

Early Vancouver

Volume Three

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Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1933-1934.

Supplemental to Volumes One and Two collected in 1931-1932.

About the 2011 Edition

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CONVERSATION WITH MR. R.W. HARRISON, 778 GILFORD STREET, 6 JUNE 1933.

He is night engineer at the B.C. Box Company, Marpole; his wife was decorated with the O.B.E. for services in the Great War; also membership in Order of St. John of Jerusalem.

Mr. Harrison had written a letter to *The Province* in which he mentioned "Mr. Sievwright, who camped in Coal Harbour in 1858."

CARIBOO MINERS CAMP ON ENGLISH BAY, 1858.

"I went to the Cariboo in 1906," said Mr. Harrison, "Keithley Creek and other Creeks; I was a young fellow then, just out from Leicestershire; young, impressionable, took everything in; there was little to do in that isolated place, no newspaper, no radio, no phone; all there was to do of an evening was listen to the old fellows talk."

MR. SIEVEWRIGHT AT SECOND BEACH, 1858.

"Mr. Jimmy Sievwright I met at Keithley Creek. He told me he left Scotland in 1852 for California, got across the Atlantic on a sailing ship; it took two months, and I never could convince him that it would not take the same time to cross it going back again. How he got to Victoria I don't know, nor how he got across to the mainland, but he did tell me there were thousands of men at Victoria on their way to the Cariboo; they were crossing the gulf in all manner of vessels; some in whip saw boats they built themselves in Victoria, and some of them who started to cross were never heard of again; it was presumed they drowned. Anyway, Jimmy Sievwright got across to the mainland."

FRASER RIVER IN FLOOD. MOSQUITOES, 1858.

"After Jimmy crossed they could not get up the Fraser; it was in flood, the banks were swampy and very wet; the mosquitoes were awful; so he and many others decided to wait until the water subsided a bit, and to avoid the mosquitoes and find a dry camping ground, went into English Bay, and camped at what is now Second Beach; that was 1858. He told me there was quite a settlement of men there, all bound for the Cariboo; Jimmy said, 'It was a nice place to camp.' He was never at Burrard Inlet or English Bay again."

(Note: it would be a nice place to camp. The Indians called English Bay Beach Ay-ay-yul-shun, "soft under foot." If they camped at Second Beach instead there was a trail through to Coal Harbour on which the Indians dragged their canoes in stormy weather; lots of deer, grouse, fish, duck, clams, good water from creek.

The campers may have learned something there which may have later caused John Morton's famous trip to Coal Peninsula (Stanley Park), etc. in 1862, with an Indian as guide, in search of potter's clay. (See "The First Settlers on Burrard's Inlet.")

JOHN MCDUGALL.

"John McDougall, who cleared the forest of part of the 'West End' of Vancouver, and built the New Road from New Westminster to Vancouver, now Kingsway, I knew very well. He came back to Barkerville during the war. He and others then sunk a shaft at Jack of Club's Creek; they struck nothing. He was living by himself in a cabin when he died; very interested in mining, but a little childish towards the last." (He died in March 1933 at Quesnel.)

KEITHLEY CREEK. JIMMY SIEVEWRIGHT.

"I remember the old fellow's conversations very well; there was little else happening up Keithley Creek way to remember in 1906. Then in 1907 when he was 77, he returned to Paisley, Scotland, his hometown, and did not return; I did not hear of him again. I sent his photograph to England, then, have just got it back; here it is. He never married, had no descendants."

PIONEER VIRILITY.

"To show you the virility of our pioneers. I was pack training for Vieth and Borland or one such work in the Cariboo for twenty years. Jimmy and I rode out on the same pack train as he was leaving for Scotland in 1907; he was 77. He rode that 20 miles, ate his supper, got pie-eyed" (drunk) "—that was the correct

thing to do at Quesnel Forks in those days—sung and danced, rode off the next morning on the stage quite all right, happy as a sandboy, and all at 77.”

NEVER LEFT KEITHLEY CREEK 46 YEARS.

“An extraordinary thing was that Jimmy had never left Keithley Creek for 46 years; not even twenty miles down trail to Quesnel Forks, where there was a mining recorder’s office, government agent, hotel, bar, everything, a natural place to go for excitement. He went up the Fraser in 1858, passed through Quesnel Forks in 1861, went twenty miles on to Keithley Creek, and stayed there until 1907; never once down trail even those twenty miles.”

PIONEER VIRILITY, ANOTHER INSTANCE.

“Jimmy was cook, and at his age, 77, I have seen him do this. He would get up at 5:30 a.m., get the breakfast for the haying crew—there were six of us—at 8 a.m. he would be in the hayfield, then at 11:30 a.m. he would go and get dinner, and then come back again pitching hay or using a scythe until 5 p.m., working like a little trooper, then get our supper and wash up his dishes. Wonderful at 77. They don’t make men like that now.

“Jimmy had been a calico printer; his nickname was ‘Calico.’”

“BACK IN CANADA.”

“The old fellows always talked about Canada as though it was a separate country to British Columbia, and so, in their day, I suppose it was; they always talked about ‘back in Canada,’ and ‘going back to Canada.’”

BOB (ROBERT) BORLAND.

“Jimmy used to make Bob Borland mad. Bob was wealthy, Jimmy poor. Jimmy would be telling about the early days, and Bob would interject, and Jimmy would remark, fatherly like, ‘Oh, that was before your time, Bob, you won’t remember that,’ and Bob had to shut up. Bob went to the Cariboo in 1862, and died at Keithley Creek, December 1922.”

JACK EDWARDS; “ISER” NEWALL.

“Jack Edwards had the ‘Aurora’ Claim, Conklin’s Gulch, near Barkerville, and also later another ‘Aurora’ Claim at Cedar Creek. He died in the Westminster Asylum about 1908 or 1909. ‘Iser’ Newall told me he walked across the plains to California in 1854, and walked barefoot; he had no shoes until he reached California. The photo of him was taken when he was 84 in 1910; he died in the Old Men’s Home, Kamloops.

“All those photos, Sievwright, Borland, Newall, Edwards, were taken by Thos. Graham, brother of Dr. Graham who now lives” (1933) “on 4th Avenue, Vancouver, in 1907. They were taken on the Keithley Ranch flat; I sent them to England the same year, and have just got them back.

“There is a narrative somewhere written by Jimmy Moore; Dr. W.C. McKechnie of Vancouver knows all about Jimmy Moore; it is called, I think, ‘Pioneers of Pioneers.’ They are really Jimmy Sievwright’s experiences; Jimmy told the yarns, Jimmy Moore wrote them down.”

THE RANCH, KEITHLEY CREEK.

“The buildings behind Bob Borland in this photo are—on the left, the bunkhouse; in centre, with window, the blacksmith shop; and part of the assay office shows.