

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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THE NAME “KITSILANO.”

“Capilano” and “Kitsilano,” assumed by many to be Indian names, are actually neither English nor Indian, but a concoction of both created within recent years, and derived from Indian man, not Indian places.

Some time prior to July 1905, the Canadian Pacific Railway requested the late Jonathan Miller, an early resident of Granville and its constable, afterwards for many years the first postmaster of Vancouver, to furnish them with a suitable name for a subdivision of land adjacent to Greer’s Beach. Mr. Miller invoked Professor Chas. Hill-Tout’s, F.R.S.C., F.R.A.I., profound knowledge of Indian matters. Professor Hill-Tout writes, 8 May 1931:

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 Squamish people, namely *Kates-ee-lan-ogh*, and modified it after the manner in which *Kapilano* has been modified by dropping the final guttural. We thus got the word *Kates-ee-lano*. This Mr. Miller or the C.P.R. authorities further modified by changing the long ‘a’ in the first syllable into an ‘i,’ and thus we have *Kitsilano*.

You may be interested to know that the Indian pronunciation of Kapilano was *Kee-ap-ee-lan-ogh*. This also was an hereditary name [*not quite correct; hardly “hereditary,” but conferred much as the title of a Royal Duke is*] of the chief who lived near the mouth of the river which we know by this name. Both names have the same ending, *lanogh*. This suffix signifies *man*. We find it also in another of their names; thus, *Kalanogh*, meaning the *first man*.

I could not learn what the significance of the first part of the other two hereditary names was; the Indians did not appear to know it themselves. The terms are very ancient.

(Signed) Chas. Hill-Tout

Note: Tate says, “Thit-see-mah-lah-nough” was chief at Musqueam. Paull and August Kitsilano dispute the hereditary character of both names. The facts appear to be contrary to Indian custom, which indicate that when a child reached a certain age of responsibility, the child was given a traditional name. Quitchetahl (Andrew Paull) was a grown man when given this name. Joe Capilano was given the name “Capilano” at a ceremony after he became chief. Layhulette, or Mary, daughter of Chief Matthias Joe (Capilano) was given hers by her great-grandmother.

The first appearance in print of the name “Kitsilano” was a newspaper announcement stating that Postmaster Miller had, approximately 1905 or earlier, adopted it as the name of a new sub-post office to serve the district known as Greer’s Beach—actually, no such post office was ever established. It remained unused for some time, until one morning the legend “Kitsilano” appeared on two or three street cars which inaugurated the service on the Kitsilano Street car line, and thus brought the name prominently to public notice. Geo. S. Hutchings, who lived on York and Balsam streets, says this was Dominion Day 1905. Subsequently, approximately 1909 (first lot sold by C.P.R. October 1909), the land north of the C.P.R. right of way was placed for sale, and the name quickly applied itself to this area. Gradually, the name spread from the small arc of land surrounding Greer’s Beach, pushed Fairview back eastward—Fairview once extended to Trafalgar Street, the city boundary; there was no other name for it prior to the adoption of Kitsilano—and as the settlement extended further westward into the clearing westwards towards Alma Road, and southwards towards Broadway, the name Kitsilano followed the settlement until now, 1933, it comprises a great section of land spreading from the Kitsilano Indian

Reserve to Jericho and southwards over an undefined area being—generally speaking—the flat land behind Kitsilano Beach, the face of the hill, and the flat land between Trafalgar Street and Alma Road back as far as the hills. It is somewhat hard to say where Kitsilano stops, and where Fairview, Talton Place, Shaughnessy Heights, Quilchena, Dunbar Heights and Jericho start.

Tate, early Indian missionary, says it is “impossible” to reproduce in English the sound as the Indian pronounced Kitsilano.

Tate spells it Haat-sa-lah-nough, the last syllable like “lough” in Scottish” or “nough” in enough.

Hill-Tout spells it Khātsalanooq and Qātsilānōq.

August Kitsilano, grandson of Chief of the name, signs his name August “Haatsalano.”

NOTE ADDED LATER:

In 26 August 1938, by deed poll, August Jack adopted the name “August Jack Khatsahlano.” (Original declaration in City Archives.)

THE LEGEND OF HAATSA-LAH-NOUGH (KHAT-SAH-LANO, KITSILANO).

As related by Que-yah-chulk (Dick Isaacs of North Vancouver Indian Reserve) with the assistance of Andrew Paul (Qoitchetahl), 7 November 1932. Que-yah-chulk is probably seventy years old, speaks English excellently, is active physically and mentally, says he remembers Mr. Derrick who built the first church in Granville in 1876 when “I was a boy then,” lost one arm working in the Hastings Sawmill in 1886, cannot read or write, and is a brother to the late celebrated character, Aunt Sally, “prehistoric” resident of Stanley Park. He lives with his daughter and grandchildren; his brother has just died. Queyahchulk says:

“Haatsalanough name very old, used by Indians long before Chief Haatsalanough of Chaythoos, Stanley Park and Toktakami, near Squamish.

“Haatsalanough of ancient days, long years ago, was visiting down near Point Roberts at a point where there is now an Indian Reserve at a place called English Bluff; his wife was with him.

“A woman of the tribe broke the moral code; her punishment was that she should be deserted by her tribe.

“Haatsalanough decided to leave the place with the others, and said to his wife, ‘where shall we go,’ and then said, ‘Oh, I know good place; lots of elk, beaver, deer, salmon, duck, fine place, plenty food, plenty cedar.’”

“Moose?” interjected Andrew Paull.

“No, no moose,” replied Queyahchulk. “Only elk.”

“That,” said Paull, and Queyahchulk nodded assent, “was how the first man Haatsalanough came to settle at Snauc” (Kitsilano Indian Reserve.)

Then Paull added, “My wife’s grandmother, very old woman, said to be 112 years old, anyway it is easy to see she is over 100, told me the story in the same way. She is Mrs. Harriet George, her Indian name Haxten.”

She died about 1938—see obituary book. Not 112, or anything like it.

Residents in Kitsilano who arrived as recently as the early years of the twentieth century can recall the enormous number of ducks which frequented False Creek in winter as recently as 1900 and 1902 or 1904. From the verandah of his clapboard cottage on the shore at the foot of Ash Street, the writer has often shot them. The last muskrats caught in the swamp back of Kitsilano Beach were caught in the slough where Creelman Street now is, just prior to the filling in of this swamp by the pumping of sand from False Creek in 1913. Salmon swam up this slough as far as the corner of Third Avenue and Cedar Street as late, at least, as 1900, and up to Eighth Avenue in Mount Pleasant. The creek at Bayswater Street was