



The Haney Slide of 1880

From: Dominion Pacific Herald, New Westminster, 4 February, 1880

Big Land Slide—A Piece of Fine Farm land Tumbles into the River:

From Mr. W. Nicholls, who was in town on Monday, we learn that a land slide occurred at Maple Ridge Friday last, which has caused considerable damage. A little way above Messrs. Howison Bros.' wharf at the Ridge, the river bank stands up, almost perpendicular to a height of from 100 to 150 feet, and it was in this place that the slide occurred. The face of the slide is about a quarter of a mile in length and it is some forty or fifty feet deep, which would make the superficial measurement of the "caved" in land some ten or fifteen acres. The land, we believe, was the property of Mr. J.W. Howison, of the Occident, and had been cleared and otherwise improved. Mr. Nichols tells us that the slide has created quite an island in the river, and that when the slide occurred, a wave of water went racing upstream, raising the level of the river as much as ten feet on our informant's farm, which is eight or nine miles above the slide. Just across the river, from the scene of the slide, a large building on the bank, owned by Messrs. A. Ewen & Co., and used as a fish-curing establishment, was wrecked by the wave, and part of the bank was washed away.

From Mr. H. Dawson, who arrived down yesterday morning, we learn that the quantity of land carried away is estimated by good judges at 25 to 30 acres, superficial measurement. The land appears to have moved forward bodily into the river, and several large trees are now standing on the slide, away out in the river, looking as if nothing had happened to them.

The slide does not form an island, but close to the original bank, the earth is only a few feet above the present level of the river, so that the water will probably cut a channel there when it rises a little. Towards the centre of the river, at the south side of what was formerly the deep channel, the slide stands about 25 to 35 feet above the water, and slopes out to both sides, so that more than half of

the river is obstructed, including the whole of the channel.

The wave raised by the slide swept over the opposite (south) bank of the river, covering it to a depth of 15 to 20 feet, carrying everything, except the largest trees, before it. Mr. Edge, who was on the bank of the river, was carried inland some distance, and when found was lying under a lot of rails and brush. He was unconscious and apparently very seriously injured. He had continued in a semi-conscious condition since the accident, and yesterday Dr. Sivewright was sent for, and went up to see him on the "Princess Louise."

Two small barns, partly filled with peas and hay, were overturned, and carried some distance. One scow, and a number of boats—in fact nearly all the boats within miles of the place—were more or less broken up, some of them being splintered to match wood. Both the wharves at Maple Ridge were damaged, that belonging to the Corporation being most injured.

Up to Monday, there was a perceptible difference in the level of the water above and below the slide, and quite a swift "rifle" where the water escaped at the south side.

Except Mr. Edge, who may lose his life, Mr. J.W. Howison is the principal sufferer. The Township of Maple Ridge also loses about a quarter of a mile of good road, which will be difficult to replace.

It is possible that navigation, for large steamers, may be somewhat difficult for some time, and it is feared that the obstruction may cause the freshet to be unusually high, for miles above, this year, unless something is done to clear the channel.

The Latest. – Dr. Sivewright returned late last evening, from the scene of the disaster at Maple Ridge. He expresses doubts of Mr. Edge's recovery. No bones are broken, but the unfortunate man has been severely bruised and utterly prostrated by the shock.

Haney Slide Area

- 1 Maple Ridge Museum
- 2 Haney House
- 3 Billy Miner Pub

From: Dominion Pacific Herald, New Westminster, 11 February, 1880

At 1 o'clock on Saturday afternoon last, the steamer *Gem*, with between thirty and forty passengers, left her wharf for a trip to the Maple Ridge Slide.

The afternoon was lovely—calm, bright and balmy as an April day, and the run up-river was very pleasant. Approaching the slide, one not intimately acquainted with the locality would scarcely notice anything unusual, except where, here and there, patches of freshly exposed earth told of a recent convulsion of some sort; until, coming a little nearer, the state of both banks of the river and the chaotic condition of the slide itself, which distance had concealed, told the story.

On the left the original shore line ends abruptly in a sharp peak, some fifty to seventy feet above the river, and the bank, showing a face of fresh earth, perpendicular for half its depth and then sloping steeply to within a few feet of the level of the river, sweeps around in a curve like the inside of a slightly drawn bow, for a point a quarter of a mile above, where it again joins the undisturbed land.

