

Early Vancouver

Volume Seven

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

2011 Edition (Originally Published 1956)

Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected between 1931-1956.

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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CONVERSATION WITH MR. FREDERICK KILBY, WHO CAME TO VANCOUVER WITH HIS PARENTS, GEORGE AND ELIZABETH KILBY, 8 OCTOBER 1887, NOW OF 8745 ABERDEEN STREET, CENTRAL PARK, VANCOUVER, AND WHO KINDLY CALLED AT THE CITY ARCHIVES THIS AFTERNOON, AND REMAINED TO TEA, 20 JANUARY 1953.

GEORGE KILBY. ELIZABETH KILBY. FREDERICK KILBY.

Mr. Kilby: "I was born in Gainesville, Virginia, U.S.A., 11th January 1873. Gainesville is near where the Battle of Bull Run was fought; it was a little town then and is a little town now. My father's parents went there after the War, some relatives had a tobacco plantation, but Dad did not like it, so about 1879, they went to Callendar, North Bay, Ontario. Father had land there in C.P.R. construction days. He had the place surveyed into a townsite, but the C.P.R. did not buy us out. We finally sold out what land we had left for five hundred dollars, and glad to get it. You know it is not a very fertile place, lots of rocks. Then Father followed the Canadian Pacific Railway through. That was how we came to Vancouver, October 8th 1887.

"I was about fifteen when we arrived, and went to the Oppenheimer School, down by Jackson Avenue, for a year or so. Father was a carpenter, and we were living down on Park Avenue, on the corner of Prior Street, on the edge of False Creek shore, all filled in now and part of the park in front of the G.N. and C.N.R. railway stations."

PARK AVENUE. OPPENHEIMER STREET SCHOOL. FALSE CREEK SCHOOL. MOUNT PLEASANT SCHOOL.

"Afterwards we went to live on the corner of Ninth Avenue and Westminster Road, now the corner of Broadway and Kingsway, and I went to the Mount Pleasant School. At that time the school consisted of one small building; two more small buildings, one on each side, were added afterwards. I think one of those buildings is still standing on the school property—close to Kingsway."

MISS MCDUGALL. MISS ROBINSON. MR. JAMIESON. TEACHERS.

"They used to introduce Mr. Jamieson as the first teacher at the Mount Pleasant School. He was not the first. Miss McDougall was the first; then came Miss Robinson or Robertson, and Mr. Jamieson came third."

HOWARD STREET. FIFTEENTH AVENUE. SECOND CREEK BRIDGE. BREWERY CREEK. BEAVER DAM.

"Then we moved; moved up to Fifteenth Avenue; about as far as we could go and still live in the City; the City boundary was Sixteenth. Back of Westminster Avenue, now Main Street, was a street called Howard Street, a sort of lane to Westminster Avenue. Our house faced Fifteenth Avenue; we were on the northeast corner of Howard and Fifteenth; the house is there yet. We had to build a bridge over the creek to get the lumber for the house in."

Major Matthews: Ever see the beaver dam?

Mr. Kilby: "Part of it was on our property; we had it full of white Pekin ducks."

WEST END. WAGES. HOWE STREET HORSE RACES.

"I spent a few years carpentering with Dad. Mostly we built houses in the West End, and got \$1.75 for ten hours. Trails everywhere in the West End; trail to English Bay beach, and horse races on Howe Street.

"Then, for a year or two, I went prospecting up Lillooet, and after that timber cruising; Powell Lake, Bute Inlet; all up the coast. I must have walked a thousand miles in the bush."



Lillooet-Burrard Inlet Trail, south of Mount Garibaldi, 1952. A.H. Cameron, in "Early Vancouver", Matthews, Vol. 4, p.106, states that in the summer of 1875 he worked on the building of this trail at a point 20 miles up Seymour Creek. It was twelve feet wide, graded three feet in the centre, and the centre covered with "maltor" to walk on. Cameron relates "but only four bands of cattle about three hundred to a band, ever came out that way". This photo was taken after the B.C. Electric power line was built from Bridge River and improved it. This photo is south of Garibaldi, and was taken in August 1952, by Captain H.L. Cadieux, 1048 Esquimalt St. West Vancouver, and by him presented to the (see companion photo) City Archives. J.S.M.

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[photo annotation:]

Lillooet-Burrard Inlet Trail, south of Mount Garibaldi, 1952. A.H. Cameron, in "Early Vancouver," Matthews, Vol. 4, p. 106 [of original volume], states that in the summer of 1875 he worked on the building of this trail at a point 20 miles up Seymour Creek. It was twelve feet wide, graded three feet in the centre, and the centre covered with "mattox" to walk on. Cameron relates "but only four bands of cattle, about three hundred to a band, ever came out that way." This photo was taken after the B.C. Electric power line was built from Bridge River, and improved it. This photo is south of Garibaldi, and was taken in August, 1952, by Captain H.L. Cadieux, 1048 Esquimalt St, West Vancouver, and by him presented to the (see companion photo) City Archives. J.S.M.

SEYMOUR CREEK TRAIL. LILLOOET TRAIL.

"Once I walked to Squamish on the Lillooet Trail—up Seymour Creek."

Note: after presenting Mr. Kilby with four photographs—one of the three small wooden Mount Pleasant School building; one looking down hill from Seventh Avenue, 1887; one looking up towards Mount Pleasant from the False Creek bridge, 1890; and one of Hastings at Seymour in 1888-9—he continued:

"CRAZY GEORGE."

"'Crazy George' used to live at the bottom of the hill in a little shack about eight by eight. On a fine day he would sit outside it and play away for all he was worth on his piccolo. When we asked him how he was, he would talk. Once he said, pointing to the north, 'See those mountains; they were little hills when I came here.' Another time, he said that at the time he arrived they were digging out the First Narrows so that the ships could get in. He did not mean dredging the Narrows; he meant they were digging a channel in the earth."

Major Matthews: Mr. Kilby, you've done a lot of timber cruising. What was the biggest tree you ever saw?

BIG TREES, POINT GREY. TWELVE FEET DIAMETER. KILBY FAMILY.

Mr. Kilby: "Down in Puget Sound at a saw mill; it was a log in the water, but it had come from our logging camps in Point Grey. It was a Douglas fir and was twelve feet in diameter."

"My first wife died; no children. I married in 1917, Baptist Church, and Mrs. Kilby is at home today, quite well. We have three children. My daughter, Miss Elsie, works at the Public Library. She writes plays, too. Roy, my eldest son, is in the printing business in Burnaby. Business of his own. married, one son about two. Lloyd works in the Willson Stationery Co., on Pender Street."

We had been talking a long time. As Mr. Kilby is 80 and I am 75, we were both getting a little tired, so we decided we had done enough for one afternoon.

J.S. Matthews.

20 January 1953.