

**Early Vancouver**

**Volume Seven**

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

**About the 2011 Edition**

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*"The most beautiful park in the world"*

—DAVID OPPENHEIMER, Mayor, 1888

# The Naming and Opening *of* Stanley Park

27 SEPTEMBER, 1888

AND APPOINTMENT OF  
FIRST PARK COMMISSION

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A tribute from the citizens of Vancouver  
to the sixty-seven Park Commissioners who  
have served in that capacity during the  
years 1888 to 1948.

CITY ARCHIVES,  
VANCOUVER  
September, 1948

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## The Naming and Opening of Stanley Park

*Address of Major J. S. Matthews, City Archivist, Vancouver, to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the naming and opening of Stanley Park, Vancouver, Canada, at a banquet given by the Board of Park Commissioners in the Stanley Park Pavilion, Stanley Park, on 27th September, 1948, at 6 p.m.*

Mr. Chairman; Your Worship; Ladies and Gentlemen:

All present around these tables, save myself, are now, or have been, Park Commissioners, or are relatives of Commissioners, or are Park officials. I alone speak for the citizens; many thousands of them, some of whom are gone, some here today, others who will be coming in the long years to be. I bring you their united good wishes, their gratitude for your sixty years of labor, and their encouragement as you commence your sixty-first.

“Westward the stream of empires wends its way.  
The four first acts already passed.  
The fifth shall end the drama of the day.  
Time's noblest offspring is the last.”

Forty years after Bishop Berkeley penned those lines, the Spaniard, Narvaez, sailing in and out and round about in English Bay, 1791, was the first European to see Stanley Park. He named it Punta de la Bodega—our Ferguson Point. The Bishop had in mind the empires of Babylon, Greece, Carthage, and Rome, the “four first acts”, and, lastly, America, “Time's noblest offspring”. He died in 1753, when Capt. Vancouver was a babe in arms; when New York had a population of 22,000, and when British Columbia was shown on the maps as the “Western Sea”.

Narvaez was the first white man to see the western mainland shore of Canada, and he saw it at Stanley Park; there was no earlier discovery. In the City of Vancouver, Bodega, now Stanley Park, is the oldest name. But Narvaez saw the English Bay side only. Next year Capt. Vancouver passed through the Narrows, and saw the other side, and this is what he wrote:

“this island (Stanley Park), lying exactly across the channel, appears to form a similar passage (Lost Lagoon) to the south of it, with a smaller island (Deadmans) lying before it.”

Queen Victoria's proclamation of August, 1858, proclaims that—

“this wild and unoccupied land on the north west coast of North America shall henceforth be called British Columbia”.

Then she sent the Royal Engineers to establish civil administration.

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I have in my hand a page torn from today's telephone directory; it reads in part:

"Scales, J. H., 3520 Main St., FAirmont 4381-R".

Three years ago, 20th October, 1945, Mr. and Mrs. Scales were your dinner guests in this Pavilion and you conferred upon Mr. Scales the Freedom—the only one—of the Parks of Vancouver, and presented them with an illuminated address. Tomorrow we send a wreath. Mr. Scales passed away at his home on Saturday evening. He was one of the child passengers of the THAMES CITY—and the last survivor—which brought the Royal Engineers, to British Columbia, 1859, and was 94 years old on 26th June last, but was young enough to symbolize the recentness of it all, for he slept in Stanley Park when the only habitations on the bouldered beach of the whole of Vancouver Harbour were two whitemen's cabins, an empty shed, and two small pioneer sawmills.

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"I wish Corporal Turner and party to proceed to Burrard Inlet and survey lands, etcetera"

wrote Colonel Moody, Royal Engineer, on a scrap of paper in 1863. Corporal Turner and party came in boats; there were no roads; they made the first survey of Stanley Park; called it 'Coal Peninsula'—it adjoined Coal Harbour—marked Chief Khahtsahlano's home, (Kitsilano) on their map; at Chaythoos just inside Prospect Point. Later, the sawmillers came, cleared the forest off our Brockton Point cricket grounds; thought better of it and left. The fishermen squatted at Village Bay nearby, and boiled herring to make machine oil; one of them built the sloop MORNING STAR by the Nine o'Clock Gun.

Mourners buried their dead at Brockton Point in our first graveyard. The wild cattle in the park were not dangerous; it was the awful crashing of bushes, and the thundering noise the frightened beasts made as they bolted away at the approach of men, which was so startling.

