

Early Vancouver

Volume Two

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

2011 Edition (Originally Published 1933)

Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1932.

Supplemental to volume one collected in 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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volunteer carpenters. In due course, the small church was completed, and the selection of the first rector was the next step.

"St. Mark's Church," continued Mr. Gilbert, "has ever been self-supporting, and being an offshoot of Christ Church, always 'low' church. The founders were very jealous of their trust, never accepted outside support, and this determination to succeed without financial assistance other than that they themselves provided, has permitted a certain freedom in the selection of the rector. They were anxious to have a clergyman from Wycliffe College. Rev. A.H. Sovereign, previously curate of Christ Church, was their first and only choice, and until his election to the Bishopric of the Yukon in 1931, was their only rector for twenty-two years. Mr. Sovereign's appointment was not effected without some difficulty, for the Lord Bishop of New Westminster, Bishop Dart, had other plans, nor did he accede to their wishes until it was pointed out to him that the choice they had made was unanimous. His Lordship attended a last meeting to settle the matter, but departed without giving his approving answer; he had in mind another clergyman whom he was especially anxious should receive the incumbency." Mr. Gilbert says, "I accompanied His Lordship to the interurban tram on his return trip to the Royal City, and as he was boarding the tram car he remarked to me, 'Ask Mr. Sovereign to please call upon me at the See House on Wednesday.' At the appointed time, Mr. Sovereign waited on the bishop in New Westminster, and was welcomed with the words, 'Mr. Sovereign, allow me to congratulate the first rector of St. Mark's.'"

"At the first service, November 14th 1909, the Ven. Archdeacon Pentreath inducted the Rev. Mr. Sovereign to his new charge."

"In those days," said Mr. Sovereign as he was leaving for his new field of endeavour as bishop of the Yukon, "the limit of civilization was Vine Street; to the west, and around the church, there was nothing. A single track street railway ran to the foot of Balsam Street produced, and from there St. Mark's was reached by a convenient trail, an old logging road, which ran from the end of the track on the beach diagonally across the land until it reached the church. At night we carried a lantern."

"Then the boom came. On one occasion, we counted, without moving from the spot on which we stood, one hundred and fifty houses all in course of erection at one time; you could hear the hammers humming like a beehive.

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

Mr. H.J. Gilbert was the first churchwarden of St. Thomas', South Vancouver, and also of St. George's, Fairview. He served four years with the Forestry Corps in the Great War. He is still, 1932, teaching Sunday school at St. Mark's. His only son was killed whilst serving with the Seaforth Highlanders (Imperial Regiment) in the Great War.

HADDEN PARK.

Hadden Park is just two blocks long, between Maple Street and Cypress Street, north of Ogden. It was presented to the City of Vancouver by Mr. Harvey Hadden of Vancouver and Nottingham, England. He died about 1929 in England, leaving an unsettled estate which included a large bequest to the City of Vancouver which, so far, 1933, has not materialized. It is understood there was not sufficient residue. He paid \$45,000 for the two blocks of Hadden Park which, with the exception of two lots privately owned, were all owned by the Canadian Pacific Railway. He also donated \$5,000 for the clearing of the land, and its cultivation. This was commenced in 1929.

The manner in which this property came to be donated was as follows:

About 1924, Major J.S. Matthews, long a resident of Kitsilano Beach, was in a downtown office of a surveyor, when he was shown a new map of the Kitsilano Indian Reserve, which had been drawn up dividing it into fifty-foot lots for commercial purposes with railway tracks, etc. It had been prepared at the order of the provincial government, who at that time were not convinced that they had not acquired title to the land by the payment of \$300,000 to the Indians to move away. Major Matthews was astonished at the proposal to turn the area into commercial uses; he had previously been extremely annoyed that the fir and cedar trees had been cut down about 1919 or 1920, for the "sole purpose of providing a few days

work for unemployed returned soldiers.” Major Matthews saw General Odium, publisher of the *Star* newspaper. General Odium said, “prepare me a map of your proposal, and I will publish it.” A few days later a map showing the paucity of parks in the older more densely populated area of the West End, Fairview and Mount Pleasant, appeared on the front page of the *Star*, and described Major Matthews’ proposal. The cutting down of the beautiful cedar and fir trees on the Indian Reserve was a wanton piece of vandalism.

