



The Gorge: Recreation Destination



Picnic at Gorge Park circa 1910 - Image courtesy of Esquimalt Municipal Archives

THE BC ELECTRIC RAILWAY COMPANY established Gorge Park at this site in 1905. The park offered a variety of amusements for residents: the Japanese Tea Gardens, bathing facilities and swimming beach, water chute, merry-go-round, bandstand and dance pavilion, scenic railway and more. On the Gorge Waterway there were regattas, canoe races, naval displays, swimming and diving competitions and sightseeing trips to the famous reversing falls at the Gorge Narrows.

Each year in May thousands of people gathered at the park to celebrate Victoria Day. People arrived by boat, bicycle, on foot or on the popular BC Electric tram. Today the curved driveway at the entrance to Esquimalt Gorge Park on Tillicum Rd marks the former terminus of the tramline.

Before World War II heading up the Gorge for a canoe paddle, a beachside picnic or to camp in the wilds of Portage Inlet was a favourite holiday excursion.



The Gorge Waterway is still a popular destination for canoeing, kayaking, fishing, nature appreciation and walking.



Swimming regatta on the Gorge 1918
Image A-02892 courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives

