

The Story of Indian River Park...

By B.F. Dickens, *B.C. Saturday Sunset Magazine*, August 3rd, 1907, page 13.

Vancouver, B.C. has no real summer resort. 'Tis true we have English Bay and Stanley Forest; one a bathing beach and the other a magnificent city park, both in the city limits, but we have no resort that is recognized as such where people can live in their summer cottages and go away for a season for a breathing spell remote from the hustle and bustle of city life. The writer has been impressed with this idea for several years and being personally fond of outdoor life has always had in his mind's eye a proposition of this sort that could be made easily accessible and would fulfill all the requirements that go to make-up an ideal outing spot.

About a year ago a certain local real estate man and I tramped up the foot-hills of North Vancouver, just back of that bright little 'burg, in quest of some acreage which he wanted to sell me. During our journey my companion unfolded an idea in the nature of a Summer Resort proposition on the Indian River which had been placed in his hands for sale. As he told me of his plans my interest in them grew, and when he had concluded I promptly pulled out my cheque book and wrote him a deposit on the property.

A few days afterwards I accompanied him up to see Lot 820 at the head of the North Arm of Burrard Inlet and on the Indian River, and although the aforesaid Real Estate man gave me a most eloquent word picture of the place, I soon learned how inadequate were mere words in the telling of the story. You have to see it with your own eyes — see the mile high mountains in all their glory of green to the very summits — note the ever changing atmospheric effects running the gamut of colours from the deepest purples to the deepest shades of orange — look into the mirror-like surface of the inlet and see a perfect reproduction of every form and colour as it is above the water line.

You have to breath the pure mountain air — sniff the blended perfumes of wild flowers, of stately cedars, of firs and balsams — of undefiled nature on every hand to greet your nostrils — have to hear the warbling of the song birds as their music falls sweetly upon the ears. You have to feel the impressions which take possession of your very soul as you commune with nature in its wild and chaotic state — have to taste the pure glacier-fed waters of rippling mountain streams as they course their way down dizzy heights of waterfall, through moss and fern covered glens and rocky canyons and over pebbly beaches to be blended in the salt waters of old Father Ocean. These and all these things no language could tell — no brush could paint.

Such is the Indian River region. Together he and I explored the 190 acres as well as we could in the short time at our disposal, but enough was seen to determine me to give to Vancouver a mountain and seaside resort to rival in time some of the famous watering places of California.

