

Early Vancouver

Volume Four

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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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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH HARRY T. DEVINE, EARLY PHOTOGRAPHER AND PIONEER OF "BEFORE THE FIRE," DIRECTOR, VANCOUVER GENERAL HOSPITAL, ETC., 11 MARCH 1936.

KEEFER'S HALL. ST. JAMES CHURCH. HOLY ROSARY CHURCH.

City Archivist: Where was Keefer's Hall, Mr. Devine?

Mr. Devine: "Keefer's Hall was on Alexander Street, facing the inlet about exactly opposite—within one hundred feet—of the point where the English Bay branch line of the C.P.R. turned off from the main line." (See plan or map of Vancouver, 1889, Dakin Publishing Co., page 11—photographic copy—Block 3, Lot No. 34, and marked "Water Works Offices, Lodge Room.")

WATER WORKS. ORANGE LODGE. ST. JAMES CHURCH, 1886.

"The Water Works office—Keefer was mixed up in the Water Works—was where Joseph W. McFarland, first secretary of the water works, who worked for Keefer, had his office. Keefer had had the contract for construction of C.P.R. from Port Moody. After the fire, June 1886, St. James held their services in Keefer's Hall; I know, my sister and I used to teach Sunday School in the hall upstairs, and St. James used it for services until they built their church on Gore Avenue; that was in the fall of 1886."

ROMAN CATHOLICS. HOLY ROSARY CHURCH. FIRST MASS.

"I don't know if the Roman Catholics held their services there or not. You say they did; well, I don't know. You see most of those now living who belonged to St. James Church at that time are now members of Christ Church, which broke away from St. James—I was one of them—and they do not know what happened down at St. James afterwards as they were looking after their own affairs at Christ Church."

FATHER FAY, THE MERRY PRIEST.

"During 1887, I am certain, and until St. James built their Gore Avenue church, Keefer's Hall was occupied by St. James Church, but, you see, there was a very good feeling between St. James and Father Fay of the Roman Catholics; they used to help him out with his bazaars and other things: used to help his funds, and it is quite likely that he used the Hall.

"But, except for organisation meetings of the Roman Catholics, I do not think they could have used it long; perhaps a month or so. You see, early in 1887, perhaps the fall of 1886, they bought the present Holy Rosary property on Richards Street."

GRANITE QUARRIES. SPRATT'S ARK. FIRST STONE POST OFFICE.

"At that time Keefer was operating the granite quarries" (see Bailey photos) "and they bought the great big old scow 'Spratt's Ark,' the famous old fishing cannery" (see W.R. Lord) "and were using it to transport stone from the granite quarries to build the new Post Office at the corner of Pender and Granville" (southwest.)

KEEFER'S HALL.

Note: in addition to Dakin's map ground plan, there are at least three panorama photos (waterfront) which show Keefer's Hall.

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH MR. B.F. DICKENS, 3582 WEST 14TH AVENUE, WHO VERY KINDLY CALLED AT THE CITY ARCHIVES FOR A CHAT, 24 JUNE 1937.

INDIAN RIVER PARK. WIGWAM INN.

Mr. Dickens said: "I was the original owner and promoter of Indian River Park and Wigwam Inn. We had four properties up there at Indian River, at first D.L. 819 and 820; afterwards we acquired two more district lots, I think D.L. 1461 and 1436; D.L. 819 and 820 were the original ones. A registered townsite plan deposited with the Land Registry, but the plan was afterwards cancelled by the present owner, Edward J. Young, No. 1 Main Street, Madison, Wisconsin, a millionaire lumberman who has interests from here to Alaska. The property now extends from about Croker Island to a quarter of a mile up the Indian River."

VANCOUVER DAILY PROVINCE. L.D. TAYLOR.

"I came here in 1898 from Belleville, Ontario, and was the first advertising manager of the *Daily Province*, May 1898. The *Province* had started publication in Vancouver March 26th that year. Soon after Louis D. Taylor joined the staff, and controlled the circulation. I stayed on the *Province* for a year, and used to make up ads for well-known firms, such as Johnson and Kerfoot, and clothiers on Cordova Street, and McLennan & McFeely, the hardware firm. Then I decided to start an advertising firm on my own, and got myself an office in the newly erected Flack Block, Cambie and Hastings streets; in addition to my publicity on newspapers, I started a sign writing business, and carried on with that for four or five years."

THE WORLD.

"Then Louis D. Taylor and myself bought the *World* newspaper from the estate of J.C. McLagan; I was the only one, I think, who put up any real money. Victor W. Odlum" (Brigadier-General) "was the alleged secretary of the company, but he was the biggest 'false alarm' I ever met; a very much over-rated man. I was advertising manager and vice president, and with some unusual publicity and initiative on the part of 'L.D.'" (Taylor) "we had the *Province* on the run."

ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND CLUB. PROGRESSIVE CLUB. VANCOUVER TOURIST ASSOCIATION. ALVO VON ALVENSLEBEN.

