

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

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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The first thing we bought was tobacco, we had been smoking a weed called kinakanic mixed with tea, which is a poor substitute. We were in perfect health, the blacksmith's gout and rheumatism had disappeared and he looked as fit and clean as a four-year-old; in fact the trip had completely cured him. All through we had had no sickness, and after two weeks out the mosquitoes ceased to worry us. They were with us, but their sting was harmless. We ate everything, leaves and roots, bark rind and sorrel, waded streams that were so swift that often we were drenched to the waist, slept in the open and suffered no discomforts. We had no tents and to keep the rain from the face we cut saplings, pointed them at both ends, stuck them in the ground and covered them with a piece of flour sack, which formed a hood.

Our next move was a Thanksgiving feast, the cocktail consisting of a bottle of good old Hudson's Bay rum, which two out of our seven refused; even then it didn't go round. Dundreary's speech was a classic; using the choicest English with Chesterfieldian grace, he threw delicately scented bouquets extolling our manhood and great fortitude in our trying experience, not omitting his own perilous encounter with Madame Bear and the cubs. I have but a hazy recollection of the feast, for I went down in the tenth round and did not come back, but not before I saw the blacksmith, who presided, carried away by two stalwart Indians who attended the celebration for what they could pick up.

I will not tell the quantity of the ardent offered at the shrine of the Merry God. Here we feasted on beans and bacon for seven days. Each day brought knots of gaunt hungry men returning from the mines and warning everybody not to start with less than five hundred dollars each. There was not work to be got and supplies were at famine prices. This was dispiriting news after our weary trip through the wilderness and after our experience, we were easy to discourage and ill-fit to face starvation. We ceased to have dreams. With sad hearts we turned to retrace our steps to the Coast by way of the river trail, Lillooet, and the lakes, via Harrison to Westminster. Our journey across country had no bad effects on our health, but the spirit of adventure was bruised and the romance plucked from us. We felt subdued and sad like a retreating army. Yet it had chastened our lives, inspired our philosophy.

Perhaps it is worth while to say a few words of our friend of the head of navigation. A few days after we left, he chartered a sloop, loaded her with his spoil and sailed for the land of liberty, a place then called Bellingham Bay, selling his merchandise and indulging in a prolonged spree. After this, his occupations were devious and despicable. He was runner and crimp for a sailors' boarding house. His next walk in life was proprietor and manager of a squaw dance hall where he met his Nemesis. An item in a Puget Sound paper, read in this fashion: "Body of unknown man found dead on sawdust heap, badly cut. The murder supposed to be committed by Indians. At the inquiry it was elicited that he was last seen alive in a squaw dance house very quarrelsome." Here lay the foul remains of our pseudo packer and forwarder, rancher, etc., etc., who was never anything but a beachcomber and pirate.

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH MRS. H.A. CHRISTIE, 1853 BROADWAY WEST, 26 JULY 1934.

(Mrs. Christie, née Margaret Mannion, an accomplished lady of much natural grace is the eldest child of the late Alderman Joseph Mannion, an early and prominent pioneer of Granville and Vancouver, and is the wife of Dr. Harvey Anson Christie, M.D., practicing in the Peace River, formerly of Lillooet, Cranbrook, and Ocean Falls. She was born in Granville in 18-?)

JOSEPH MANNION OF GRANVILLE.

"Father was born at Ballindine, County Mayo, Ireland, March 17, 1839; his mother's maiden name was Cradock. He was educated at the Brothers' School" (Roman Catholic) "at Ballindine, and when, in 1909, whilst we were on a tour of the British Isles, he took us to see his old school and church. We endeavoured to ascertain something of his ancestors, but were informed that it had not been the custom in the early years to keep these records in Ireland. However, he had two brothers, Edward, who married, and whose widow still lives in London, England, and James, now deceased, and a sister Marion, who married a Mr. Dewing. The family moved from Ireland to Liverpool when my father was a youth.

"When he came to B.C., I do not know, but it was when he was about twenty-two, that is, about 1862, via the Panama Isthmus, and on the same boat or boats which brought Mrs. Fortune of the Fortune Ranch" (see Fortune Diary in Provincial Archives) "and at first, he worked in Victoria at anything offering; then he tried his luck as a placer miner in the Cariboo Gold Fields—at Lillooet, I think, although they called it Parsonville, I believe, at that time—and elsewhere; carried his blankets on his back in company with the rest of the adventurers of that excitement, had poor luck or none at all, and returned. What followed, I am uncertain. Finally, he acquired the Granville Hotel—Lot 3, Block 2, Granville Townsite—operated it during the C.P.R. construction days—it was a sort of semi-official post office, prior to the establishment of an official post office in Granville, and was destroyed in the Great Fire, and he finally disposed of it.

"Father had extensive interests in and about the lower mainland. For instance, in addition to the Granville Hotel, he possessed about 300 acres at Deep Cove, Bowen island, used as a summer residence, the grounds overlooking Deep Cove. After the Great Fire of 1886 he went to live there and took the children with him; they had a governess. It is part of the present estate, owned by the Union Steamship Company and used as a tourist resort. The old ranch house is part of the present Mount Strahan Hotel; nearby the old site of Mannion's brick kiln, where many of the bricks used in the first buildings of Vancouver were made. He also had a small steamer, the *Saturna*, which operated to and fro between Vancouver and Bowen Island." (See W.A. Grafton.) "He possessed extensive acreage at Magee, still more acreage in the neighbourhood of the Gladstone Inn on Westminster Road, now Kingsway, and also the Gladstone Inn itself. At one time he lived in a fine residence on Oppenheimer Street, just west of Main Street, but, of late years, he resided at 1156 Burnaby Street."

