

## **Early Vancouver**

### **Volume One**

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

**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 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the City's founding. The project was made possible by funding from the Vancouver Historical Society.

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“At that time there was a large creek which came down the hill from the direction of Broadway, and crossed Third Avenue at Cedar Street and Third Avenue, and entered the bay at the foot of Yew Street—about ten yards to the west of the foot. There was another stream which entered the bay about the middle of the beach, and I think it must have been connected with the other, but am not sure, at about the Henry Hudson School. It ran through the muskeg.

“The salmon used to go up both streams when the tide was high, and go up as far as Third Avenue, where the creek ran in a ditch on the roadside. When the Australian boat first came in, the one which inaugurated the All-Red Line, the *Warrimoo* or *Miowera*, the sailors used to come up to see us at -Greer’s Beach, and they were greatly surprised to see the salmon swimming in the ditch under the electric light. At that time Third Avenue was a principal street, and had one or two electric lights; it was the only street which was open north of Seventh, and was open only as far as Vine, where it ran into the forest.

“Between the two streams I have spoken of there was a high strip of land which ran along the beach from about the foot of Yew to half way between Whyte and Creelman streets produced. It was quite narrow, wider at the base than at the point, covered with grass, and with some small bushes, green and luxuriant, very convenient for bathers to dress or undress behind. We used to come down False Creek by canoe, and camp on this high strip of land for a couple of months; others came too, some from Westminster. It would be about 1896 to 1898. It soon got noised abroad, more came, and finally the city authorities stopped it on account of sanitary conditions.”

J.S.M.

### **KITSILANO BEACH.**

The high strip of land—it was not more than two or three feet about the surrounding swamp, though much higher, say ten feet, than the lake which once existed between Maple Street and Laburnum Street—was the old site of Mr. Sam Greer’s home, almost immediately behind the present bathhouse (1931). Ultimately the campers became so numerous, probably about 1904 to 1906, that they formed themselves in streets, and spread half way along the beach. When the Hon. and Mrs. J.W. De B. Farris, afterwards attorney-general of B.C., were first married, and not possessed of the worldly goods they afterwards acquired, they camped on the beach at the foot of McNicholl Avenue, one or more summers.

J.S.M.

### **KITSILANO.**

A gentleman, who has lived many years at 1912 York Street (opposite Henry Hudson School) told me recently, that when he went there first he caught trout, to amuse his little daughter, in a small creek which ran through his garden.

J.S.M.

### **NEWSPAPERS.**

*Vancouver Herald*

*Vancouver News*

*Vancouver Daily Advertiser*

*News-Advertiser*

On 30 March 1887, the *Vancouver News* publishes its last issue, and on Thursday morning, 31 March 1887, the title becomes

THE VANCOUVER NEWS

AND Daily Advertiser.

The editorial of 31 March announces that the *Vancouver News* and the *Vancouver Daily Advertiser* have been transferred to a new proprietary.

Vol. 1, No. 3 of the *Vancouver Daily Advertiser* is dated 11 May 1886. Vol. 1, No. 104 of the *Vancouver News* is dated 23 October 1886. (Both in U.B.C. Library.)

The Voters List, City of Vancouver, April 1886, contains an advertisement, as follows in part:

The VANCOUVER HERALD

Best Weekly Paper in B.C.

**14 APRIL 1931 - FALLING THE TREES. THE FIRE BRIGADE, 1887 – GEO. L. SCHETKY.**

“When I first came to Vancouver in February 1886, before the railway, I lived as a boarder at the home of the Reverend Joseph Hall, Methodist minister, who had a little house, almost over the inlet, on the north side of Water Street, just west of the foot of Abbott Street—the shore stuck out a bit there,” said Mr. Geo. L. Schetky, financial agent, Royal Trust Building, Pender Street West, and still a very active “young” man.

“The room in which we had our breakfast faced west, and often, when we were at breakfast, in the spring of 1886, we would watch the trees falling on the C.P.R. Townsite; as the ‘West End’ was known. The men were cutting down the trees, and quite close to us, too. It would be hard to say just exactly where I first saw them, but it would be about where Spencer Department store is now; quite close. We used to watch, and call each other’s attention when a big one went down.

“The picture you have of the procession on Cordova Street, Dominion Day, 1887 (the military parade) reminds me that it was just after that parade that we had a fire which frightened us; up here, just about the corner of Pender and Howe. They were clearing the land, and the fire got away from them, much as it did a year previously at the big fire. You know what [it is] like; a lot of dry debris of clearing, and it burned some houses; we had quite a scare for a while.”

J.S.M.

**8 MAY 1931 - KITSILANO, HOW NAMED – PROFESSOR CHAS. HILL-TOUT.**

Kitsilano was named by Professor Hill-Tout. He writes as follows (8 May 1931).

The manner in which that part of the city we know as Kitsilano got its name, and also the significance of the word in the Indian tongue from which it is drawn.

To the best of my knowledge it came about in the following manner.

The name by which the Kitsilano district was first known was “Greer’s Beach,” so called because a squatter by the name of Greer had erected a dwelling there, near the beach.

The land was afterwards in control of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and when they opened it up for settlement, (*note, about 1910*) they desired to give the district a more suitable name than Greer’s Beach, and, knowing that Mr. Jonathan Miller, who was then postmaster of Vancouver, was on friendly terms with the Indians, they requested him to find an appropriate name for the settlement.

Mr. Miller referred the request to me; knowing that I had given considerable time and study to the customs, habits and place names of the local tribe. After some little consideration, I chose the hereditary name of one of the chiefs of the