"Well, while I was on the *World*, I read an article on a '100,000 Club,' about 1910; perhaps 1907 or 1908. I did not originate the slogan '100,000 men in 1910'" (in Vancouver), "but I did get the '100,000 club' started. We rented the O'Brien Hall next door on Homer Street, and called a public meeting; the hall was jammed with business men. There was difficulty in getting the meeting started, so Ed. Norcross, city editor of the *World* was there and I asked him to take the chair, but he demurred, and in the delay I heard a loud voice with a foreign accent shout out from the back of the hall that he moved that a chairman be elected. It was Alvo von Alvensleben, and the meeting started off with a bang. I think we called it the '100,000 Club,' afterwards it became the Progressive Club so very active at one time, and then the Vancouver Tourist Association, later changed to the Vancouver Publicity Bureau, and now back to its old name Tourist Association. That was the first time I met Alvensleben."

WORLD. FRANK HART.

"I sold my interest in the *World*, and joined the Royal Business Exchange as advertising manager and vice president, and during that time I met a man, John Bain, and he and I bought some property on 18th Street, North Vancouver, and on the way over to see the property, he told me he had a piece of property to sell at Indian River, but that he was not the sort of man to push and promote it. I was quite interested and said, 'I'll buy it myself,' and did so, without even seeing it. That is now Indian River Park. I gave him the check right there; got an interim receipt, and he drew from his pocket an old paper with a drawing on it; and old drawing which looked like one of these charts showing how to find lost treasure that you read about [in] the magazines. It was of the location of a mineral spring near the mouth of the river. There was an old timer here, Frank Hart, got up early about three one morning and went over when the tide was out to see the spring. We had an analysis made of the water by Thos. H. Price and son, of San Francisco, and afterwards I had another analysis made by Dr. Underhill, medical health officer of Vancouver; both agreed; both stated that it was good water for bathing and internal use; internal and external, for chronic affections of the skin."

INDIAN RIVER PARK. WIGWAM INN.

"Three months after I bought the property I was impressed with it as a possible summer resort, and engaged Col. Tracey" (the city engineer) "to survey it into lots for a townsite called 'Indian River Park.' I gave the various streets Indian names, North American Indian names such as Hia-watha, etc.; that's how 'Wigwam Inn' came about; then we took the plan to be registered, but Col. T.O. Townley, the land registrar, at first demurred because the streets were not in all cases 66 feet wide; some of them were only 20 feet. But he considered the matter, considered that some of it was mountainside, and finally registered the plan."

"I got busy and landscaped it myself; did all the designing, everything up there is my work; I had twenty or forty men working. I had not enough money to carry on, so Alvo von Alvensleben bought a half interest and supplied the money, and took most of the kudos; it was Alvensleben this and Alvensleben that, but I

did the work. We sold a few lots, too. I made a design for the hotel; I got Fred Townley, the architect for the new City Hall just built; he was apprenticed then to Sholto Smith, architect, in Vancouver, and just a boy, to improve on my sketch, and the 'Wigwam Inn' resulted. Alvensleben was getting all the credit and advertising, but I did not care; I drew a nice salary."

HON. H.H. STEVENS, M.P.

"In Indian River Park we had sold a few lots, but we bought the lots back, and the townsite reverted into one big property. I also got the foreshore lease, and started a gravel pit, the government taking 10¢ royalty, and we took 10¢ royalty from those whom were operating it for us, but the lease was cancelled, cancelled by Harry Stevens, then member of parliament. What the reason was I have never found out to this day.

"One day I got a telephone message from the Harbour Commission Office—Carter-Cotton was chairman at the time—that they were going up to Indian River in the Harbour launch, and would like to have me come along. I bought cigars and cigarettes, etc., to hold my end up on the trip. A cottage had been built up there for my wife and children, and when we got there my wife prepared a nice lunch for the harbourmaster's party, and after it was over they said, 'Let's go out and look around and see what's what.' They asked me to point out the boundaries of my foreshore lease, so I showed them my stakes, and then, what do you suppose they did. They handed me a cancellation of my lease. They cancelled a gravel lease for no apparent reason; the books were all in order; they got their royalties each month exactly the same as we did; they were getting one hundred dollars a month in royalties; that is, the government was; and from that day to this the gravel pit has laid untouched. I have always assumed that Harry Stevens, who was mixed up in some proposal to get sand from Spanish Banks, and was a member of parliament, had a deal to do with the cancellation of that lease.

"Finally, Alvensleben and I separated our interests. The hotel license had to be in my name, and I did not like that; my dear old mother would have turned in her grave if she had known I had a license to sell liquors. So I took the townsite and he took the rest, that is, I took the registered townsite only, being part of D.L. 819 and 820. Afterwards I got in touch with Edward J. Young of Madison, Wisconsin, and sold my interest, lock, stock and barrel—about 1917."

HARBOUR NAVIGATION CO.

