

Early Vancouver

Volume Six

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

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Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1940-1945.

Supplemental to volumes one, two, three, four and five collected in 1931, 1932, 1934, 1939 and 1944.

About the 2011 Edition

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Ridley's photo of Gastown, date unknown. "My parents told me it was thus when I was born, i.e. 1875. H. E. Ridley, 1933.



Portugese Joe's.

Curve of beach.
Vine maple bush.

Trail to west

Lamppost, ^{here,} pile of
May be Tom Fisher's
Hand rail. Cedar shakes
Fence on edge, bank, water.
"Hole in the wall" Saloon.
Lamppost
Children.

Sullivan's store
Blair's Saloon
Shed to hotel.

Granville Hotel

Young hemlock
Telegraph office

Boy's rocking horse
Prov. Gov^t Bldg.

Believed to be
Miller house.

Identification incomplete,
J. S. Matthews, 1933

Steps to hotel.

Maple tree
Cuallip's verandah.

Box protection.
Verandah posts.

Entrance, Deighton.

Item # EarlyVan_v6_019

MEMO OF CONVERSATION, 14 SEPTEMBER 1943, WITH MRS. JAMES WALKER, 721 CAMBIE STREET, ELDEST CHILD OF JOSEPH SILVEY, OR "PORTUGUESE JOE NO. 1" AND HERSELF THE FIRST CHILD OF EUROPEAN PARENTAGE (HALF INDIAN) BORN ON THE SITE OF THE CITY OF VANCOUVER, 4 JULY 186?

Mrs. Walker lives in one room, very neat; cooks her own meals on a small gas range; has lived there "for years," and looks very well; a very gracious kindly lady. Her maiden name was Marian Elizabeth Silvey.

JOSEPH SILVEY. SALOON AT BREW'S POINT. SALOON IN GRANVILLE.

Mrs. Walker said: "The inscription you have written out to go under the re-photograph of my father" (Joseph Silvey) "is quite correct, except that you haven't got that he had a saloon at Brockton Point, and he had one before that in Gastown." (See evidence in "Streets Ends case," 1905, red bound book.)

ORIGIN OF SILVEY FAMILY. STEVE ANDERSON.

"And about his mother, she was Scotch; they were British people; there was a war in Portugal, and the British soldiers were down there, and some of them liked Portugal and stayed there, and that's how she was down in Portugal; I don't know all the details, but my grandmother Silvey was Scotch; so was my father; yes, he had sandy hair, just as you say in your writing for the re-photograph. Father's saloon at Brockton Point was where Mr. Brew, the Customs officer lived, nine o'clock gun. My sister Josephine died in 1935, but her husband, Steve Anderson, he's living, but he is in hospital. I don't know which one, but I think General Hospital.

"Father had a partner, Douglas; he had a schooner; and Douglas' wife was Maria; she was half Indian and half Hawaiian."

MARRIAGE OF MRS. WALKER, NÉE MARIAN ELIZABETH SILVEY. BIRTH OF MARIAN E. SILVEY. FIRST BABY, EUROPEAN PARENT.

Major Matthews: The certificate of your marriage says you were 20 at the time of your wedding, 15th July 1883. If that is so, then you must have been born at Gastown July 4th 1863. That's long before "Gassy Jack" came. "Gassy Jack" wasn't the first to settle in Gastown. But what I want to find out is when you were born; what date, what year. You said you were only 16 when you were married, but the clergyman put down 20. If you were 20 then your father (Joseph Silvey) must have settled in Gastown in or before 1863, but if you were only 16 then he probably came later. I want to find out who was the first man to settle in Gastown. "Gassy Jack" wasn't; do you suppose it was Joseph Silvey?

Mrs. Walker: "The minister said, 'She's not twenty; she's just a child,' when we went to be married, but James Walker's stepfather, he said to the minister, 'Yes, she is twenty,' and the minister said he did not think she was that old, and I was too young, but Kern" (sic), "that's James Walker's stepfather, he said he had known me since I was a baby, which was a lie because he knew me only since I went to Reid Island."

BIRTH OF MRS. STEVE ANDERSON, NÉE JOSEPHINE SILVEY. MRS. PETER SMITH. MRS. HARRY TRIM.