But Bodega, Coal Peninsula, Stanley Park, remained, as it had ever been, a silent wilderness, hidden beneath a dense forest of huge trees towering to the heavens, standing close together as a field of grain, the habitat of bear, deer, cougar, wolf, and a few Indians clad in skins. On maps it was marked 'Government Reserve'; reserved for something, none knew precisely what. The first inkling that it was of value—except to loggers—was when the railway had a map drawn showing that the eastern half of it from Second Beach to Lumberman's Arch was part of the proposed "C.P.R. Townsite", adjoining our present West End.

Why the Almighty ordained that of all the countless generations of men which have gone, your generation and mine should have

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been chosen to change an age-old order, the primeval solitude of centuries, into Stanley Park, a thing of modern living beauty, must ever remain a mystery.

Then, suddenly, the flood gates opened; the railway was completed; a trickle of whitemen came over the Rockies; they grew in numbers until great hordes flowed over in huge waves down the Pacific Slope, so that, before that little boy of 1859, John Henry Scales, your Freeman of 1945, had passed from the sight of men, perhaps as many as one million persons each year visit Stanley Park, where once he, as a lad, slept alone in the night.

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One bleak wintry night in January, 1886, the wind moaned in the tree tops along Hastings street from the Cenotaph to the B. C. Electric at Carrall street. A few men, each carrying his own lantern, its light bobbing in the darkness as he strode, gathered on Water street; one side was the beach. Each in turn passed down a narrow alley to a sort of hall behind Blair's Saloon; behind the hall was the swamp; the home of a million frogs, now Woodward's store. Through the open door one could see strong bewhiskered men standing, smoking around the stove; a pile of cordwood, oil lamps suspended from the rough ceiling, and some benches. Mr. Alexander, of Hastings Sawmill, took the chair, and then explained that the object was to incorporate the village of Granville, 20 acres of forest debris, into the City of Vancouver.

Imagine the courage and the vision of those men. When the incorporation papers came out, it was for a city FIVE MILES WIDE. Some old-timers were amazed. They could understand a city extending from our Post Office to the Ballantyne Pier and back as far as False Creek, but a city from Jericho to Hastings Park, and back two miles into the forest of our Shaughnessy; that was a little too much for some to grasp.

However, an election was held. There was no voters' list; no money in the bank, not even a pen or a pencil or a chair, and the Council met in a room about ten by fourteen; the spectators peered in through the open door. The very first motion at the very first business meeting of the very first Council was that Ottawa should be asked to grant us the 'Government Reserve' as a park. It was a year before the grant was made, but as soon as the Reserve was set aside to become a park, the Council built the Coal Harbour bridge on piles, where our Causeway is, and started a seven mile park road around it. There was already a trail in places, for not even an Indian could walk along the beach when the tide was in; an Indian trail, broken by hand,

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worn smooth by Indian bare feet, and used alike by wild animal and man. White men, with iron axes, slashed it a bit wider. Today that trail is paved, and has become our famed Stanley Park Driveway.

Old Chief Khahtsahlano's home of cedar slabs at the end of the Pipe Line Road, First Narrows, marked by the Royal Engineers in 1863, was occupied by Mr. Khahtsahlano's mother and family—he is here tonight. They were at breakfast when someone struck their abode—bang - bang - bang—and the family rushed out to see who dared to do that. Three or four surveyors with surveying instruments were there, standing; they said they were going to build a road; it would make the Indian property very valuable. They cut a survey notch in the side of the lodge. The ancient home was doomed; it was pulled down to allow the road to pass. By January, 1888, a good deal of the road was completed; then the smallpox came, and the contractor's camp, stables, bedding and clothes were burned. There was delay. Meanwhite the new Governor-General, Lord Stanley, had arrived at Ottawa.

#### NAMING AND OPENING

The 27th of September, sixty years ago, was a lovely day. Cloudless sky, brilliant sunshine, cool summer zephyrs. The procession formed up at Carrall and Powell streets, where the old Maple Tree had stood. The City Band was in a wagon drawn by four horses; the Fire Brigade was in another four-horse wagon. The procession proceeded via Georgia street to the Coal Harbour bridge, and wound along the beautiful driveway twixt the trees, our Park Road; it stopped at Supplejack's Grave, at the Indian clearing 'Chaythoos' at the end of the Pipe Line Road, where there was a grassy spot—about the only grassy spot there was—and where a temporary platform had been erected. Carriages, cabs, buggies, express wagons: everybody came, some on foot; it was almost a public holiday, for many stores closed. The Hon. John Robson (of Robson street), Provincial Secretary, the Mayor of Victoria, Mr. Abbott (of Abbott street), C.P.R. superintendent, David Oppenheimer, the Mayor, and Park Commissioners Alexander, Ferguson, Tatlow and McCraney were there.

