

Early Vancouver

Volume Two

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Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1932.

Supplemental to volume one collected in 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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"I lived across the way from the parsonage, but I don't remember the Indian church. I came here in March 1886, March 1st 1886. I remember them building the hall, it was just a few feet, only a little, east of the parsonage; the hall had just been completed a short while when it was burned in the fire; a second one was built in the same place, just like it only larger perhaps, after the fire. The stable was west of the parsonage, not far, perhaps fifty feet. They might have turned the Indian church into a stable; I am quite sure we never worshipped in the Indian church."

EXTRACTS TAKEN FROM RECORDS OF BOARD OF HOME MISSIONS, UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA, 299 QUEEN STREET, TORONTO, ONTARIO, 10 SEPTEMBER 1932.

1. EXTRACT FROM VOLUME III – METHODIST MISSIONARY NOTICES OF CANADA.

Burrard Inlet, Thomas Derrick, page 85, 1876.

When at home he also preaches to a congregation of Indians in the afternoon. This work amongst the natives has so increased on his hands that he finds it necessary to erect a church for their accommodation, and a subscription has been taken up for this purpose. The people of the Inlet are remarkable for their public spiritedness and liberality.

2. EXTRACT FROM METHODIST MISSIONARY REPORT, 1875-6.

Burrard Inlet, page XI:

This branch of our work has been assuming a most interesting feature on this Mission. Not only has there been a spirit of enquiry after the God of Missions, but evidence has been given of faith in Christ, the possession of spiritual joy and the strength of grace. We have been trying to teach them that, as Christians, we are to make sacrifices for Christ, and become workers for God. To this their response is most pleasing, as will be seen by the following facts: by contributions among themselves they have purchased the lumber for building a church; by free labour they have cleared the ground and placed the lumber in readiness for building. We hope soon to see, by another effort, a House of God erected in which the Indians around the shores of this beautiful inlet shall worship their God. Hitherto they have been worshipping in the parsonage, where we have formed a class, and where among them baptisms have been administered and marriages solemnized. The scene will not soon be forgotten when the tribe witnessed the public baptism and marriage of the chief Lah-wa. On the review of the past year of mercies we thank God and take courage.

[Signed] Thos. Derrick.

Sumas and Chilliwack, page XII:

During the year we have included in our circuit a little village named Popquom, where we have succeeded in building a church. We have now five Indian churches; a membership of 60, with 15 on trial, making a total of 75.

[Signed] Charles M. Tate.

3. EXTRACT FROM METHODIST MISSIONARY REPORT, 1876-1877.

Burrard Inlet, page XI:

The Indian church which, in my last report, I referred to as a thing being prepared for, has been completed, and I am happy in being able to report that by the liberality of the Indians, and a few white friends, that it is free—no debt, thank God.

A visit from our dear Bro. Tate during the past year in his missionary rounds, was a great blessing to our Indians, and as night after night, he (in their own tongue) preached to them of Jesus, their hearts were filled with joy. We pray that your missionary income may greatly increase, and that we may soon see the right men appointed to the Naas and Fort Rupert.

[Signed] Thos. Derrick.

Note: Rev. Tate told me (JSM) he was not present at the marriage of Chief Lah-wa, but heard all about it at the time, and remember him well.

EXTRACT FROM *COMMEMORATIVE REVIEW OF THE METHODIST, PRESBYTERIAN, AND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA*, BY REV. E.A. DAVIS, 1925:

From this centre [*New Westminster*] regular preaching was maintained at Ladner, North Arm [*Eburne*] Burrard Inlet, in the school house at Hastings Sawmill, and in the cookhouse at Moodyville, Chilliwack, Langley and Maple Ridge. In 1874 Burrard Inlet became a separate charge, and the Rev. James Turner was stationed at that point, Granville, which was then known by the more popular name of Gastown. Gassy Jack was the nickname of a saloonkeeper from which Granville received its name. A lot was purchased from the government for the sum of two hundred dollars on which Mr. Turner built his parsonage. The following year an Indian church was built on the same lot for the use of the Indians who were working at the Hastings Sawmill. This was the first church of any kind to be built on the site of the city of Vancouver. The lot was lapped by the waters of the inlet. The disastrous fire which destroyed the first Vancouver took both church and parsonage. A large hall was afterwards erected on the lot which served for church purposes until the waterfront property was needed for business purposes when the Homer Street Church was built [*now Labor Temple*]. When residential Vancouver moved to the West End the present Wesley Church was erected, and may well feel proud of being the mother of some thirty churches throughout the city and district.

METHODIST MISSIONARY NOTICES OF CANADA, VOL. III, PAGES 84 AND 85, 1876:

Burrard Inlet, Thomas Derrick. The full quotation given on previous page reads:

This is one of the busiest places in the province. The two sawmills employ in their different departments not fewer than five hundred men. Vessels from almost every part of the world come to the inlet for lumber. A fleet of eight or ten ships may be seen lying in the harbour at one time waiting for cargoes. Bro. Derrick feels especially at home among these shipmasters and lumbermen. He preaches at each mill three Sabbaths in succession, and on the fourth goes to the North Arm of the Fraser. When at home he also preaches to a congregation of Indians in the afternoon. This work among the natives has so increased on his hands that he finds it necessary to erect a church for their accommodation, and a subscription has been taken up for this purpose. The people at the Inlet are remarkable for their public spiritedness and liberality.

Thos. Derrick died on a train whilst going east from San Francisco in Spring of 1880. Authority Eb. Robson who (son of Dr. Robson) met him in San Francisco at that time, 1880.

Memo of conversation, 31 July 1936 with Mrs. R.M. Bower, daughter of Benjamin Springer of Moodyville:

"David Milligan was a Methodist, I know that. He had something to do with Sexsmith, out in Richmond, Lulu Island.

"Jonathan Miller's wife was an Anglican; Jonathan was not a very churchy man; all the Miller girls were married in the Church of England. Mrs. Todd Lees (Carrie Miller) tells me she knows nothing of any Methodist Church; she says she was christened in Church of England.

"My father, Benjamin Springer, together with all his brothers and sisters, were baptized in the Roman Catholic Church, but turned Anglican. I was born in 1882, and I remember going to our Moodyville schoolhouse to church, then to St. James, and finally father helped to build Christ Church; my godmother was Mrs. Bishop Sillitoe.

Mrs. Hugh Nelson: "He is an adherent of the Episcopal Church." *Biographical Dictionary of Well Known British Columbians*.

Memo, conversation, 31 July 1936, Mrs. Alice Crakanthorp (of Hastings Sawmill, 1873) and close friend of Miller girls: