

Early Vancouver

Volume Four

By: Major J.S. Matthews, V.D.

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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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

Indian church, we had a sort of shelter for wood piles, and that did not leave much room for anything else at the back of the parsonage.”

Ladysmith, B.C.,
December 12th, 1936.

Dear Major Matthews:

I have seen in the “Province” a few days ago where Eburne Island had again been renamed as of yore—it was in 1880 that I, with my father, walked over to the North Arm to go to Lulu Island—to gather mushrooms—we got to Angus Fraser’s Log Camp that was not far to the right of the North Arm road—had dinner there—a good one just like they put up in logging camps, and while there, a bull team came along with a string of logs, there were 8 or 10 oxen in the line—from there we took a trail more to the right and came to the North Arm of the Fraser. The first time I had seen it—my father gave a call and soon Mr. Eburne came over in a skiff to Mr. Sexsmith’s farm—the place was covered with mushrooms, wagon loads I should say—Mr. Sexsmith and Mr. Eburne were friends of my father—That afternoon we reversed the course and came back to Granville, the same road—passing the Tea Swamp [*low land between Fraser and Main Street south of Kingsway*], as was known then—on our way in the morning we passed the turn-off to Jerico [*Jerico, may be merely poor spelling, but the earliest known spelling was Jerico*], it was just a trail out into the burnt timbers—must have been fires in that country many years before—a split cedar had been put in near the turn-off to Jerico—most likely as a mark to go by—it had been penciled on it quite a piece of rhyme—“If you go to Gas Town your money for to spend,” and many more lines probably put there by some lumberjack—I never went to Jerico.

I suppose you will have a fine new office in the new City Hall—will have to call in and see you early in the year—seen Domingo Silvey, asked him re pictures of his father, said he could not find it, but was looking further—may find one.

A Mrs. M.A. Elliott here, half breed, born in Yale B.C. may be able to give you some information re old times—I never spoke to her about Vancouver—she is over 70, I think getting the old age pension—if born in Yale at that time would be in the 70’s. She told me the man who made up her papers that her father was an Oppenheimer, which makes quite a Hebrew aspect to the case.

This is my busy time so must close with wishing you a very merry time at the holiday.

Sincerely,

Theo. Bryant.

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

EXCERPT, LETTER, 30 DECEMBER 1936, THEO. BRYANT, LADYSMITH, TO J.S. MATTHEWS.

EARLY CEMETERIES. BROCKTON POINT.

“I know nothing of the burial grounds at Brockton Point; I never saw any over there when a boy. I went and called on H. Hayden re cemeteries there, but he knows nothing; never saw any.”

(Note: merely illustrates that the Brockton Point graveyard was little more than a place in the trees “where they buried people.”)