"The Inn never paid. Young is also interested in the Harbour Navigation Co., and, between the two, it probably does pay, but Indian River is more a toy with him than anything. You see, motor cars came in; and the first flash of interest in Indian River was worn off, and the C.P.R. and Union Steamships started other picnic grounds. But it really looks beautiful now that the trees have grown. Young has an interest in three lakes to the north, one of them named after him; there has been talk of getting electrical power from them, but nothing has come of it as yet."

B.C. MOUNTAINEERING CLUB. VANCOUVER MOUNTAINEERING CLUB. J.J. TROREY.

"It was J.J. Trorey, the little fellow, brother to Geo. E. Trorey of Henry Birks & Co. afterwards, who formed the original Vancouver Mountaineering Club, now the B.C. Mountaineering Club."

MOUNT DICKENS. CATHEDRAL CANYON. FALLS OF THE SPRAY OF PEARLS.

"Thirty or forty strong of them came up to Indian River one day. I provided a Union Jack and a bottle of champagne, and away they started, and climbed the mountain at the back from the ridge to the north; they were away from noon to dark; had fastened the flag to a pole on the top, and christened the mountain Mount Dickens, but had not found a drop of water, and were exhausted with thirst, and had drunk all the champagne except a few drops they sprinkled on the ground when the christening ceremony was on. Somehow, they missed by one hundred yards a torrent of water in the creek nearby; said they did not see it. Jack McConnell" (J.P. McConnell, editor of the *Saturday Sunset*) "named the falls 'Falls of the Spray of Pearls' because the water comes over like a spray of pearls; up in the Cathedral Canyon. I named it Cathedral Canyon; it looked like an old cathedral; it is a wonderful canyon."

GENEALOGY.

"I was born on November 30th 1860, so that I am 77, at Belleville, Ontario. My parents were William and Hannah C., née Vandervort. On the 5th September 1883, I married Miss Ida Emma Ashton" (Anglican

Church) "at Napanee, Ontario. We have been married fifty-four years now. We had four children, Arthur, the first, who died in infancy; Charles, who is with Dale & Co. of this city, has four children; Irene is Mrs. Robert C. Moody of Eugene, Oregon; and Florence is Mrs. W.G. Easterbrook of Eburne; we have ten grandchildren altogether."

Note by City Archivist: The inability of John McConnell's party to find water is not unaccountable. He was a brilliant journalist, and a splendid companion, and he would have considered it a waste of good "ammunition." The recollections of many yachting trips with him tells me so. J.S.M.

Correction: Jack McConnell was not with the thirsty party. Sorry. J.S.M.

In a letter written 28 June 1937, Mr. Dickens approves, in the main, of the above, but objects to it being in the first person as too egotistical, but adds, "I am amazed that you were able to put our disconnected chat into such good form considering the hurried notes."

J.S.M.

He also sends more regarding formation of "Progress Club."

28 JUNE 1937 – (COPY OF WRITING ON PIECE OF CARDBOARD BY MR. DICKENS.)

(VANCOUVER) PROGRESS CLUB. PROGRESS CLUB. VANCOUVER PUBLICITY BUREAU. VANCOUVER TOURIST ASSOCIATION. "100,000 MEN IN 1910." HUNDRED THOUSAND CLUB.

Mr. Dickens writes:

Vancouver at that time had a population of perhaps 50,000 or 65,000, so Mr. D— thought it a proper time to introduce a proposition for Vancouver similar to one being sponsored by Dallas, Texas, called the "HUNDRED THOUSAND CLUB" to boost Dallas population to one hundred thousand by 1910, so the "World" [*newspaper*] leased the old O'Brien Hall on Homer and Hastings Street, and through some appropriate publicity in the "World's" columns, succeeded in packing the hall with an interested body of business and professional and labor men wanting to know what it was all about.

There was a little difficulty in getting the meeting started, no one seeming to know just how to get organised.

ALVO VON ALVENSLEBEN.

At this stage a loud voice called out from the back of the hall and moved that a chairman be elected. It was the voice of Alvo von Alvensleben, who afterwards became a very active businessman in Vancouver. Soon a chairman, a secretary, and other officials were appointed and the meeting started off with a bang.

The object of calling the meeting was explained, which met with an enthusiastic reception. The object was to build Vancouver up to 100,000 population in 1910; the slogan, "IN NINETEEN HUNDRED AND TEN VANCOUVER THEN WILL HAVE ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND MEN" was adopted.

The "100,000 Club" made good, Vancouver had 100,000 and more by 1910. The 100,000 club campaign had the best form of community spirit ever shown in the city either before or since 1910.

The campaign was concluded with the best commercial parade ever seen here, and is remembered by all old timers with a feeling of pride.

PROGRESS CLUB.

The 100,000 club was the germ from which sprung the "Progress Club," the Vancouver Tourist Assn., and the Vancouver Publicity Bureau.

Note by JSM: The slogan commonly used was "100,000 men in 1910."