

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.

Copyright Statement

© 2011 City of Vancouver. Any or all of *Early Vancouver* may be used without restriction as to the nature or purpose of the use, even if that use is for commercial purposes. You may copy, distribute, adapt and transmit the work. It is required that a link or attribution be made to the City of Vancouver.

Reproductions

High resolution versions of any graphic items in *Early Vancouver* are available. A fee may apply.

Citing Information

When referencing the 2011 edition of *Early Vancouver*, please cite the page number that appears at the bottom of the page in the PDF version only, not the page number indicated by your PDF reader. Here are samples of how to cite this source:

Footnote or Endnote Reference:

Major James Skitt Matthews, *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 4 (Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 2011), 33.

Bibliographic Entry:

Matthews, Major James Skitt. *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 4. Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 2011.

Contact Information

City of Vancouver Archives
1150 Chestnut Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 3J9
604.736.8561
archives@vancouver.ca
vancouver.ca/archives



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.”

WATER WELLS. JAMES CUMMINGS.

“At that time, Father, James Cummings, Mother” (Lucy Cummings), “and three children constituted our family. William, that’s me, was the eldest; my sister Agnes, who lives with me now, was the next, and my brother Murphy, the third child, who died in 1898, was born while the Park Road was being built. The other two children, Annie and Margaret, came next.

“Father died in 1897, Mother died in 1918; both buried in Mountain View.

“Neither my sister Agnes nor myself are married; both single; she lives with me in the park. Annie was Mrs. Grant Campbell of Hastings East, and died in 1937, leaving four children, Mona, Olive, James and Elmer Campbell. My sister Margaret is Mrs. Harry Pells, and lives next door to me in Stanley Park on our property. There are no little Pells.”

SQUATTERS. RUNAWAY SAILORS. EARLY FISHERMEN.

“Father came from the Island of Ankel” (sic) “or some name like that, in Scotland, as a sailor on one of the windjammers which loaded lumber at Moodyville Sawmill; there was a whole group of sailors deserted the ships. I know four of the deserters were Long, Cole, John Brown, and my father, James Cummings.

“I don’t know how they skipped out” (note: see evidence in “Squatter’s Eviction Trial,” about 1923) “but they squatted in Stanley Park, and started fishing for herrings and all sorts of fish, with drag nets pulled ashore by hand. There was sufficient demand for fish from the ships, mills, and Gastown, so that they could sell their fish.

“Long, Cole and Brown lived and died at Brockton Point, and are buried in Mountain View; I remember the deaths of all three.”

BROCKTON POINT. EARLY CEMETERIES. LAST BURIAL. NINE O’CLOCK GUN. JOHNNIE BAKER.

“There was a little graveyard between the Nine O’clock [gun], that’s where Johnnie Baker was, and the Brockton Point Lighthouse, and one of the Smith girls” (Peter Smith) “was the last one buried there.

“There were about fifty or one hundred graves along the bank above the beach; the Smith girl was the last one buried, after the road came, and they started clearing the place for picnics. She died of small pox during the epidemic. It was about the time the Victoria boat landed passengers at Brockton Point on account of the small pox scare.” (July 1892.)

HALLELUJAH POINT. SALVATION ARMY.

“The Salvation Army used to come over and have picnics. Someone put up quite a large shelter—a roof over tables where they could sit down and picnic—and then the graveyard just vanished. But the graves are still there; the bodies were never removed. Hallelujah Point is where the Nine O’clock gun is; the Salvation Army had their shelter there.”

JAMES CUMMINGS.

“Father continued fishing to the end of his days; he fished out in English Bay, and usually sold his fish to Anderson, the fish curer, who used to have a big place at the foot of Abbott Street.”

LUCY CUMMINGS.

“Mother was a Bella Coola Indian who came with her parents in one of those big canoes, paddled all the way from Bella Coola, to work in the salmon cannery at Ladner’s on the Fraser. Her Indian name was Spukh-pu-ka-num; English name, Lucy. Father met her at the Ladner Cannery and brought her home to Brockton Point. If there was a marriage ceremony, then I never heard of it, but they lived happily together until Father died after eighteen years married life.”

BIRTH CERTIFICATE. PETER SMITH OF BROCKTON POINT.

“My birth, of course, was never registered as they do now, but these two sworn declarations, made on the 7th October 1918, one by my mother, and the other by Peter Smith, state that I was born at Brockton Point on the first of January, 1881.”

Canada, Province of British Columbia

I, Peter Smith, of Brockton Point, Vancouver, B.C., make oath and I say:

1. I have lived at Brockton Point aforesaid 44 years.
2. I am well acquainted with Timothy Cummings, and have known him from the time of his birth.
3. To my knowledge he was born at Brockton Point aforesaid, January 1st 1881, and has lived there ever since.

Sworn by me at
Vancouver, B.C. this seventh
day of October 1818

Arthur J.B. Mellish "Peter Smith"
J.P. for B.C.

Dominion of Canada *[printed]* In the matter of
Province of British Columbia T imothy Cummings.

I, Lucy Cummings, of the City of Vancouver, in the province of British Columbia, solemnly declare that:

1. I am the widow of James Cummings, and the mother of Timothy Cummings, of Brockton Point, longshoreman.
2. My son Timothy Cummings was born at Brockton Point on the first day of January 1881, and has lived there with me ever since.
3. And I make this solemn declaration. *[etc. as per printed form]*

Declared before me at Vancouver
this seventh day of October 1918

J.B. Mellish, "LUCY her
J.P. for B.C. mark X CUMMINGS"

Read and approved by
Mr. Cummings
7th March 1939

J.S. Matthews.

"ARCHIVISTS WORTH THEIR WEIGHT IN GOLD."

SIR ARTHUR CURRIE.

About April 1932, Gen. Sir Arthur Currie passed through Vancouver on his way from the Orient to eastern Canada, and was, one afternoon about four, informally entertained by a large assemblage of ex-overseas officers who had gathered together to shake hands, chat, and drink a cocktail in the "Oval Room" of the Hotel Vancouver.

Prior to 1899, a large wooden shed served as the first drill hall in Vancouver, and General Currie, as former Corporal Currie of the 1st Battalion, 5th Regiment, Canadian Garrison Artillery, Victoria, had once entered it on a holiday event when the Victoria battalion had paid a visit to the 2nd Battalion in Vancouver. In 1931, the many regiments of Vancouver subscribed together to erect a memorial to mark the site of the old drill shed, and General Currie was invited to unveil the bronze tablet, but being indisposed in health, he declined, so the memorial was taken to the Oval Room for him to see. The shining new bronze tablet, bearing in part the words, "HERE STOOD THE DRILL SHED," was suitably placed upon an easel, and conducted by a group of senior officers. General Currie was escorted across the spacious room to view it; Major Matthews, City Archivist, Vancouver, long known to General Currie as a collector of military relics and records of British Columbia, as well as an old friend of many years, was among them, and had been responsible for the proposal, creation and design of the tablet.