

## Ancient Encampment

Numerous narratives and records from explorers since the 1590s have documented the coastal area above the 48th latitude as being inhabited by great numbers of people ... (Pp.2-4)

"The earliest known record of human beings inhabiting Surrey comes from a burial cairn, unearthed at Blackie Spit, today's Crescent Beach, in 1946. It contained a well preserved skeleton of a chief who died shortly before the birth of Christ.

Another very ancient development was the entrenched Indian Fort, located on the crest of the bluff about one quarter of a mile north of the line of the North Bluff Road. It commanded an extensive view of the waters of Mud Bay, a part of Semiahmoo Bay and also of Point Roberts. It was excellently situated for defence, facing the open water on west with a sheer bluff practically to the waters edge. North and south it was defended with a deep ravine on each side, running inland for a considerable distance. From the termination of the ravines a deep ditch connecting them was excavated. The earth so moved formed a high bank or breastwork, the entrance being towards the south side of the structure, and enclosing possibly about a half acre of ground. The surface of the enclosure appeared to be quite level.

This encampment has now become part of a housing development and the ramparts that once protected the early inhabitants against their marauding enemies has been reduced to just another building lot. Many old timers have expressed regret that this fort was not put under the 'Historic Objects Preservation Act' in time to ensure preservation.

Another early encampment was the Semiahmoo Spit and the natives living there were probably the first to come in contact with the white man.

They also were the first traders in these parts as much of the goods they obtained from the early ships found its way to the Interior tribes. Simon Fraser reported that he saw articles of European manufacture at almost all the villages he visited along his route down the Fraser River.

Blackie Spit, today's Crescent Beach, was also a very early encampment. It is believed to have been a narrow strip of land reaching from the mouth of Nicomekl River to the present day beach and offered excellent defence against the marauders from the North.

A cave containing several skeletons was discovered by some early settlers in the hillside where the Great Northern Railway from the south enters Crescent Beach. No written record of this cave has been found but in the opinion of old timers, it was very old.

Old timers also report seeing skeletons hanging in the trees at Blackie Spit verifying the belief that the Indians in these parts, in common with most of the North American Indians, practiced Tree Burial.

Old timers also tell of several burial huts remaining in the Mud Bay area at the time of the arrival of the first settlers."

*Source: Land of the Peace Arch by John Pearson Surrey Centennial Committee, 1958*

*(A copy of this book was presented to Brenda Samuels (now Davidson) by Mayor William Vander Zalm, and loaned to the Ocean Park volunteers for research.)*

## Spanish Explorer Discovers Indian Village of Semiahmoo

The first official mention of White Rock was 209 years ago. In 1791, Spanish Explorer Narvaes anchored off the mouth of the Little Campbell River near the location of the Blaine Cannery, and marked the area on his map with two black squares indicating the Indian village of Semiahmoo.

*- Research by Dave Henderson*

## Petroglyphs Found in Ocean Park

by Kathleen Moore, nee Murphy

The petroglyph was originally found on the beach near the foot of Bergstrom Road (136 Street) in the Ocean Park area. Two local residents, Laurence Berry and Mrs. Leeson, saw it in that location in the early 1920s.

It was near or below high tide level, close to the railroad tracks. At that time the markings were quite deeply indented. Both of those people also saw it when it was moved to Crescent, and remarked how much of the design had eroded over the years.

Laurence Berry took Helen Murphy, who was a member of the Surrey Historical Society, to see the petroglyph in early 1969. She reported it to the Surrey Historical Society who then notified Surrey Council, and the provincial authorities.

Dr. Clifford Carl, curator, and Donald Abbot, archaeologist, from the Provincial Museum came to look at the petroglyph. After permission to move it was granted, and with the assistance of Burlington Northern Railway Company, the petroglyph was moved to Crescent Beach on May 10, 1971.

In 1972, archaeologists from Simon Fraser University examined the petroglyph. Mrs. M. Simons from Fulford Harbour, Salt Spring Island, made a rubbing of it for the Petroglyph Recording Society.

The general opinion is that railway construction between 1907 and 1909 removed material from the cliff side, and the petroglyph tumbled down the hill.

When Heron Park was developed, the petroglyph was placed in its present position. Crescent train station, post office, and fire hall were originally on the park site. The park was officially opened in July 1974, and was named after a local resident, Stanley Heron.

Helen and Con Murphy and family moved to Crescent Beach in 1946. They were always very interested in local history. Con, who died in 1992, enjoyed wood carving. He made house number signs with dogwood decorations that can be seen on several houses at Crescent Beach. Helen lived at Crescent until 1999. *Source: Murphys*



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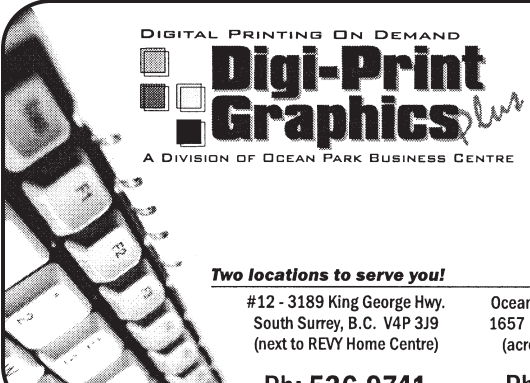
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