Two months previously, Mayor Oppenheimer had requested Sir Donald A. Smith, afterwards Lord Strathcona, to select a name. Sir Donald approached the new Governor-General, Lord Stanley, who acceded to Sir Donald's suggestion. But the name had been kept a profound secret. When Mayor Oppenheimer, in a long and eloquent speech, announced it, and that noble national emblem, the most respected flag on earth, the Union Jack was unfurled; the band played 'God Save the Queen', and the assemblage gave three cheers for Her Majesty Queen Victoria. The Park Commissioners had been appointed the previous day, and Mayor Oppenheimer delivered to them a copy of the by-law creating their office, and concluded his speech by saying:

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"Ladies and Gentlemen: I shall not detain you longer but, in the name of the citizens of Vancouver, I deliver Stanley Park to the care and guardianship of the Park Committee here present, and hope that under their management and that of their successors, we may ultimately realize our present hopes to have the most beautiful park in the world".

A large number of fireworks were let off which, exploding high in the air, released inflated forms of men, animals and ships to the delight of the children. Some went picnicking, others for a drive. That night the new Salvation Army band paraded for the first time, and the day's festivities closed with a ball in the Opera House—Hart's Opera House—actually a glorified shed, on Carrall street, in what is now our Chinatown; it was nearly daylight when the dancing ceased. It had been the greatest gala day Vancouver had ever known.

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There is no greater honour than to be the representative of one's fellows and the trustee of their welfare. The greatest of all accomplishments is to be a good servant; kings and queens aspire to that. The most civilized man, and most intelligent, is he who serves his fellows best. I ask you to examine the roll of the sixty-seven park commissioners who have served us since 1888; you will not find in all Canada a more conscientious, faithful and devoted group of men and women; a group whose axiom has always been that they seek no reward other than the comfort derived from the esteem of their fellow citizens, and the quiet consolation of duty done. Banish the thought that a Commissioner does nothing save attend a meeting once in three weeks; the daily detail is constant and continual. Some have served long years—Mr. Rogers 26; though some calculate it 27; Mr. Holland 19; Mr. Tatlow 18; Mr. Lees 16; Mr. Baynes 15; Mr. Tisdall 15; and Mr. McDonald and Mr. Costello 10.

And, these good men would chide me if I failed to remind you of the skill and devotion of the officials, great and small, from Mr. Avison, the first Park Ranger, to Mr. Dickson; from Mr. Eldon to Mr. Stroyan and Mr. Lefeaux; and from some unknown office lady to Miss Bell.

All honour to you all on this your diamond jubilee day. To those who now serve we urge 'keep on; keep on'; to those who serve no longer, we bow our heads and grasp their hands in gratitude, and to those here representing commissioners who have passed away, we give assurance that their memory is held in fond recollection.

When men, having first provided for their own as is right that they should, turn aside in their path and devote their talents to the common weal, it is fitting and proper that they should receive the

plaudits of their fellows, that others may see their good works and so emulate their example. Birds of the air and beasts of the field, hustle for themselves, and are satisfied when their bellies are full, but with mankind it is different; they sometimes give their lives, in peace or war, for one another. I am but the spokesman for the multitude; it is the voice of the host which you hear: the old pioneer; the newcomer, the aged and the children. In admiration and appreciation of what you have done and what you are now doing, in one grand united acclaim they are cheering:

“Well done! well done! thank you! thank you! thank you!”



