



TRAIN WRECK ON OCEAN PARK BEACH – IN THE THIRTIES

After 1909, the train was rerouted to run along the base of the escarpment. The nearest railway station was at Crescent from which point people made their way to Ocean Park on foot. Various approaches were made to the Great Northern Railway for a station at Ocean Park; all met with refusal. Then, in 1912, a sympathetic track man announced he'd be on holidays for a couple of weeks. When he returned, he found a small grey three-sided building (like a modern-day bus stop) at the base of the escarpment next to the tracks. He reported this to the railway authorities who accepted the fact. Further, they agreed that the train leaving Vancouver at midnight and the 6:25 a.m. train would stop 'on flag'.

Beneath the trestle near the bottom of 1,001 Steps is an underpass which has been partly filled in. Originally, it was at the base of a track for horse-drawn vehicles and pedestrians, but it became too sandy for the vehicles to climb. Before the railway was relocated, Ben Stevenson, a local farmer, had a private road heading up the hill away from the public track, so the railway had to grant him continued access. He would bring freight in by barge and then take it up the hill with horse-drawn wagons. Signs of the groins on the beach are still there. In the early days, there were two roads down the escarpment to converge at the 1,001 Steps: Ben Stevenson's road coming from the north; and a road from the south used by people to get to the railway station and the beach, and to pick up the mail delivered by train.

From May 3, 1926 through to at least the end of 1929, Rev. Robert Hughes was actively involved in trying to get a train service more appropriate for the needs of the growing community. He engaged in long episodes of letter-writing to the Great Northern Railway and to the National Railway Commission in Ottawa, as well as meeting any person available to him, attempting to get a commitment for a regular and functional railway service. The Association also enlisted the aid of the Reeve and Council of Surrey to support the effort.

Trains weren't so easy to disregard then. Steam locomotives were bigger, heavier, noisier, and slower. And local people knew the train schedules, although there were more daily runs because there were freight and passenger trains.

Mr. George Giblin, who had had a summer cottage north of Camp Kwomais (United Church Camp) since the 1910s, had worked on the railway and knew all the crews. During the days when the train didn't officially stop at Ocean Park, it always stopped for 'Gibby' to get on or off so canny locals timed their travel to his.

For only a few years, there was a change house at the bottom of the 1,001 Steps behind the railway station, near the trestle. It had men's and women's change rooms and an outhouse. Eventually a big rock rolled down the hill and seriously damaged it, after which time it was torn down.

In the 1950s there were discussions of removing the tracks to another part of Surrey, making the track bed a walking/bicycle path to Vancouver, but the relationship with the railway has always been a controversial one. Individual railway contacts have expressed support for our efforts but the company itself gives the appearance of not being overly concerned with accommodating the community's wishes.

by Anne Helps. Sources: OPCA Minutes, 'The Story of Ocean Park', anecdotal evidence.

Fun Fun Park

Many years ago, after people had stopped living in the old brick house, located in the middle of the property bordered by 14th Ave. and 128 Street; people living south of this property started walking through it to catch buses, do their shopping and visit the library.

One of these was Mr. Gordon Felty, a well-liked employee of the B.C. Liquor Board. In the spring of 1985 he approached some members of the Ocean Park Community Association to see if a way could be found to up-grade this often muddy path so that more members of the community could use this route to the central business area. A call was made to City Hall and a short time later a load of bark mulch was delivered. Gordon spent most of a weekend spreading this material. This upgraded path proved to be so popular that it soon needed significant repair. Now, the City provided crushed rock for the path surface. Need for this path was well recognized and Gordon now had a group of willing volunteers to help with spreading this material.

Officials with the Parks and Recreation Department in Surrey approached the OPCA in the late Summer of '85, suggesting that the community take advantage of a new program, 'Volunteers in Parks' and harness the already demonstrated Ocean Park community spirit, and create a public park on the site.

Coincidentally, a group of exchange students with Canada World Youth were being billeted in Ocean Park and needed a community project to work on to fulfill their mandate. They were recruited, and once a rough plan had been created, about thirty young adults started clearing the site. Surrey provided tools and advice about proceeding without damaging precious plant life. Many additional volunteers from the community contributed whatever they could.

Within a couple of weeks, so much had been achieved that the Mayor of Surrey, Mr. Don Ross was brought in to see the site. He and his officials were so impressed that 'on the spot', they committed \$50,000.00 to complete the park. It was to be showcased as the first 'Volunteers in Parks' in B.C.

After the Park had been finished in the following Spring, a celebration was held to dedicate the park and recognize the volunteers. This was attended by several officials with the City, all of the Parks and Recreation Commissioners, and a multitude from the community. Part of this very joyful event was a competition to name the park. After much deliberation the judges chose 'Fun Fun Park' to be its name, and awarded 12-year-old Jessica Tuttle 10 shiny silver dollars for her winning entry.

'Fun Fun' Park is still recognized as a model of co-operation between all concerned in a community which can result in a project that succeeds beyond all expectations.

— by George Tuttle

DID YOU KNOW? by Dave Henderson

B.C.'s first recorded earthquake occurred near Ocean Park in 1872, estimated at about magnitude 7 on the Richter scale.

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