

Title: **WE Live Here - A West End Audio Tour**

Hosted by **Aaron Chapman**

*Voice of Aaron Chapman:* Welcome to the West End Car Free Day Storyteller series. I'm Aaron Chapman, an author and historian here in Vancouver. I love talking to people about the history of the city, its people, and its neighbourhoods--and I'm always interested to find out more. I'm proud to join you as host of this audio tour series spotlighting Vancouver's West End.

First, we would like to begin by acknowledging that you will be enjoying this Audio Tour on the traditional, unceded territories of the of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səɫɪlwətaʔɫ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

This year...the Covid 19 pandemic forced a sudden change to virtually everything we do; how we live, work, shop, and how we interact with our friends and neighbors. It's changed the way we celebrate our community with festivals and music, and even though we were not able to gather and take over the streets for our usual Car Free street festival we worked hard to come up with car-free activities that would keep you safe during a global pandemic. Like many other festivals, we brought our Car Free Day celebration online, so we could still gather and feed our deeply human need to connect through celebration. But we wanted to do more!

As we settle into the new norm, and establish new ways of coming into the world safely, we are learning a new appreciation for simple things, like going for a walk in our neighbourhoods.

For this reason, we've invited some of our favourite Vancouverites to tell you about the West End which is as steeped in history as it is beautiful.

We're going to start at the foot of Denman, and wind our way through Lost Lagoon and Stanley Park, English Bay, and then back to Robson through the West Ends canopied streets.

The whole tour will take approximately an hour and a half strolling at a very leisurely pace. Please feel free to pause when you need to, whether that be to gaze upon your surroundings, or to enjoy some of the great restaurants and shops you'll pass along the way. Or you can also enjoy these stories in separate episodes if you prefer to take shorter walks.

While you stop to enjoy the stories, please be mindful of your surroundings, which might include being aware of passing cars and bikes, and also leaving enough space for your fellow pedestrians to social distance.

For episode One - We begin today at the Northwest corner of Denman and Georgia, and we'll be walking through the Devonian Harbour Park on our way to Lost Lagoon.

It's my great pleasure now to welcome Squamish Elder Dennis Joseph. Dennis Joseph is a traditionally trained speaker in the Squamish/Coast Salish Longhouse, who has facilitated countless ceremonies. He's also a member of a Rock & Roll group Bitterly Divine who played at Skookum Fest and the Festival of Lights. He's also the Cultural Advisor, and Elder to Full Circle

Performances at the Talking Stick Festival founded by recent Order of Canada recipient Actor Margo Kane. Dennis is going to share some of his ancestral knowledge about the area.

Title: **The Kanaka Ranch and The Denman Arena - Family Stories**  
by **Dennis Joseph**

*Voice of Dennis Joseph:* Good day everyone! I want to share with you today some history as I understand it from the Squamish people. My ancestral name is Xwechtaal, my given name is Dennis Joseph. Today on behalf of car free day in the West End I want to welcome you all to the Traditional territories of the Musqueam, Tsleil wau tuth and Squamish peoples. I am ever grateful and thankful to be here with you all to share today.

I'd like to start at the north end of Denman street at Georgia street, there was a place known as Kanaka Ranch. Kanaka Ranch was near the entrance of Stanley Park. I would like to share with you some history of Kanaka ranch. Kanaka ranch was a place where a lot of our Hawaiian brothers and sisters homesteaded. These were mainly men who were serving on the Hudson Bay company tall ships of the day.

I was told by my late cousin Kanaka (aka Jerry Nahanee) that after two years of service the sailors were given their choice of port of call which meant that they could get off anywhere in the world that Hudson Bay company served. Many of them chose Kemkemalay also known as Vancouver and the powers of the day put them in a place called Kanaka Ranch, right here.

Many of those men and women married Squamish and other Coastal peoples and they left children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, and great great grandchildren. This happened not only here in Kemkemalay but up and down the Salish Sea, up and down the Fraser River and in Salt Spring Island there are many descendants of the Kanaka Ranch people. Kanaka aloha, love has reached far and wide.

While there is an enormous history of Stanley Park, we call it [Xwáyxway](#) (Whoi Whoi) as it relates to Squamish People I would like to share with you personally my connection to the area close to Pepiyek, also known as Brockton Point. Pepiyek is where now exists the "9'oclock gun".

Stanley Park is where my great great grandmother, Tsiyaliya was born and lived her life. Some of the words my late Uncle Percy used to share with me was that while our families existed, lived and thrived in these areas, the concrete jungle has grown up around us. Our families still tell the stories of these areas and we can still see our ancestors living their lives here.

Now I am excited to be asked to share these stories with you all, it has brought back many good memories of our old timers. One of those stories are of the Denman Arena. The arena was also in this same area on the NW corner of Denman and Georgia built post Kanaka Ranch. The Denman Arena opened in December of 1911 and was destroyed by fire in 1936.