**PARK COMMISSIONERS BY YEARS**

Alexander, R. H.....	1888, 1889, 1890
Alsbury, A. T.....	1946, 1947, 1948
Armstrong, F. A.....	1945, 1946
Bartley, Geo.....	1900, 1901
Baynes, E. G.....	1924, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931 1932, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938
Bell-Irving, Dr. R.....	1908, 1909
Blaney, C. E.....	1943, 1944
Brighthouse, S.....	1888, 1889, 1890
Branca, A. E.....	1939, 1940
Brown, Don C.....	1942, 1943, 1944, 1945
Browning, J. M.....	1898, 1899
Calder, W. G.....	1943, 1944
Clark, Mrs. Susie Lane.....	1938, 1939
Coldwell, Chas. A.....	1888
Cornett, J. W.....	1935, 1936
Costello, M.....	1890, 1891, 1894, 1895, 1896, 1897, 1898, 1899, 1900, 1901
Cottrell, G. H.....	1920, 1921, 1922
Cram, Robert.....	1924, 1925
Crone, Fred.....	1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1935, 1936
Dean, E. W.....	1922, 1923
Eldon, George.....	1910, 1911, 1912, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1920
Emery, Bert A.....	1946, 1947, 1948
Endacott, G. M.....	1913, 1914
Ferguson, A. G.....	1888, 1894, 1895
Fewster, P.....	1892, 1893
Fyfe-Smith, J.....	1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1935
Garden, Wm.....	1896, 1897
Gatewood, Dr. C. H.....	1906, 1907, 1908, 1909
Grubbe, E. H.....	1940, 1941
Hobson, C. G.....	1892, 1893
Holland, R. Rowe.....	1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942, 1943, 1944, 1945, 1947, 1948
Horne, J. W.....	1889, 1890, 1891
Hutchings, G. W.....	1914, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918, 1919
Irwin, Everett J.....	1947, 1948
Jones, W. D.....	1921, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928
Kent, H. W.....	1902, 1903
Knowlton, E. S.....	1912, 1913
Lees, A. E.....	1902, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1906, 1907, 1908, 1909, 1910, 1911, 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917.
Logan, M. S.....	1916, 1917, 1918, 1919

Macaulay, R.....	1937, 1938
Mackay, G. G.....	1889, 1890
McConnell, G. S.....	1889, 1890
McCraney, H. P.....	1888
MacDonald, A.....	1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942.
MacDonald, Duncan A.....	1945, 1946
McNeely, C. J.....	1940, 1941
Nelson, Charles.....	1910, 1911
Owen, W. R.....	1910, 1911, 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916
Pettipiece, R. P.....	1936, 1937
Rogers Jonathan.....	1908, 1909, 1910, 1911, 1912, 1913 1915, 1916, 1917 1918, 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934
Rolston, Mrs. F. J.....	1939, 1940, 1941, 1942, 1943, 1944, 1945, 1946
Sharp, G. L. Thornton.....	1936, 1937
Shelly, W. C.....	1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1925, 1926, 1927
Smith, Stanley V.....	1942, 1943
Stewart, D. M.....	1914, 1915
Swan, W. G.....	1938, 1939
Tatlow, R. G.....	1888, 1889, 1890, 1891, 1892, 1893, 1894, 1895, 1896, 1897, 1898, 1899, 1900, 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904, 1905
Thompson, C. W.....	1937, 1938, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942
Thompson, George.....	1944, 1945, 1946, 1947, 1948
Tisdall, C. E.....	1904, 1905, 1906, 1907, 1908, 1909, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934
Townley, Mrs. Alice.....	1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1935
Tracey, Col. T. H.....	1906, 1907
Underhill, Dr. F. T.....	1904, 1905, 1906, 1907
Van Norman, Charles B. K.....	1947, 1948
Webster, Arnold.....	1941, 1942, 1943, 1944, 1945, 1946, 1947, 1948
Weeks, A. C. J.....	1918, 1919, 1920, 1921
Wilson, T.....	1904, 1905

### CHAIRMEN OF THE BOARD BY YEARS

Baynes, E. G.....	1928
Cronc, Fred.....	1929, 1930, 1931
Ferguson, A. G.....	1888, 1894
Fewster, P.....	1892, 1893
Fyfe-Smith, J.....	1934
Holland, R. Rowe.....	1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942, 1943, 1944, 1945, 1947
Horne, J. W.....	1890, 1891
Lees, A. E.....	1910, 1911
MacDonald, Duncan A.....	1946
Owen, W. R.....	1913, 1914, 1915
Rogers, Jonathan.....	1912, 1916, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1920, 1921, 1932, 1933
Shelly, W. C.....	1922, 1923, 1924, 1925, 1926, 1927
Tatlow, R. G.....	1895, 1896, 1897, 1898, 1899, 1900, 1901, 1902, 1903
Thompson, George.....	1948
Tisdall, C. E.....	1904, 1905, 1906, 1907, 1908, 1909
MacKay, G. G.....	1889