

Early Vancouver

Volume Six

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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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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH SAMUEL G. CHURCHILL, FORMER REEVE OF MUNICIPALITY OF POINT GREY, AND OF "CHURCHILL" STREET, KERRISDALE, WHO VERY KINDLY CALLED AT THE CITY ARCHIVES THIS AFTERNOON AND SAT DOWN TO REST HIMSELF, 6 DECEMBER 1944.

MUNICIPALITY OF POINT GREY. FIRST COUNCIL MEETING. FIRST MUNICIPAL HALL. FIRST ELECTION.

Major Matthews: Where did the first Council of Point Grey meet, Mr. Churchill?

Mr. Churchill: "In the red wooden building across the interurban track at Eburne; it's Marpole now; in the hall upstairs at the back. You know where the interurban car stops at Marpole; used to be Eburne. Well, across the track, that is, on the south side of the track, there used to be an old building, and a grocery store in front of it. Old Man Higgins had it, and there were two brothers bought it, and a man named Porter was afterwards in it. It was only a few feet from the track, and faced west. Wilby's bought it, and pulled it down and built a new one."

REEVE BEN CUNLIFFE.

"Well, at the back of the old building was a store room, and over the store room was a hall. It was just an old hall, that's all; wood stove and stove pipe. Ben Cunliffe, he was Reeve afterwards, was Returning Officer; he was Municipal Clerk afterwards, too. There were sixty-two votes cast. But there was a small polling booth up at District Lot 472, adjoining Sixteenth Avenue in Fairview, just south of Sixteenth West. The old hall at Marpole is gone now."

FIRST MUNICIPAL HALL.

"The old hall was just boarded up inside, unvarnished, and the floor was just common floor. And when the Council met, they met around a table provided by themselves, and some cheap chairs, and I think there were some benches for the spectators.

"I don't know how long they stopped there, but not very long, and then they moved down the same side, nearer the bridge about one hundred and fifty feet where they established in a new store. So we took what we had in the way of furniture and possessions—not much—and went to the little store which had just been built. It is still standing and they call it 'Fred's Confectionery' store now. It is on Hudson Street."

MUNICIPAL HALL. KERRISDALE.

"Then in 1909, we bought the property from the Canadian Pacific Railway, up on West Boulevard, Kerrisdale, and built the Municipal Hall, now used as a kind of public hall and library; the political parties, lots of them, meet there."

FIRST ELECTION IN POINT GREY.

"In the first election, Foreman ran against Howe for Reeve. There were five Councillors; the election was a quiet one; there were not many people around to make it anything else. Then, in fall of 1908, I was up at Bowen Island for the Provincial Government, and I got several letters to come home as they wanted me to run for Council in 1909. I got the letters in 1908, and they kept on writing for me to come home. A man named Otton ran against me; the two of us were nominated for the Council on the ward system. After all the votes had been counted I had a good majority. The policeman—what is his name?—he lives in Chilliwack now; I forget. So after the election was over, a group of us were walking up the track. We heard a noise, a racket, and presently we came on Webster and the policeman having a fight. The policeman had been supporting Otton, and Dave Webster supporting me, and they had got into an argument; I think Dave held his own."

SHAUGHNESSY HEIGHTS. GRANVILLE STREET PAVING.

"It was in 1908 that the C.P.R. started clearing up the west side of Shaughnessy and built the roads. They put the streets in themselves; did everything, and not only that, but they even paved Granville Street—and it is an eighty foot street—all the way from 16th to 25th Avenue. The Council graded it for them, and the C.P.R. put in the concrete pavements, and all the sidewalks and sewers and waters for Shaughnessy Heights.

"Then, when they extended Shaughnessy out to the east, out to Oak Street, and south to 33rd Avenue on the east side of Granville, and 40th Avenue on the west side as far as the interurban track, they did the same thing; that is, paved the streets, put in the concrete sidewalks and laid the sewers and water pipes."

SHAUGHNESSY WANTS TO SECEDE.

"Then, when I was Reeve, that is, 1913, they applied to the Provincial Government to form a municipality of their own—the Municipality of Shaughnessy—and leave Point Grey Municipality. The C.P.R. took a special boat of citizens down to Victoria to lobby for four days. They were sure they were going to be successful, but the Select Committee adjourned until next Monday, and when they gave their decision it was in favour of us, that is, not to allow the severance of Shaughnessy from the rest of Point Grey.

"Well, the controversy was finally settled, and I'll tell you how we did it. We allowed a reduction on the taxes of those people who were actually living in Shaughnessy, of \$10,000 a year for ten years. You see, there was no question that the residents had paid for the improvements of the district in the price they paid for the vacant property, so we did not consider it fair for the residents of Shaughnessy to make them pay for the cost of developing—in their taxes, of course—of other parts of the municipality which were undeveloped."

MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH MR. F.J. BURD, PRESIDENT, *VANCOUVER DAILY PROVINCE*, LTD., (OVER THE PHONE), 15 DECEMBER 1944.

VICTORY SQUARE. THE CENOTAPH. FRED SOUTHAM.

Major Matthews: Mr. Burd, Rowe Holland made such a splendid address at the Cenotaph last Remembrance Day that I got a copy and am going to print it in pamphlet form so that people can read what is said on such occasions. Then I started to put an illustration on the outside of the folder, and wrote a small inscription beneath it, but the inscription grew bigger and bigger until I had a whole sheet of typing, and then I saw I could not do it fully unless I wrote a bit about Victory Square, and that grew into two sheets of typing, and now I have so much I am going to complete all three, Mr. Holland's address, the Cenotaph and Victory Square, and when people want—or children—I can just give them the booklet, and they can read the story themselves. I thought to print one thousand. What I should like to know is the part the *Province* paid in landscaping the Square. How much did it cost you?

Mr. Burd: "Over eleven thousand; we agreed at first to five thousand; then it grew to ten thousand, and after that we put the railing and the cement around the Cenotaph, and that cost more; it ended with over eleven thousand five hundred as near as I can remember."

Major Matthews: Well, how did it all come to be?

Mr. Burd: "Fred Southam, he is President of Southam Newspapers, son of William Southam, the founder; he and I were passing there one day, and the whole of Victory Square was rubble—untidy, disorderly and unsightly—and Fred Southam said to me, 'Why don't you get the City to fix it up?' So I replied that we had; we had done editorials on it, but did not seem to be able to get anything done.

"So Mr. Southam said, 'How would it be if I gave you \$5,000?' So we took it up with the Parks Board, and they said it would cost \$5,000 and then W.S. Rawlings, the Park Superintendent, he designed the landscaping, the walks and flower beds and the five thousand was not enough, and it ran into ten thousand, and then, after that, we found" (I did not catch what Mr. Burd said) "and so we put the iron railing around the Cenotaph, and the concrete pathways around it, and that cost over one thousand; the whole thing cost about eleven thousand dollars and a little over."

Major Matthews: Well, rumour is that Mr. Fred Southam did it as a sort of memorial to his father, William Southam?

Mr. Burd: "No, that's just a rumour; nothing to it. People said that we did it to improve our property" (the Province Building) "and, of course, it does, but that was not what was in" (Mr.) "Fred Southam's mind when he said, 'How would it be if I gave you five thousand?'"

City Archives, Vancouver,
15 December 1944.

J.S. Matthews.
City Archivist.