



***The park is shrouded by unexplained deaths, suicides and murders***

### **Victoria – August 2017**

There are locations which don't require being framed by the backdrop of fading daylight to have their ominous sides exposed. Beacon Hill Park is one of those places that is layered with chilling occurrences even by the light of day. The park's history is shrouded by many unexplained deaths, suicides and murders. We revisited the location while recording for a podcast that will air at the end of the year and we thought the fascinating park deserved a spot on our website as the stories are extremely disturbing and eerie. You may want to read this by the light of day. Though as we mentioned, this may not make a difference.

We took a scenic and informative carriage ride through the park in the summer of 2017 knowing a little bit about its dark and foreboding history. The park has belonged to the city of Victoria since 1882. It has a combination of scenic shoreline and woodland trails which are very inviting to locals and tourists. The landscapes are generously surrounded by native flora, mature trees and lush green vegetation which has been carefully preserved. For nature lovers it is a great place to unwind. There are two playgrounds on the site along with several ponds. During our visit we saw and heard the vibrant calls of majestic peacocks which freely roam the grounds. The land was originally set aside as protected lands by Sir James Douglas, governor of the Colony of Vancouver Island in 1858.

There is something magical about being able to experience the park through an old-fashioned carriage ride. It's easy to imagine going back in time. The rides are routinely offered by the city and are a spectacular way to see the sights and to hear condensed histories about a variety of locations from the tour guides. Interestingly, Beacon Hill Park didn't have ghostly activity until later in its history and what is revealed is truly chilling.

The hill is culturally very significant because it was a burial site for the First Nations Coast Salish people who are the original inhabitants of the Greater Victoria region. The traditional name of the hill is Meeacan to the Songhees people and means "belly." The 200 acre park is abundant with swans, ducks, Canada geese and blue herons. It was given its present name because it overlooks the Strait where navigational beacons once stood. There are several man-made features in the park, the most notable being the world's fourth tallest totem pole carved by Kwakwaka'wakw craftsman Mungo Martin and erected in 1956.

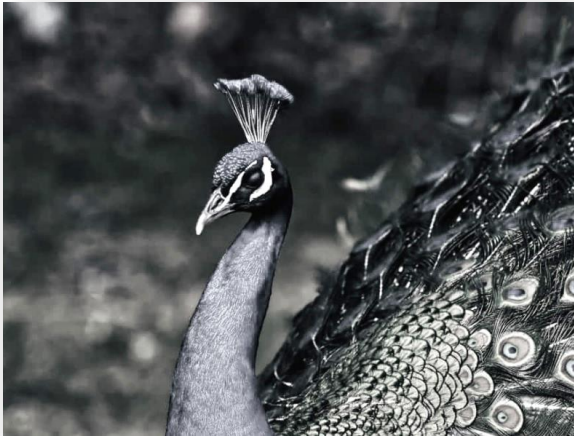


The terrifying story of Beacon Hill Park begins during the 1970's. Many people frequenting the park during this time reported seeing a mysterious woman with long blonde hair and darker complexion standing atop a rocky area in the park. She would eerily stare straight out at the landscape. Those who saw this woman described her behaviour as peculiar because she simply stood there, silent, unmoving, morning after morning in the exact same place for several months. Then, one day, the sightings just stopped. She literally faded away and over time the incident was gradually forgotten. This story was quite unnerving as we made our way through the area just as evening shadows began to materialize. Suddenly the atmosphere shifted. Surrounded by the rustling leaves and chattering wildlife, the atmosphere felt a bit more claustrophobic. It was nice to emerge from a lengthy canopy of trees to a more lighted section in the park.

Then in the late summer of 1983, suddenly an eerie sighting occurred once again. People saw a woman who struck them as odd. This time, a woman with light complexion and dark hair was seen standing very near to the same rocky area as the woman people saw in the 1970's. The local people who were familiar with the 1970's sightings said this woman seemed very similar but appeared to be a mirror image of the woman who was seen over a decade before. Those who saw her said she looked as if she was an apparition at times because her face lacked



distinct features and appeared misty and ethereal. Many people say they saw her in various ways—sometimes she was sitting as if she was meditating, occasionally her arms were outstretched and in some more terrifying instances she was described as having her mouth formed in what appeared to be a silent scream. Some approached her only to find that she disappeared in mist.



*Majestic peacocks freely roam the grounds*

The 1983 incident was particularly chilling because months after the mysterious woman began appearing again, a murdered woman's remains were found in a shallow grave in November of 1983. The woman, Donna Mitchell, went missing and was strangled to death. The remains were found very near to the location of both sightings of the mysterious women. The description of the murdered woman, matched the description of the woman people saw in 1983 but was a mirror image of the woman appearing in the 1970's. Many theorize the blonde woman in the 1970's was possibly a

Doppelgänger of the murdered woman and was nicknamed the 'future ghost'. Was this apparition predicting a future demise? The crime was never truly solved as the suspect, a man from Vancouver, was discovered dead by hanging.

History shows that seeing your Doppelgänger, or double, is thought to be an omen of one's death or some sort of tragedy. Was the woman people saw in the 1970's predicting a death which was going to occur more than a decade later? Adding to the eeriness, the most recent ghostly sightings we came across during our research was reported this year in 2020. In April a female visitor said she saw another woman staring at her from what she described as a rocky pathway just south of Superior Street. The visitor stated there was a child playing right behind this staring woman but that she seemed to be oblivious to the child's presence. The woman passing through the park said she was unnerved by the dead staring. That's when she suddenly realized the woman must be a ghost because she was dressed in clothing from another time.

For whatever reason, female spirits seem to be manifest at this location and all seem to have a similar eerie demeanour, quietly staring. What is it these staring



*Beacon Hill Park was declared as protected lands in 1858*

women wish to tell us? What seems to attract these energies to this particular location? It could be the proximity to water or the fact that this was indigenous land and a former burial ground. For more than one reason, Beacon Hill Park seems to be aptly named as beacons are found on elevated ground, signal a warning, are a source of light or act as guidance. With so many hauntingly tragic stories and sinister events are the ghosts trying to warn us about this beautiful park? Decades apart, the dark histories of this place are as spooky as they are beautiful.