"The way I know how old Josephine was, she was born in Gastown too, and that when she was born I was taken out of the house by Mrs. Peter Smith and Mrs. Harry Trim. They took me out that night to stay at their house in Gastown, and when I came back in the morning there was a baby on the bed, a little baby, and it was Josephine. And I tried to pull it off so as to have it walk with me like a doll, and they told me I could not do that; that it could not walk yet. Then, just after, Mother" (Khaal-tin-aht) "died. Afterwards I asked my father how old I was when Josephine was born—he would tell me things—and he said, 'You were three years old, my dear.'"

SALOON IN GASTOWN.

"Father sold his saloon in Gastown to hand loggers."

Note: a very good photo, not yet indexed, of Mrs. James Walker, was taken 20 August 1943 by W.J. Moore; negative in City Archives. Mrs. Walker has a copy; she is wearing an imitation pearl necklace, one long and one short loops.

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH MRS. JAMES WALKER, 721 CAMBIE STREET, ELDEST DAUGHTER OF JOSEPH SILVEY OF GRANVILLE, "PORTUGUESE JOE" No. 1, WHOM I CALLED UPON THIS MORNING, 30 SEPTEMBER 1943.

JOSEPH SILVEY. LUCY KWATLEEMATT, HIS SECOND WIFE.

Major Matthews said to Mrs. Walker: The Vital Statistics branch, Victoria, have sent me a photostat of certificate of marriage No. 41329, dated October 1872, which shows your father's name spelt as "Joseph Silvy," Silvy, not Silvey, and records that he was born at Piepika Island, Portugal; was a fisherman, 38 years old in 1872, and was the son of John Silvy and Francesca Hyacintha, his wife, and at the date of his marriage to Lucy Kwatleematt at Shishels, which I suppose is Sechelt, he was living on Howe Sound, Pasley Island I suppose, as a fisherman. It says that Lucy Kwatleematt, I think that should be Kwatleemaht, was 15, and that her father and mother were Andrew Kwakoil and Agatha, and that the marriage took place at Sechelt on 20th September 1872, and Rev. Father Paul Durieu, O.M.I., was priest. What do you think of it?

SLOOP, *MORNING STAR*.

Mrs. Walker: "I know. I was there. We went up in the *Morning Star*. I wasn't at the wedding; I was too young and too small for that, but I was there and saw what was going on, and so was Josephine" (her sister.) "Josephine was just a little thing, about so high" (gesturing with fingers of hand and stooping to about eighteen inches off ground); "Josephine wasn't a year old; that's why Father got married again; two little girls and no one to look after them."

SECHELT, B.C.

Major Matthews: (surprised) You say you were up at the wedding at Sechelt when your father married Lucy, his second wife. Can you remember as far back as September 1872; why, you must have been pretty small!

PASLEY ISLAND.

Mrs. Walker: "Sure, I can remember, I've got a good memory; my people think I have a wonderful memory and there wasn't much to remember in those days."

Major Matthews: Well, if your father married again in September 1872, and Josephine was less than year old—her death certificate says she died 27th March 1930, and was 57 years, 11 months and 27 days old then—then she must have been born on Pasley Island, 1st April 1872.

Presuming you were about four years old, then you must have been born in Gastown about 1868 (July 4th). How old were you when you held the hammer on the other side of the boards your father was hammering nails into when he was building the *Morning Star* at Brockton Point?

***MORNING STAR*.**

Mrs. Walker: "I held a big hammer on the other side of the board for him when he was hammering the nails. Oh, I was a big girl, then, five or six" (years.)

SILVEY'S SALOON IN GASTOWN (GRANVILLE). HAND LOGGERS.

"Father told me that the day I was born he had a celebration. He got a bottle of brandy, and a big barrel of beer, and invited the hand loggers. It was an American holiday, July 4th, I think."

JOSEPHINE SILVEY. CHARLES RALPE (SIC.)

"When Josephine was first married she was Mrs. Charlie Ralpe" (sic); "he had a store at Chemainus; he died. Mrs. McDonald" (sic) "who lives out Trout Lake way, Grandview, she is Ralpe's daughter; the oldest. Then when he died, she married Steve Anderson; he's living in hospital now."

MRS. STEVE ANDERSON, NÉE JOSEPHINE SILVEY.

