saturday morning, he invited me to accompany him with a number of university students to collect fossils, and we went along the foreshore between Balsam Street and Trafalgar Street, and searched, hammer in hand, under the cliffs, the low cliffs, at this point. We found many, some with very distinct markings of leaves of trees.

In the summer of 1931, two very large specimens were cut out of this sandstone rock and placed in the Vancouver City Museum, one being long and narrow, the other square; they are very wonderful evidence of the forest growth at this point millions of years ago.

J.S. Matthews