At the bottom of the amphitheatre thus formed, is an almost level bed, composed partly of pretty firm clay and partly of quicksand, and through the centre of this bed a little "creek" or rivulet was brawling and rushing along to the river. A little inside of what used to be the high water line, you came upon pieces of the surface of the bank, which, although, some of them must be a good hundred feet below their former positions, have been carried only a few yards riverwards.

On many of these the snow is still undisturbed, except where the frozen sod is divided by cracks, which run generally at right angles to the line of the river. Over these sections of surface the line of the Maple Ridge road can be traced for a considerable distance. Crossing the shore line riverwards, you come first upon masses of loose sandy loam, tossed and tumbled like the irregular dumping from some excavation, and lying at a few feet only above the level of the river. As you go outwards, the ground rises, and more surface soil appears, still in irregular heaps, and covered with fallen trees and brush, the roots still imbedded in the soil and the

tops, as a rule, pointed shoreward.

As you proceed, surface soil predominates more and more, until on the highest point you come upon several trees standing erect or nearly so, particularly one fine cedar, which rears its stately head, erect and majestic as ever.

From this point to the water's edge, there is an abrupt slope, broken here and there by little ledges or terraces, the soil being chiefly hard clay; and dotted around the extreme end of the slide are miniature islands of the same material. On the opposite side, or south bank of the river, the trees stand undisturbed, but many of them show marks of the rude shock they experienced, limbs and pieces of bark being broken off. Some of these marks are at heights estimated variously at from twenty to thirty feet above the ground, and they seem to show that pieces of ice or timber, or both, were carried along the crest of the wave.

The underbrush beneath these trees and for some distance inland presents the appearance of a field of "laid" grain. Whatever the cause of the slide may have been, two or three things seem pretty clear. The height and force of the wave which swept over the south bank and raised the river many feet above its normal level for miles above, and for some distance below, the scene, seem to prove that the mass of earth moved quickly, and the same facts, taken in conjunction with the appearance if the extreme end of the slide, favour the supposition that the front part of the original bank, or at least the upper part of it, moved forward bodily—almost like a wall—for a considerable distance.

Again, looking at the appearance of the place left bare by the slide, and at the position of sections of the surface, which are lying as if the earth had suddenly shot out from underneath them and allowed them to drop, leads us to believe that that is exactly what did happen.

If we suppose that a bed of quicksand existed in the bank as it originally stood, and that the face of the bank was cut away by the combined action of the river and of the severe frost, until this bed was tapped, we will have a condition of things which might fairly be expected to result in just such a disaster as this.




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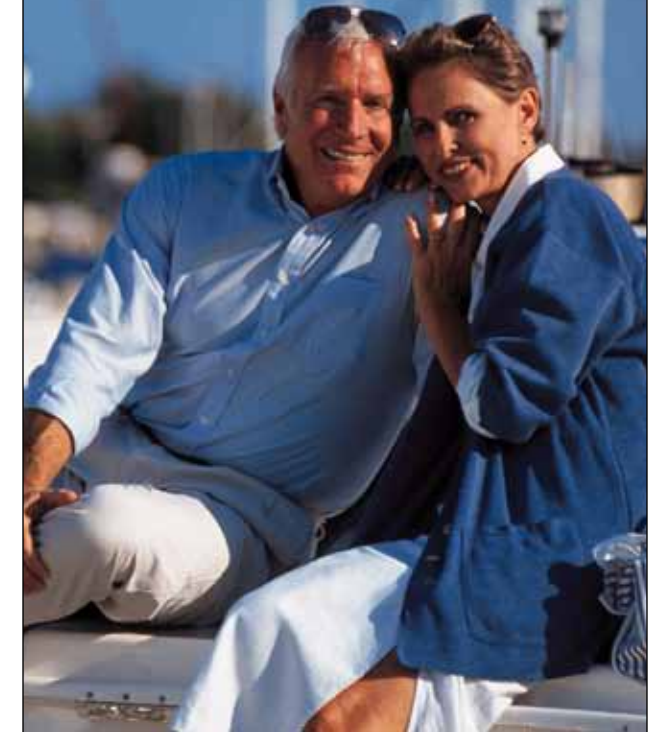
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