

Early Vancouver

Volume Five

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Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1936-1945.

Supplemental to volumes one, two, three and four collected in 1931, 1932 and 1934.

About the 2011 Edition

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KING EDWARD HIGH SCHOOL.

“Then, when they built the ‘Shaughnessy School’ on Oak Street, between Twenty-fourth and Twenty-fifth, I walked from Ninth to Twenty-fourth. The school was afterwards closed, and the ‘Edith Cavell School,’ built in the 500 block, West Twentieth, and the old ‘Shaughnessy School,’ on 24th, 25th and Oak, was later re-opened as an annex to King Edward High School.”

GENEALOGY.

Miss H.M. Hesson, 1164 Melville Street, is the daughter of Mrs. Alexander Hesson, who came to British Columbia in 1885, went to Soda Creek, and came to Vancouver prior to 1889. She had seven children, and died in July 1919. In order of birth her children were:

1. Detail s unknown.
2. Miss Helena M.
3. Ruth, now Mrs. E.W. Nichols, (of B.C.E.R.) City.
4. Mabel Elizabeth, now Mrs. C.W. Colwell or Colvin of Vancouver.
5. Sandy, in United States.
6. Hilda, now Mrs. W.Q. Stirling, of Vancouver.
7. Lorne, deceased 1920.

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH MRS. DAVID EVANS, NÉE AWREY (WIDOW, NOW OF 5727 NORTH EAST 33RD AVENUE, SEATTLE), WHO, IN COMPANY OF MRS. M.E. HARRIS, 1284 WEST 11TH AVENUE, ATTENDED THE VANCOUVER PIONEER ASSOCIATION PICNIC TO NEWCASTLE ISLAND, 14 JUNE 1939.

A beautiful day, calm and warm on a beautiful island fresh and verdant in the early summer. About 200 pioneers of Vancouver present.

DAVID EVANS, PIONEER TAILOR AND MUSICIAN. HASTINGS STREET, 1886. GRANVILLE STREET AT ROBSON STREET, 1886.

Mrs. Evans said: “Mr. David Evans came to Vancouver before I did; he came before the Great Fire, June 1886; I came November 16th 1886. The planks on Hastings Street were not laid at that time; afterwards they planked the centre of it. I remember that, once, Mr. Evans and I went for a walk up Granville Street; the Hotel Vancouver was building; they had more than the foundations finished. Mr. Evans and I stopped and stood in the stumps, about Robson Street somewhere south of Georgia Street; the stumps were all around us, and Mr. Evans said to me, ‘I wouldn’t be at all sure but there will be business on this street some day, but it won’t be in our day.’” And Mrs. Evans smiled.

(See illustration in *Vancouver Daily Province*, 15 June 1939.)

MOUNTAIN VIEW CEMETERY. HIRSCHBERG (SUICIDE). THE FIRST BURIALS.

“The first burial in Mountain View was my little son, Caradoc, about ten months old; February 1887; the date is on the headstone. At that time Mountain View Cemetery was just a little clearing in the forest; the fallen trees lying about everywhere as they had fallen. A Mr. Hirschberg had committed suicide in the Leland Hotel, and actually he was buried a day or two before my little son, but they had buried him on the side of the road, now Fraser Avenue, but all trees everywhere then; Mr. Hirschberg was not buried in the cemetery. Whether they subsequently lifted the body or not I do not know; he may be lying there yet so far as I know; I never heard that he was raised. Mrs. Hirschberg was not one who would bother much about that, and, in any case, she went off somewhere. The exact location of his grave I do not know, but it was somewhere about the location, the old entrance. Macdonald’s cottage afterwards stood on the southwest corner of Fraser Avenue and East 33rd Avenue. You see, in those days Vancouver was without undertakers as we understand them today; there were no coffins to be bought; each one had to be made as required.

“Mr. Hirschberg was a man, and his body and coffin was heavy, and they could not carry it over trunks and branches of trees lying around in wild profusion, as they had tumbled when the site of the small cemetery site was being cleared of forest; but my little baby’s coffin was light—only ten months old—and they could climb across the logs and carry it.

“The cemetery was not ready for burials; the logs and stumps had not been cleared away; burned up. The grave to receive my little boy had been dug beside the new grave of Mr. Hirschberg—on the roadside—but when Mr. Evans saw it, he would not permit interment. So Mr. Evans took the little coffin inside the cemetery ground, and a little grave was dug on the top of the ridge—the grave stone is there yet.

“At first we had wooden posts, with swinging chains between each post around our son’s grave; you can see it” (the posts and chains of the grave) “in the distance in this photo” (C.V. P. Dist. 9) “just beside, but beyond, Macdonald’s cottage wall, and the forest beyond. Then, afterwards we had a headstone placed; two stones, one flat on the ground, and another, with round top, perpendicularly upon it, with name and date.”

Photo C.V. N. Port. 173, 21 June 1939, shows Mrs. Evans kneeling beside her son’s tombstone.

“I visited it the other day—west of Fraser Avenue, and just a few yards south of East 33rd Avenue. The ground was so dry and sandy, we could get nothing to grow, so we planted ivy; ivy would grow, and it is there yet; a small low stone almost covered with ivy, lovely and green, which has grown to quite a big root.”

MACDONALD, FIRST CARETAKER. FIRST CARETAKER’S COTTAGE.

“Macdonald, the caretaker, had several children; they were very poor, and my son’s clothing was afterwards worn by their children; their cottage was on the southwest corner of Cemetery Road” (Fraser Avenue) “and 33rd East Avenue.”

FIRE, 30 MAY 1887. HASTINGS STREET, 1887. POST OFFICE, HASTINGS STREET.

“I was not in Vancouver when the Great Fire took place, but Mr. Evans was, and when the second alarm came on May 30, 1887, he was, naturally in common with everyone else, very nervous of consequence; they had suffered once.

“There was a new Post Office under construction directly across the street” (old 309, now No. 409 West Hastings Street) “and there was a pile of sand near it, for building material; they were getting ready to start building, but had not actually started. Well, our home” (old 312, new 418) “was across the street” (south side between Homer and Richards), “and when the alarm came all our furniture was carried out and across the street and buried in that sand. They had no time to waste, so my father, Peter Awrey, helped my husband to carry the furniture over and bury it in the sand, just took the drawers out of the chest of drawers, contents and all, just as it was as they pulled it out, and then buried it in the sand. My mother” (Rachel Awrey) “and I fled for safety down to False Creek, when the things were brought back after danger had passed, oh, my, what a mess; the house was ‘full of’ sand.”

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH. FIRST BRASS BAND. PETER AWREY.

“Mr. Evans was a musician, and formed the first brass band. He was a teetotaler; he never touched wine or whisky; he had promised his mother, years previously, that he never would, and he kept his word. He came from Wales. Father was the first life deacon of the Baptist Church, and I was the first organist.” (Hamilton and Dunsmuir.)