

Early Vancouver

Volume One

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2011 Edition (Originally Published 1932)

Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1931-1932.

*A Collection of Historical Data, Maps, and Plans Made with the Assistance of
Pioneers of Vancouver Between March and December 1931.*

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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"Then," said Reverend Canon Sovereign, "the boom came. At one time we counted one hundred and fifty houses being built at one time; we could count that number without moving from one spot. You could hear the hammers humming, almost like a beehive."

"We had a little 'groan box' for an organ, and we started the Sunday school with seventeen children; today we have six hundred.

"We are sorry to go," said Mr. Sovereign. "We have been very happy here. I love the place. There is no place in all Canada where I desire so much to be, but there is a great work before us in the Yukon, and we must go."

Mrs. Sovereign interjected, "You know they have no one up there; it is a missionary field. I'm looking forward to having much to accomplish."

Mrs. Sovereign is one of the daughters of the late Honourable Price Ellison, formerly Minister of Lands and Finance. She and her sister were, or are, the two first white girls of Vernon, B.C.

The Reverend Canon Sovereign gave me the *St. Mark's Church Year Book* for 1929 which includes a brief history of its history, and also an *In Memories* brochure printed in memory of Lieutenant Harold Owen, son of Reverend C.C. Owen, "Killed in Action," 31 January 1916, an especially well written historical biography of this remarkable father and son written by Canon Sovereign as a tribute to both.

JSM

SITE OF ST. MARK'S CHURCH.

"The particular location on which St. Mark's Church stands," said Canon Sovereign, "was selected on account of its commanding position; it is the highest in Kitsilano; the ground slopes in all directions downward. If there is any one man more than another who selected it, it would be Mr. H.J. Gilbert, now living at 2425 West First Avenue. The surrounding area was a wilderness of stumps, and Mr. Gilbert searched around until he found this location, then called on others to come and look at it. We selected it on account of its eminence; we hoped that some day, we should build a church with a tall tower or spire which could be seen for miles around; a landmark."

"I remember," said Mr. Calland of Point Grey Road, "the Reverend Mr. Sovereign coming to me one day when I was sitting on my lawn here, and asking me what I thought of the corner of 2nd Avenue and Larch Street as a site for the new church. I told him I thought it would be a very good site. I was on the committee for selecting the site."

JSM

FOSSILS OF EARLIER AGES IN VANCOUVER.

My attention to the fossils on Kitsilano foreshore was first brought to my attention by Dr. S.J. Schofield, professor of geology in the University of British Columbia, and who lived for several years at the corner of McNichol Avenue and Arbutus Street. One Saturday morning, he invited me to accompany him with a number of university students to collect fossils, and we went along the foreshore between Balsam Street and Trafalgar Street, and searched, hammer in hand, under the cliffs, the low cliffs, at this point. We found many, some with very distinct markings of leaves of trees.

In the summer of 1931, two very large specimens were cut out of this sandstone rock and placed in the Vancouver City Museum, one being long and narrow, the other square; they are very wonderful evidence of the forest growth at this point millions of years ago.

J.S. Matthews