The records of Mountain View Cemetery, City Hall, show that Mrs. Josephine Anderson died 27 March 1930, aged 57 years, 11 months, 27 days; was buried by the Vancouver Funeral Company (out of business, 1943), 29 March 1930 (heart failure) and her grave is in the 1919 Addition, Mountain View Cemetery (opposite old South Vancouver Municipal Hall), and it states she was "BORN IN VANCOUVER," which is, obviously, a mistake, as there was no such place as Vancouver in 1872. She was born on Pasley Island. This indicates how unreliable such records can be.

Another instance. Her sister, Elizabeth, marriage certificate 37587, 15 July 1883, is shown as being born in New Westminster. Actually, she was born on Burrard Inlet, because at the time of her birth, there was no place called "Gastown," Granville, nor Vancouver, so I presume they just put down "New Westminster" where she was registered.

See photo of Joseph Silvey, taken to be copied. 2 October 1943. J.S.M.

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH MRS. JAMES WALKER, DAUGHTER OF JOSEPH SILVEY OF "GASTOWN," NOW RESIDING AT 721 CAMBIE STREET, AND WHO VERY KINDLY PAID US A VISIT AT THE CITY ARCHIVES THIS AFTERNOON, 12 OCTOBER 1943.

CHIEF KI-AP-I-LA-NO.

Mrs. Walker said: "I remember Chief Ki-ap-i-la-no. He was a great big man with a voice like a microphone on a loudspeaker; he spoke loud. Anyway, that's how it seemed to me; I was little. And he had long white hair; it was bobbed" (gesturing with her hand to indicate that it was cut off straight all around the nape of the neck) "and white, and he always had a smile. He beckoned to me to come to him, but I would not go, but afterwards I did, and he took me up on one arm, and held me to his breast. Oh, he was a nice man; everyone liked him. He was not bald-headed; his hair was *thick*, and snow white, and that's what I remember of him. I think that was at Brockton Point—you see, after my father sold out at Gastown we went to Brockton Point—I don't remember us moving; I must have been asleep or something because I don't remember us moving, but I remember after we got there. We lived facing this way" (towards the east) "and Chief Ki-ap-i-la-no used to come over to Brockton Point, and brought his little tent with him, and he had his wife, old lady, and they had a little tent by the beach, beside my father's house. That's the last time I saw him. We went away then; we went to Vancouver Island."

PASLEY ISLAND. WHALING CAMP. CAPT. DOUGLAS'S SCHOONER. JOSEPHINE SILVEY.

"Perhaps you are right. Perhaps it was Pasley Island where Josephine was born, and now Bowen Island. I know it was a whaling camp. I can remember Capt. Douglas's big schooner coming in. He had two boys, Georgie, and I think the other was Alfred; they were only tiny boys, but I think they were older than I was. I think they are living yet. It may be at Texada Island that one of them is logging, so my son was saying. This schooner was Capt. Douglas's schooner. They used to use it at first for fur seals around Victoria."

WHALES. PASLEY ISLAND.

"I saw them bring one whale in. They were towing it. And all the people looked out and said, 'Here they come.' And they were towing it. We saw the schooner coming full sail, and they were towing something white. They were coming fast with all the sails. And they were towing this big thing behind the schooner. Yes. And when they turned it over it was black, and then when they turned it back again it was white. They had a little wharf, and the schooner docked there; it was piles, small piles, but a pretty good little wharf. And then they had a great big cable as big as my arm; the cable was rope. They lowered the whale boat; they always packed the whaleboat on the schooner, and then when they saw a whale they lowered the whale boat. And then had a big line, like a cable, and a harpoon. And then, finally, they had a big shed where they had the iron pots, you know, where they boil the blubber, the fat, and they had the harpoon on the whale's head. And then they hauled it up to the shed. Listen. I'll tell you the first. They had a big thing" (a windlass) "right on the shore, edge of the water, and two men kept going around and around, walking around the big thing. And the rope was coming in, and bringing the whale up; it was a slow job. And then they cut the whale up with a great big knife, ready to boil, all the fat. It was all chopped up in squares, and the fat was *that* thick" (gesturing to show a thickness of about twelve inches); "it was all fat, just excepting the ribs; very fat."

JOSEPH SILVEY MARRIES LUCY.

"Then after that my father married again to Lucy at Sechelt and we came back again to Howe Sound" (Pasley Island), "and Father, he always used to go around fishing, and we stayed at home in the house he built; he built a little house. We did everything them days, including making money. It was the oil they were after." (Mrs. Walker means that they had to do everything for themselves, did not spend much as there was nothing to spend it on, and were so industrious that they made money from the fish and the oil.)

DEATH OF JOSEPH SILVEY.

"Father died on Reid Island. He was a healthy man. He never was sick. So at last he took sick when he was out fishing; he was fishing for salmon with a net, in the fall. There was a good sale for salmon; they were buying all the salmon. And then he complained about his back first; he had got cold. He was living in an old shack at Chemainus, and had got cold. So he went home; he has some men working with him, but he went home to Reid Island and they never let me know.

"I was living at Ladysmith, three miles towards Nanaimo, right on the highway, on a little farm; that was where all my children were raised. I was there *over thirty years*. And then I said to my boy, I think it was Bill or Frank, my son, I said, 'I don't know what's the matter with me. I want to go and see Grandpa. I've been thinking about him all night. I can't sleep.' And then we got a little row boat.

"It is only ten miles from Ladysmith to Reid Island, and we rowed over. And then when we got there, there was my father still sick. He was sitting up in a chair and looked so well. He said to me, 'My dear Elizabeth, Papa's so sick. I'll tell you later.' Later he told me how could not make water. So I said, 'Come quiet, and about four o'clock in the morning we will go to Ladysmith and see a doctor'—it was me who suggested that.

"So early in the morning we put him in one of the sail boats he had just built, and he lay in the bottom of the boat. He was talking, but he did not drink for three days; he dare not, he said. Then I had a call for Jim Walker, my husband; they were working right on the bay getting out some timber. I said, 'Come right down at once,' and he came down to the boat. So we sailed home where I lived on the highway. I hurried and got my husband to bring a doctor, and then we will send my father to the hospital. So he was back four o'clock that afternoon with Dr. Walkem.

"And there was a pool of water on the floor, and Father said, 'Oh, doctor, that's wonderful.' It was the water the doctor had got out of him and it was three days' water. And he said, 'It was my daughter Elizabeth who brought me here.' And the doctor said, 'You'll be all right.' And then, it was not until a year or two after that that he died; it was the second attack that he died from. They had him at the Chemainus hospital when he had the second attack; at the hospital."

BURIAL OF JOSEPH SILVEY.

"Father is buried on Reid Island; that was his wish. He is buried on his own property. His grave would be about a block or two from the house. There are some Silvey children buried there, and I think my half-brother, Domingo Silvey, who died two years ago, is buried there. No one buried in the little graveyard except Silveys, and of course, Lucy, Father's second wife. I have not been there since 1902 when my father died, so that I do not know if there are any gravestones."

GOLD AND SILVER COINS. GRANVILLE, OR "GASTOWN."

"Father always had gold and silver. I've seen it in a little sack; no bills. That was when he had that little saloon in 'Gastown.' I saw it on the counter. And no one would ever touch it. He was putting out the rum, reaching up to the shelf for a bottle, and the men were all standing drinking in his saloon, and the money he was making change. Them days they had the gold and silver, no bills. And I asked my father how old I was when he had the baby" (Josephine), "and he said, 'Three years old, my dear.'"

SILVEY MARRIES LUCY. DOGFISH.

"After Father married Lucy" (in 1872) "at Sechelt, we left Brockton Point and went to Howe Sound, and then after we left Howe Sound, we went to Pender Harbour where they were fishing for dogfish, and Capt. Douglas was there, too, fishing for dogfish. And they sold their oil to Nanaimo and Departure Bay" (coal mines), "and before he went to Reid Island he was 'all over.' He was at Nanaimo for about a year, I think; he lived on Newcastle Island; there is a cottage there. They were fishing. He travelled around. He was on a bay by the lighthouse on Gabriola Island, perhaps a year or two.

"Oh, they made money fishing. And finally, we went to Reid Island, and he got a crown grant of the whole of Reid Island, all of it. There was some 'outside' land, but the eldest son, Domingo, got it. So now it is all 'Silvey' island. They are lazy devils, but there is one good boy, Henry; he's the best. There was some good boys there, but two of them were drowned. Jack Silvey was drowned, and one in here, in the First Narrows; that was Manuel. They were coming in with a launch full of fish, and a tug was going out, and the tug boat passed them, and they were towing a scow, and did not have a light on the scow."

J.S. Matthews
City Archivist

Typed as Mrs. Walker talked,
12 October 1943.
City Archives.