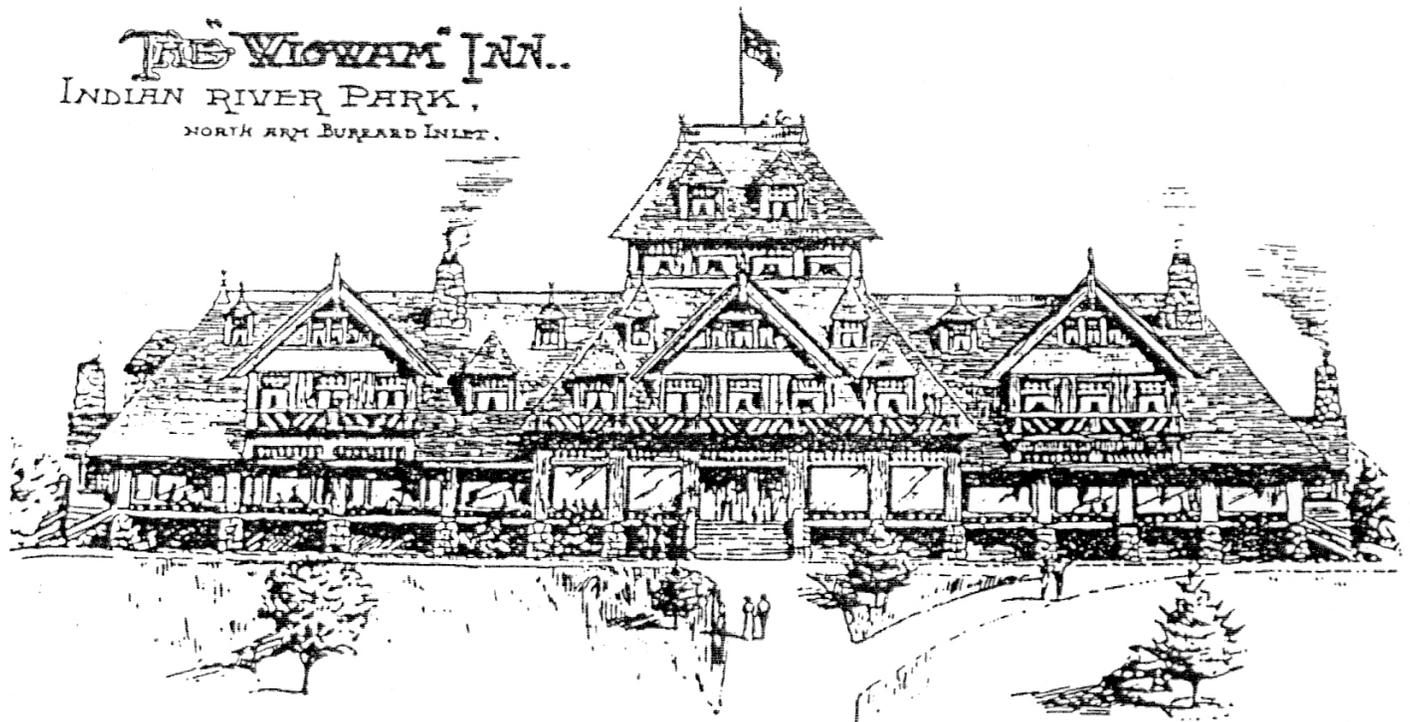
Numerous expeditions have been made, including persons whose experience in these matters would be valuable. Surveyors, photographers, landscape artists, mountain climbers, sportsmen and others interested in outdoor life, have made numerous visits and the universal opinion is that Vancouver should be congratulated upon having such an attraction so near. Nature has done her share; it now only remains for the expenditure of some energy and money to make one of the most picturesque outing spots to be found on this continent.

For a whole year I have been perfecting the titles to the property — securing the water records — acquiring the foreshore privileges and otherwise laying plans for the purpose in hand. At this stage I organized a strong syndicate of local men — real lovers of nature and the out-door life — to assist me in successfully completing the undertaking, and so enthusiastically have they taken-up the work that we hope to make it possible for camping parties to spend the most of August and September under favourable camping conditions, if indeed we are not able to provide them something better. It will be a mere question of labour and materials, if we can be assured of both we will rush the work of wharves, clearing and the construction of the hotel with all possible dispatch.

With this end in view a corps of surveyors under Col. Tracy is now on the ground subdividing the property into a scenic park with broad roads, trails and marine drive, etc. Building lots of approximately 50 x 120 are to be laid-out, not in the order of a certain number in regular size blocks as is customary in a town or city, but the topography of the ground will be considered and the plats laid-out with an idea to the picturesque — a few lots here, a few more there — according to the contour of the ground, with trails and roads and small irregular parks or groves scattered all over in a hit and miss fashion.

A gang of 20 men are now busily engaged in this work and clearing the grounds for the hotel site. A firm of local architects has made the preliminary sketches for the "Wigwam Inn", a building in harmony with the surroundings with its quaint gables and old fashioned chimneys and fireplaces, broad piazzas, cosy ingle nooks, and such. And the plans will be rushed so as to get the hotel well under way this season if at all possible.

In the meantime, campers upon application to the management will be allowed the free use of the site; the management merely asking that they use extra precaution with camp fires on account of the unusual dryness of the season.



*A picture of the proposed hotel that appeared in B.C. Saturday Sunset, August 1907.
Picture taken from The History of Wigwam Inn by Pam Humphreys.*