Next Major Matthews brought the matter to the notice of the Kitsilano Ratepayers Association, secured their support, etc., advocated the proposal on every occasion. At one of the ratepayers’ meetings, Mr. S.M. Eveleigh, the pioneer architect, was present, and heard what Major Matthews advocated.

Some considerable time afterwards, Mr. Harvey Hadden visited Vancouver on one of his periodic trips from England. His first visit was in the early nineties, or perhaps late eighties, and he was returning to England by train when he got in conversation with someone (Mr. Harry Abbott, Superintendent, Canadian Pacific Railway, Vancouver) on the train, who told him of the brilliant prospects of the young city of Vancouver which he had just left. Mr. Hadden got off the train, returned to Vancouver, and saw the C.P.R. land again and on his advice bought property, some of which was at the northeast corner of Hastings and Granville Street. He made much money as a result of his investments. He afterwards also constructed in West Vancouver a wonderful forest home known as “Hadden Hall,” a sort of Garden of Eden in the forest. There were no roads in West Vancouver in those days, and the lumber for “Hadden Hall” was taken on horseback—pack horse—up the Capilano Road, and across the suspension bridge at the Canyon as the only means of getting it there.

Mr. Hadden’s married life was not a happy one, and this probably had something to do with the manner of his behaviour, his actions and his bequests.

But on Mr. Hadden’s visit in 1929 he again renewed the friendship of Mr. S.M. Eveleigh, with whom he had had long business associations and had been architect of the Hadden block on the above mentioned property, and informed Mr. Eveleigh that he would like to do something for Vancouver which had done so well for him in his real estate investments. Major Matthews’ proposal that the Indian Reserve should be a park, and should be connected by a park to Kitsilano Beach, and that the ultimate goal of building a waterfront promenade from Kitsilano Beach to Jericho Beach should be always kept in view, was explained to Mr. Hadden by Mr. Eveleigh. The upshot of it all was that Mr. Hadden bought the two connecting blocks and gave them to the city.

At the suggestion of Major Matthews, the Kitsilano Ratepayers Association then endeavoured to secure knighthood for Mr. Harvey Hadden, but after taking the necessary steps, were informed by Thos. Mulvey, Under Secretary of State, Ottawa, 10 March 1930, 4492, GS/BG that “if the petition were transmitted” (to the King) “by the Canadian Government it would have to be accompanied by a recommendation of the government, and any such recommendation would be out of harmony with the will of Parliament.”

Despite attempts to secure for the Archives of Vancouver a photograph of its benefactor, so far this has been impossible of accomplishment.

INDIAN RESERVE.

Major Matthews endeavoured for many years to get the Indian Reserve allocated for park use. He met with considerable opposition. As an instance Mayor L.D. Taylor was not favourable, but offered, so it is said, it as a possible site to the agents of the Ford Motor car for an assembling plant site. The Harbour Board of Commissioners also wanted it for a deep sea vessel lumber loading yard, and the Provincial Minister of Lands, Mr. T.D. Pattullo, personally told Major Matthews that he was opposed to it, its use as a park, and publicly stated in a speech before the Provincial House, that “there were people in Vancouver who thought it should be allocated for a park use, but that he did not agree.”

Major Matthews then appealed to the newly formed Town Planning Commission, and was overjoyed to see in their first report issued, that they agreed with his recommendation, and that the new City Hall should be built at the northern end of the Burrard Bridge (proposed) overlooking the Indian Park and English Bay, “one of the most superb locations for a city hall in all North America.”