

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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“W.O. Miller started as a telegraph operator at Yale for W.H. Armstrong” (later Armstrong and Morrison, Vancouver.) “Bill Miner was on the Yale, No. 1; Ed Austin had the New Westminster, or No. 3; Charlie Johnson had ‘Old Curly’” (No. 2), “and I had the ‘Savona,’ No. 4.”

C.P.R. CONSTRUCTION. PORT HAMMOND. C.P.R. OXEN.

“The ‘Savona,’ No. 4, was landed at Port Hammond, and they started laying the track from there both ways. Old Man Heath, an Englishman, he was a machinist in the shops at Yale, and claimed he was a locomotive engineer, but he put the engine in a ditch down at Pitt Meadows, and killed himself. I was on night shift, and it came my turn to be day shift, so they sent me down to get No. 4, and we pulled her out of the ditch, jacked her out with jacks, and” (laughingly) “pulled her into Hammond with two oxen, and before we got her ready for the road, there was another vacancy, and Teddy Hosker, who was firing for me, he got the night shift and I got the day. Hosker came down to the slough at Pitt Meadows; it was deep water; he had a canoe; and he got the body of Mr. Heath, and took it down to New Westminster.”

C.P.R. CONSTRUCTION.

“No. 4 was at Port Hammond, and there was another engine at Port Moody; they worked from both ends, and the track was connected up east of Westminster Junction. I was running the engine at Port Hammond, and Ed Austin was running the one at Port Moody, and the end running west from Hammond, and the end running east from Port Moody, finally were connected up, as I say, east of Westminster Junction.

“All the time they were working at Yale, and finally the track was connected up at Deroche.”

HARRISON HOT SPRINGS.

“A lot of Onderdonk men were lying around at Yale waiting for the C.P.R. to take the line over, so a lot of us went down to Agassiz, and up to Harrison Lake; there was nothing there then but a log shack, and an old cedar log chopped out, hollowed out, for a bath; it was not an old canoe, but a log chopped out to make it hold water for a bath. The water was too hot at first, so what you did was, put some in, and cool it off with a few pails of cold water, and after you had been in a little time you could stand it quite hot.” (See Morton or Findley narrative, *Early Vancouver.*)

Mr. Herbert Creelman was born at Colchester, Nova Scotia, 10 March 1858, was brought up a Presbyterian. He married Miss Sarah McMullen of Truro, Nova Scotia (Methodist) at Halifax, and recently celebrated their Golden Wedding in Vancouver.

They have three children: one son, Hugh, who is principal of a school at Esquimalt, and two daughters.

A free mason, raised at Truro Lodge, No. 43, Nova Scotia, in 1881, and afterwards affiliated with Cascade Lodge, Vancouver. Pensioned by the C.P.R. in 1924.

As to his South American experiences—he was away from the C.P.R. for one year—he says, “forget that.”

[LETTER FROM A.B. CURTIS.]

Roselands,
Comox, V.I.
8/4/36.

Dear Mr. Matthews:

I must apologize for not answering your letter before. The fact is I can give you very little information regarding the old hospital.

In 1888 my sister succeeded Mrs. Roberts as matron, and I took the position as nurse. There was another nurse, and a male night nurse. I think there was about ten or twelve beds in the then only furnished ward, which was on the main floor. Another upstairs intended for women was really never finished, although very occasionally a woman was nursed there.

The attending physicians were:

Dr. Bell-Irving Dr. Langis
Dr. Johnston Dr. McGuigan
Dr. LeFevre Dr. Berkingsale
Dr. Robertson

I think we had all the water we wanted and electric light.

There were three bedrooms upstairs for staff and a small sitting room. The kitchen and storeroom was in the basement, and the cookery done by a chinaman. We had typhoid, surgical cases, also many cases, I might say, beyond description, that were left in a great measure to the nurses by [*the C.P.R. doctors*] who had little time at their disposal—but I would not like any criticism of any doctors to be printed.

I am sorry neither of us have any photos in uniform to send to you.

I am afraid I have told you very little. Thanking you for your letter.

Yo

urs sincerely,

[signed] A.B. Curtis [*née Crickmay*]

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH MRS. ESTHER M. CROSFIELD, 4540 MARINE DRIVE, VANCOUVER, 15 AUGUST 1935.

(She was a candidate for Park Commissioner about 1934.)

WILD ANIMALS. THE LAST BEAR KILLED IN VANCOUVER, 1909. QUILCHENA. PIGS.

“I saw the last bear killed in Vancouver taken by our house in a wagon. That was at the corner of 20th Avenue and Vine Street; Pete O’Flynn had shot it in the swamp, down below where the Quilchena Golf Course is now. The way I establish the date is that, at the time, we were living in a tent—it was August—alongside the B.C. Electric Railway tracks; Arbutus Street was only a track then. We lived in the tent while they were blowing the stumps on our lot to make room for our home. My daughter is twenty-seven this month, August 1935, and she was about a year old when the bear’s dead body was taken by our house in the wagon. Quilchena was then a great big forest.

“The big black bear had been ‘after’ Pete O’Flynn’s pigs, and he shot it in the swamp. If you deduct 26 years from 1935, it must have been August 1909.”

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH WILLIAM TIMOTHY CUMMINGS, 23 FEBRUARY 1939.

Born at Brockton Point, Stanley Park, 1 January 1881, son of James Cummings, a Scotsman, and Lucy, a Bella Coola Indian (Indian name Spuhk-pu-ka-num), Stanley Park squatter, now deceased. Mr. W.T. Cummings and his two sisters still reside in Stanley Park. He called at City Archives. He is active, but has lost sight of one eye, and sight in other is poor. Wears dark glasses.

STANLEY PARK. LOGGING OFF FOREST.

Mr. Cummings said: “The first I remember of what is now Stanley Park was a logging camp which got their water from a little stream which runs into the inlet through the old beaver pond, a hundred and fifty yards east of the Causeway entrance to the park, before you come to the yacht club.

“I don’t know whose logging camp it was, but they were getting out cedar bolts and such, and had a little boom in the tiny bay.”

PARK ROAD. SQUATTERS.

“The next thing was the Park Road was made around Stanley Park, and ran right through our house; we had to move our house back to let the road go by. Our house was built of sawn lumber, and axe-hewn lumber, and had some kind of a tile chimney, and we got our water from a hole in the ground, and hauled it up with a bucket and a rope.”