Denman Arena once dominated this Coal Harbour view Credit: Vancouver Archives cva 99-280

I know it was home to the Stanley Cup winners, the Vancouver Millionaires and Denman Arena in its heyday was second only to Madison Square Gardens in New York City in terms of capacity. The Denman Arena could seat 10,500 people. Before the arena was lost to a fire it was also home to the famed North Shore Indians. This lacrosse team led by my maternal grandfather Andrew Paull and many other players from Six Nations family, for example the Powless family, the Bomberry, the Martins. The list still goes on and on to this day. Here in the west we have had a long exchange with our brothers from the East, Six Nations players keeping the game of skekwa (aka lacrosse) alive. Six Nations people are on the eastern seaboard, bounded by Ontario, Quebec and New York state.

Back in the days the North Shore Indians would pack that arena, it was “the” ticket in town to get. A great memory I have was listening to my mother and my grandmothers and many others that spoke of those amazing days and how they were always astounded at the capacity crowd that North Shore Indians brought to the city for the game of lacrosse.



Taken outside the Old Toronto Forum, ca 1936

Left to Right: Trutch, Andrew Paull, Cec Van Every, Oscar Bomberry, Gilbert Thomas, Louis Lewis, Stan Joseph, Moses Joseph, Harry Newman, Jack Squires, Hubie Smith, Stu Bomberry, Ray Baker, Joe Johnston, Henry Baker, (unknown) , Russell "Beef" Smith, Mr. Brown, Mr. Williams  
Image credit: Dennis Joseph family archives

I was told that there were often times that they would go over capacity and they would bring speakers to the outside so people who couldn't get in the gates could listen to the game from commentator who doing play by play. Some of the masters of the game were my grandfathers, on both sides, they were certainly amongst the best in the world to be able to draw thousands of people with their stick skills, their fitness.

Many of these players were longshoremen, fishermen and hunters. The longshoremen would work many hours in a day and back then everything was done by hand. I was told they would lug 500 lb sacks into the cargo holds with little tows and load it onto the little dolly and unload them into the ships - all this being done by hand. Then at the end of the day they would go play lacrosse. It was incredible to see their commitment to the game and keeping the beautiful game of skekwa (lacrosse) alive.

The year that the arena was tragically lost to fire, in 1936, the North Shore Indians went on from playing in the Denman Arena to winning a Canadian National Championship in Toronto at the old Forum. There are many famous photos of that group led by Andrew Paull and Six Nations players. Six Nations player, Ross Powless, was a leading scorer. Then there was Stan Joseph Sr. who was my grandfather on my dad's side.

The stories I hear of these guys is that their stick skills were so intricate that a team mate would run in front of the crease and they would turn their stick backwards over his shoulder and wouldn't even have to look, and the gentleman with the ball would fire it into their stick and the guy receiving the ball would shoot... and score! [sound of crowd cheering]

Rarely if ever done today. These stories are a great inspiration and just amazing to hear. My mom, Yvonne, who is Andrew's daughter, told me many stories of those great plays. As a young girl she was asked by her dad to hand paint the lacrosse balls that were hung on a tiny nail and string from the ceiling. She would hand paint all of the lacrosse balls so that they would be bright and shiny for game time. She did it with love and care, she would share stories of witnessing these sold out games. One of the stories she shared was on the side of the Denman Arena there was a plywood where they, a player, or her dad, would open the plywood up and let people in because of the arena was at sold out capacity. My mom shared that they as young people would stay to take in the game. The stories and the games that she got to see were very uplifting to hear, and I could see it in my mind's eye.

Then there was my dad, his name was Willard, who was Stan Joseph Sr.'s son. Our family comes from a long line of lacrosse players. He asked me as a young boy if I wanted to play and I'm so glad to say I was hopeless, he was my dad, he's my hero. So at five and half, six years old I said I would play. He went on to coach many years and is one of many heroes of the game including his brother Stan Joseph Jr. He was a goaltender like me, but he is in the lacrosse hall of fame.

Stan went on to inspire many generations after him with his very unusual stick style. He held his stick sideways and even though he was right handed he would hold it like a left-hand player with palms facing in. It was amazing to see. I got to see him play many times as a young boy. There were many times he was brought out of retirement by New Westminster Salmonbellies, and the North Shore Indians right near the end of his career.

I want you all to enjoy Car Free Day, you know during this time of turmoil and the Covid 19 virus I want to wish you all well, happiness, stay safe and know my prayers are with you. All of our

people's prayers are with you and our faith – stay strong – stay safe. Xwechtaal, Dennis Joseph. Osiem, thank you. Bye for now.

[music plays out: *Ah Nee Na* sung by Dennis Joseph]

*Voice of Aaron Chapman:* Thanks very much Dennis. We hope you're enjoying these stories from West End Car Free Day. We're looking forward to you joining us for the next segment.