THE MOODYVILLE TICKLER.

"Father took some interest in political and civic matters—he was an Alderman of the City Council in 1887-8—but his tastes ran more to literature, reading, etc., as an instance of which his preservation of one of the copies of *The Moodyville Tickler* indicates his literary astuteness. This tiny sheet, the first newspaper on Burrard Inlet" (20 July 1878) "would, in the distant future, become a historical curiosity. So far as is known, this small four-page publication, published at the 'Old Mill,' Moodyville, is the only copy now extant, and, while not of much historical value, is the precursor of all the great newspapers of Vancouver." (Note: in Mr. Mannion's writings are found words now infrequently used, such as "trottoir," "leman," and "monody.")

CAULFEILDS. MRS. BALFOUR KER.

"Mrs. Balfour Ker, whose husband was an early proprietor of Skunk Cove, now Cypress Park, was a skilled artist in oils; these are her small paintings of scenes on Burrard Inlet and English Bay. The Balfour Kers were rather impecunious in those days, and Mrs. Ker sold her paintings to 'help out.' Father bought much of her work—another indication of his interest in art rather than political matters.

"The children of our family are Margaret (myself), the eldest." (De Vere, a son by second wife distinguished himself in Christchurch, New Zealand. See file.) "At an early age, about three years, I was sent to the convent in New Westminster; scholastic institutions on Burrard Inlet in those days were restricted to the Hastings Mill School, and remained there until I was in my teens. Then came Clarence, deceased; next, Nora, now Mrs. Allan G. Wilmot, of 312 Light Street, Woodstock, Ontario" (who has two sons, Gerald and Allan) "and lastly, Gerald, deceased." (See photo No. ?)

AN EARLY BOATING ACCIDENT.

"Clarence and Gerald, when respectively about 16 and 14, together with a younger brother of the late Norman Sawyers, left Vancouver in a row boat for our Bowen Island estate; they were never heard of again. It was known that they reached and passed Point Atkinson."

DEATH OF MANNION.

"Father died at Lillooet on September 12, 1918, aged 79, and is buried there. He died in our home; we were living there at the time.

"He was a tall, handsome man of robust frame; Charles Weigand once told me that, in early days, he was the handsomest man on Burrard Inlet; well educated and well informed, and accustomed to be consulted by others on affairs."

(Note: Mrs. W.E. Draney, daughter of Angus Fraser, says, "He was a genial gentleman who carried himself with propriety; not exactly a leader among men on account of his somewhat retiring disposition.")

THE "MAYOR OF GRANVILLE."

"He was colloquially known as the 'Mayor of Granville,' although, of course, no such office existed.

"This photo, No. ?, taken by Hacking, before 1909, shows the profusion of hair—mouse-coloured, he himself jokingly referred to it. Grey-blue eyes, imperial beard, and of a healthy, not ruddy, complexion. He appears in the oil painting by John Innes, of the first meeting of the First City Council of Vancouver.

"My children are Hubert Mannion, born 24 May 1911, and Nora Patricia, born 13th March 1914; both born in Vancouver."

Note: Mr. Mannion's first wife was an Indian, and their daughter, Mrs. H.A. Christie, was at the age of three years, sent to the Catholic convent in New Westminster, and educated there. They also had a son, De Vere, now supposed to be in Australia—an engineer. His Indian wife having died, Mr. Mannion married again, and of the other three children, two of them, both sons, were drowned. The third, Nora, now Mrs. Wilmot of Woodstock, Ontario, has issue.

After the Great Fire of 1886, Mr. Mannion went to live at his farm at Deep Cove, Bowen Island, where the children had a governess (no school available.) This farm later known as Terminal Farm—Terminal Steam Ship Company, Capt. J.A. Cates—is now a tourist resort of Union Steamship Company.

17 SEPTEMBER 1934.

NATIVE DAUGHTER DIES.

A native daughter of British Columbia who had resided in this province all her life, Mrs. Lucy Silvey Watson, aged 75, of Reid Island, died suddenly early this morning, according to advice received in Vancouver.

Mrs. Watson is survived by her husband, Joseph Watson, of Reid Island; four sons, Domingo and Antony Silvey of Reid Island, and Joseph and Henry of Jervis Inlet; and three daughters, Mrs. J. Walker of Vancouver, Mrs. H. Buss of Egmont, B.C., and Mrs. F. Beale of Vancouver.

Funeral arrangements will be announced later.

(From a newspaper of 13 August 1934.)

GENEALOGY OF MRS. LUCY SILVEY WATSON.

Residence: Reid Island.

Place of birth: Sechelt, B.C.

Avocation: Fisherman, Sechelt B.C. Joseph Silvey of Granville, 1870.

Married at Sechelt, B.C. (Catholic.)

Bride: Lucy Anthony; Bridegroom: Joseph Silvey of Granville, 1870.

CHILDREN.

Domingo Silvey, Gastown, Vancouver, B.C., 1874.

Mary A. Silvey, Gastown, Vancouver, B.C., 24 May 1877.

Joe Silvey, Reid Island.

Henry Silvey, Reid Island.

Lena Rose Silvey, Reid Island.