

Early Vancouver

Volume Four

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2011 Edition (Originally Published 1944)

Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1935-1939.

Supplemental to Volumes One, Two and Three collected in 1931-1934.

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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“Between Sullivan’s store and the Granville Hotel was a Chinese restaurant, and across the road or pathway, and on the edge of the beach, these Chinamen had a little float and some racks on which they dried fish.

“Beyond the foot of Carrall Street a trail ran between the four shacks shown on this map, and the shore, and led on to Hastings Mill; beside this trail, at a point now about the northeast corner of Carrall and Water, was a little deserted shack, not more than 12 x 20 at the outside, perhaps 10 or 12 feet high, and built of nondescript material—I think board and batten, but I forget—just a little bit of a place, and perhaps this was, as you suggest, Gassy Jack’s first abiding place; it was just a bit of a shack, and, as I remember it, deserted.”

“HOLE IN THE WALL.” EARLY ROWING CLUB.

“Robertson’s salon, known as the ‘Hole in the Wall,’ was back from the sidewalk some ten or twelve feet, it had been built some years back, and the platform in front of it was used to sit upon, and I seem to recall that, adjoining it—probably it was the same place as is shown in the photograph of 1882 as beside Dr. Master’s office—where they kept a racing boat. George Black, Alec McLean and others used to do some rowing in races. Robertson went to England, and afterwards his wife and he lived in a house which, to me, seems to have been on what is now the southeast corner of Abbott and Water. I think that the Wilson’s’ first house was on the south side of Water Street, and not as shown in this map on the north side between the parsonage and Portuguese Joe; I remember nothing in 1878 between the store and the parsonage.”

Signed “OK”—see original.
Theo. Bryant
6 May 1939

GRANVILLE, BURRARD INLET. JOHN SCALES, 1869. COAL BORING, 1864 OR 1865. INDIAN CHURCH.

Ladysmith,
February 18th, 1936.

J.S. Matthews Esq.,
City Archivist,
Vancouver, B.C.

Dear Sir:

Thanks very much for your letter containing information about the Indian Church. I received quite a long letter from Ernest Robson a few days ago—give a few items from his father’s diary of his stay at Granville in ’80, I think the year was. He was hazy as to the Indian Church but as his stay was short that is not unusual. I may say re a previous letter re my father’s picture, etc., I think I can get these in Vancouver. My late sister had quite a lot of his pictures and I expect to see you this spring or summer with something you can include in the Bryant folio. I read, I think, in the “Province” last fall a story by John Scales—I know him as a boy (that’s me) in Nanaimo. It referred to his mother washing clothes at some stream that ran through Granville back in, was it, 1868 (or 1869.)

The only stream I remember was about a stone’s throw west of the “Parsonage,” and it dried up during the summer, and at best in winter was only a mere stream perhaps 8-10 feet wide; it had a couple of planks for crossing. I can hardly think it was used by whites as it was in that part where the Indians lived, yet it would be easily located on the map—I think.

Yours truly,
Theo. Bryant.

Signed “OK”—see original.
Theo. Bryant

6 May 1939

Note: this is the stream for which I have been so long seeking authentic information. Undoubtedly the stream mentioned by John Scales, it would no doubt be the one from which the coal borers drew their water prior to John Henry Scales building a little grate of stones so that his mother could heat water for washing; the Scales family possessed themselves of the coal borers' abandoned shack. This gives the location of the coal bore mentioned as being "near the Granville Hotel" in Mayor Oppenheimer's printed brown notebook. It must have run down—as other records state—under or beside the first Y.M.C.A. building on Hastings Street, now the Astoria Hotel.

J.S. Matthews.

Ladysmith, B.C.,
May 22, 1936.

J.S. Matthews Esq.,
City Archivist,
Vancouver, B.C.

Dear Sir:

PORTUGUESE JOE. METHODIST PARSONAGE. EDWARD GOLD.

I am in receipt of yours dated 15th inst. re "Portuguese Joe" of Granville. I did not know Gregoris Fernandez nor any of their kind—or any of the Portuguese gents. Perhaps you could find something re this man's obtaining title to the property which was the empty store next to the Methodist Parsonage and on say Abbott Street corner—was empty when we arrived there in '78. I think Edward Gold's father opened a store there when we were there, perhaps Ed. Gold has some memory of this.

I read the Vancouver Jubilee Province last night—Dr. W.W. Walkem's name is mentioned as being there in early '70s. He came in '78 or '79 following a Dr. Siveright [*sic*] or something like that—it's phonetically spelled—he was a New Westminster doctor—W.W. Walkem of this place—Mayor of the town is his youngest and only living son. Perhaps he could give you some data on his father's days in Vancouver. He lived almost behind the old Hastings Mill Store, if you remember that place—there was an evergreen hedge in front of the lot. I knew the Doctor very well in after years around Wellington, Nanaimo, etc.

Hope to see you later in the summer.

Yours truly,

Theo. Bryant.

Signed "OK"—see original.

Theo. Bryant

6 May 1939

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH THEO. BRYANT, 30 JUNE 1936, WHO HAS COME TO VANCOUVER FROM LADYSMITH TO PARTICIPATE IN THE GOLDEN JUBILEE FESTIVITIES.

"PORTUGUESE JOE." JOSEPH SILVEY. DOMINGO SILVEY. INDIAN CHURCH. GRANVILLE, BURRARD INLET.

"Domingo Silvey owns the whole of Reid Island, Portier Pass, quite close to Chemainus."

(Looking at photo of Water Street, before the fire, 1886, taken from below Cambie Street, looking east; big stumps in centre of a street; forest in distance.) "That is Ike John's the custom officer's cottage, on the left here, and this gable end is the parsonage roof; the little building, with end only showing, between them, is undoubtedly the Indian church; I don't think there is the slightest doubt of it; there was not enough room for it to be anywhere else; at the back of the parsonage, and just to the east of this little