

Early Vancouver

Volume Three

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2011 Edition (Originally Published 1935)

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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19 JUNE 1933 – DAILY NEWS-ADVERTISER. NEWSPAPERS.

Memo of conversation with George H. Miller of Hugh A. Fraser and Co., real estate, Hastings Street West. (Member Vancouver Pioneers Association.)

Mr. Miller said:

"You know the old Gurney Cab stables on Westminster Avenue where they were going to stable the horses for the street cars. When you showed that lantern slide picture the other night before the Pioneers it reminded me that in 1890 I used to go there every morning to get the bundle of *News-Advertisers* for my paper route. I had all east of Westminster Avenue, and had just thirty newspapers to deliver.

"Used to get up at 5.30 a.m. in the morning and get back about 8 a.m. in time to go to school; another boy had west of Westminster Avenue. I had to walk too, no bicycle, could not use a bicycle, no roads, then too it was dark, no lights then, couldn't ride a bicycle.

"I started east up a trail with a single plank, afterwards Front Street, now First Avenue East, crossed a creek—the slaughterhouse was up there—then followed the trail up to the North Arm Road, now corner Kingsway and Fraser Avenue, where Henry's Nurseries were, then back to the corner of 9th Avenue, now Broadway, and Westminster Avenue, now Main Street, and on home and to school. I walked about 6 or 8 miles, and made fifty cents a week. Westminster Avenue was the western boundary of my route; the woods were the other boundaries, and thirty papers in all to deliver."

(Note: see also Roy Oben, now postmaster and school teacher, Lasqueti Island, late of Central Park, son of Phillip Oben.)

KERRISDALE. MAGEE. HUGH MAGEE.

The original crown grant of D.L. 194 on the North Arm of the Fraser River in Point Grey to Hugh Magee is dated Victoria 13th December 1889. It shows W.S. Gore as surveyor-general, F.G. Vernon as Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works, and Hugh Nelson, Lieutenant-Governor. It is in the Land Registry Office, Vancouver. A map is attached of which this is a tracing.

It conveys one hundred and ninety-one acres to Hugh Magee for one hundred and ninety-one dollars.

The reservations are the usual for roads, canals, bridges, towing paths or other works of public utility or convenience, not exceeding one twentieth of the whole, and there is a reservation protecting lands on which buildings are erected, or gardens, or "other for the more convenient occupation of any such buildings." The right to mine gold and silver ore is reserved.

The grant includes a small island right in the centre of the southern boundary, separate from the mainland by a narrow strip of water.

Magee's preemption plan in original copy only.

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH EX-REEVE W.H. LAMBKE OF POINT GREY, 30 OCTOBER 1934.

EARLY KERRISDALE.

"Kerrisdale was named after McKinnon's house, now occupied by Dr. Pearson, who has an office on Granville Street; the house bore the name 'Kerrisdale.'" (See photo No. ?)

"I went to live at Kerrisdale, or rather Wilson Road, now West 41st Avenue, in 1911.

"The first resident at Kerrisdale must have been a Mr. Bell. He had about half an acre of land there. He was the first to establish at the point where the business section, at the corner of West 41st Avenue and West Boulevard, now is. At the time he went there the forest grew on all sides. The Canadian Pacific Railway had, in 1904, completed the steam railway line to Steveston via Eburne, now Marpole, and were running a daily train on a single track through a slit in the forest. The Wilson Road was opened up, just a

trail of mud in winter and of dust in summer. All around was a wilderness of forest with an occasional bit of clearing with stumps and brush. Bell built a very modest building with a grocery and feed store downstairs and living quarters upstairs, and then he applied for a post office. It was a queer thing to do, we thought, for at that time there were not more than half a dozen settlers within a mile or two miles; anyway, the post office was established. At that time I have seen bears ambling across the Wilson Road.

"Then, as the place grew, finally the first primitive single line street car track was laid from the C.P.R. railway, which had been electrified and taken over by the B.C. Electric Railway. The shuttle car ran from the interurban to Dunbar Street, and of course that gave Bell a start.

"He finally gave an option, during the real estate boom days, on this property for \$60,000, and then, after signing the papers, regretted it, and thought he ought to have got at least \$70,000. He was very nervous lest the man with the option should take it up, but it was never taken up, and the decline came, and he first mortgaged it, and then lost it entirely; afterwards went to live on Earl's Road, and is now, I believe, in very humble financial circumstances.

"As I have said, Bell's original building on the southwest corner of Wilson Road" (41st Avenue) "and the C.P.R. line to Steveston, was a very modest building painted dark green with white trimmings, and absolutely devoid of ornamentation, verandah; indeed, I am not certain that there was a sidewalk, even of boards. It was set in a frame of forest, and was reached by turning down Wilson Road, then a muddy track through the stumps, from the road to the North Arm, now Granville Street, which was not much better. All around the store was stumps in second growth and an odd boulder or two. It was from such a humble beginning that a splendid little business settlement at Kerrisdale, now so brilliantly lit at night with electric and neon signs, paved, a splendid street car service, etc., etc., originated."

MAPLE GROVE PARK. BOWSER PARK.

Maple Grove Park on Yew Street between 50th and 53rd avenues, was formerly (about 1920-1925) called Bowser Park; either after Frank Bowser, or his brother Hon. W.J. Bowser, Prime Minister of B.C., but, says Mr. Paton, "Somebody didn't like Bowser's politics, so they changed it to Maple Grove."

Authority, Reeve J.A. Paton of Point Grey.

EXCERPT FROM *THE BUZZER* (B.C. ELECTRIC), 15 SEPTEMBER 1933

WHO'S WHO ON THE CARS. ALEX. McDONALD, MOTORMAN NO. 165.

There are a number of Alex. McDonalds among the 900 motormen and conductors on Vancouver city lines, but this Alex. is the flower lover, the man who spends every minute of his spare time in his own garden, in other people's gardens or in the city's gardens and parks business, by virtue of his office of park commissioner.

Motorman Alex. McDonald was born on a farm in Inverness, Scotland, and started early in life working for the North British railway as signalman. He came to Vancouver in 1908 and for two years was employed driving a team for the city.

He started as motorman on the street cars in 1910 and for the past 23 years has operated regularly on Vancouver streets. In 1916 he took an active part in the organization of the South Vancouver Horticultural Society, and from then on has maintained an active interest in public matters.

He served for two years on the police commission and for five years on the council in South Vancouver, and in the latter capacity was responsible for much park development in the municipality.

MCDONALD PARK.

The five acres of park property grew to 300 acres during Alex's terms of office, and it is well known that his zeal in advocating open spaces for the people was mainly responsible for this result.