

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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The voice: "Why, of course, I married him. For years I used to write his letters, but he always signed them; he was an illiterate man. I used to write them for him to 'Dear Mother and Eddie'" (the son); "I did not know it was his wife and son I was writing to, but I never did anything. He died in Kamloops."

This subject appears to have arisen through the publication in Vancouver newspapers, of the notices concerning the banquet given to the voters at the first election, 1886, and the mention of Edward Gold as one of them, which he was not, and did not attend the banquet, but it evidently raised in Mrs. Brown's mind a sense of injustice she is (alleged) to have suffered, or perhaps vindictiveness, at the hands of Eddie Gold's father.

J.S. Matthews.

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH THEODORE BRYANT, WHILST ON A VISIT TO VANCOUVER, 22 JULY 1935.

Postmaster of Ladysmith, B.C. for many years, and son of the Rev. Cornelius Bryant, Methodist minister at the parsonage, Granville, B.C., from about 1878 to 1883.

GRANVILLE, 1878.

We had before us a Photostat of a map of Granville, August 1885, made by the Sanborn Map Co., and once published in the *Vancouver Daily World*, about 1896 (souvenir edition).

"The small building touching the shore line in front of the parsonage and facing in a nor-northeast direction is probably the boathouse. I recall the place in 1878, and from the front of the parsonage to the boathouse was only a few feet; I could hop, skip and jump from one to the other. For a few feet to the east of the boathouse towards Portuguese Joe's place the shore was filled in with old slabs, and the tide came up to these slabs. The boathouse itself was above the tide, but we had a little sloped grating from the beach to the boathouse up which we dragged the boat, and it is here that young Robson probably fell through and had to be sawn out. Our garden was to the east of the parsonage and ran almost up to Portuguese Joe's store; it had a little fence around it, but in front of the house there was nothing but rubbish and bushes—it was several steps below the parsonage floor, because there were steps down from the parsonage to the few feet separating the boathouse.

"To the westwards along the beach was Isaac Johns place, and beyond that some bachelor shacks, and still farther, probably about the foot of Cambie Street, was a little clearing. There the Indians used to camp intermittently."

(Note by J.S.M.: John Henry Scales speaks of making a primitive fireplace of stones and iron bars beside a creek so that his mother could do her washing after heating the water in a boiler. This must have been close to the empty shed, deserted some years previously, which John Scales, his father, occupied with his family. It would be reasonable to suppose that the small clearing, which Mr. Bryant speaks of as being used by the Indians, would be beside a creek; probably the same creek as would be used by Mrs. Scales, and before her by the coal borers. This creek is known to have crossed Hastings Street beside the first Y.M.C.A. (Public Library—Hotel Astoria Building). It may be concluded that the coal bore, mentioned in Oppenheimer's report as being put down twenty years ago, was very close to the foot of Cambie Street.)

"As I remember Portuguese Joe's store, it was, in 1878, deserted, and, I think that Mrs. Gold opened a store there before they opened the Gold house. Joe's store was a very unpretentious building and he had a big sign on the water side, spread across the face of the building, with or without his name, advertising the fact that he sold groceries and general merchandise. On the water side, on the west corner of the building, was a sloping gangway which allowed him to haul his goods from the rowboats and into his store."

INDIAN CHURCH.

"Father came with us to Granville in 1878, and stayed three years, but I cannot remember much about the Indian church excepting that the services were very irregular, but I presume it was still standing in 1881 and later, if Miss Thompson, daughter of the Rev. Thompson who followed Father, remembers using it as a playhouse.

“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