

Early Vancouver

Volume Six

By: Major J.S. Matthews, V.D.

2011 Edition (Originally Published 1945)

Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1940-1945.

Supplemental to volumes one, two, three, four and five collected in 1931, 1932, 1934, 1939 and 1944.

About the 2011 Edition

The 2011 edition is a transcription of the original work collected and published by Major Matthews. Handwritten marginalia and corrections Matthews made to his text over the years have been incorporated and some typographical errors have been corrected, but no other editorial work has been undertaken. The edition and its online presentation was produced by the City of Vancouver Archives to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the City's founding. The project was made possible by funding from the Vancouver Historical Society.

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[photo annotation:]

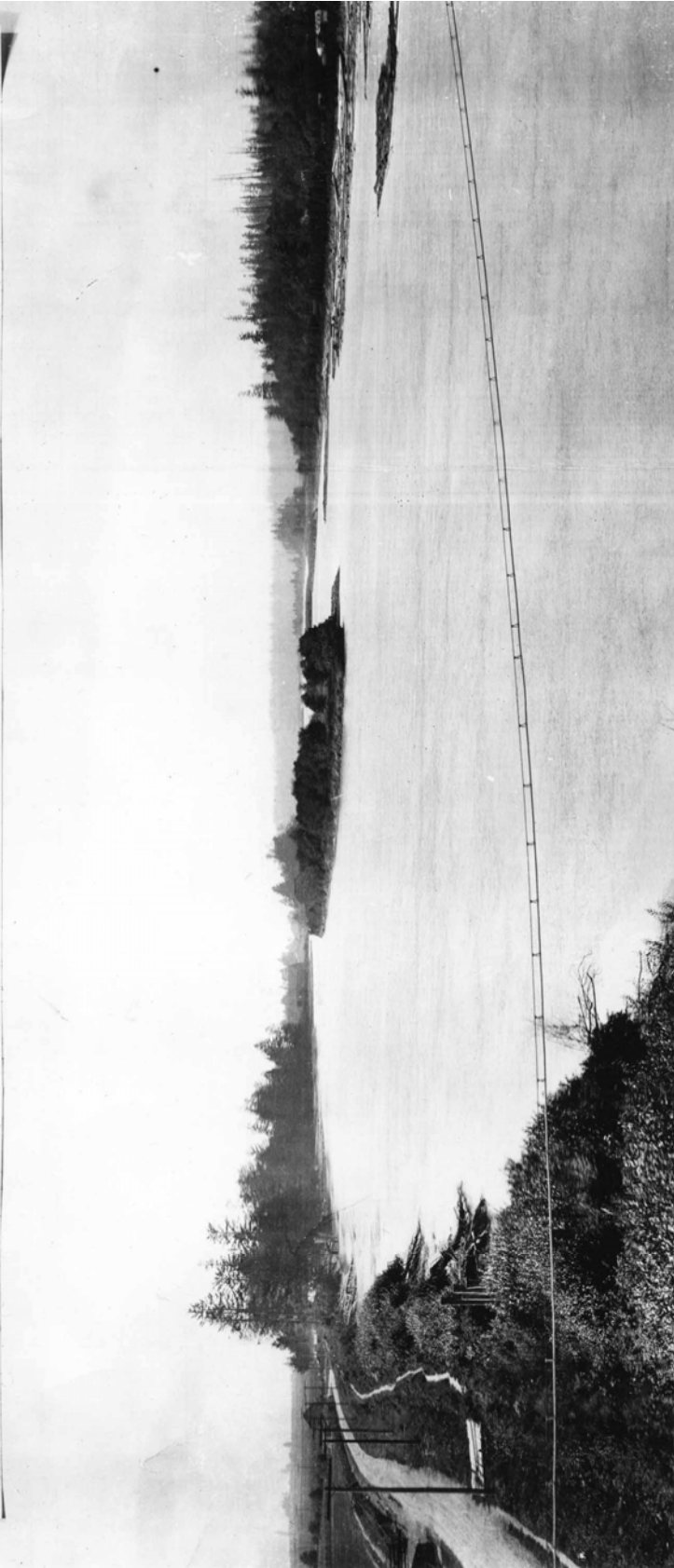
Narvaez, first visitor, saw this, 1791.

Pilot Commander Don Jose Maria Narvaez, Spanish explorer, anchored his vessel the “Santa Saturnina” under the cliffs of Point Grey, 1791, and was the first whiteman to see the site of Vancouver, Canada. His sketch, the first chart of Burrard Inlet, now the port of Vancouver, indicates that he saw—perhaps visited—the Indian village of Eyalmu, now called Jericho, and the coast line beyond trending into False Creek, here in this photograph, taken ninety-eight years later, portrayed.

Entrance to False Creek from low cliff at south entrance to Stanley Park, showing, on the left, a forest clearing, now “West End,” and below, the beach on which John Morton, first settler, and his Indian companion, landed, October 1862, now English Bay bathing beach. The bridge spanning False Creek leads to the Pacific terminus of the Canadian Pacific Railway—across Canada from the Atlantic—at Greer’s Beach, now Trafalgar St, Kitsilano. A depot of the Royal Canadian Air Force has replaced the village of Snauq on the False Creek Indian Reserve. On the high ridge to the left—between the two tall trees—a towering City Hall, a General Hospital, and educational institutions of Fairview and Shaughnessy Heights. Photograph by William Tinniswood Dalton, pioneer, presented, 1942, by his son, Arthur Tinniswood Dalton, F.R.G.S.

NORTH ARM, FRASER RIVER, 1911, from Eburne bridge. Narvaez, Spanish explorer, 1791, probably ascended thus far in small boat, and returned down middle arm, invisible on left, to his anchored schooner "Santa Saturnina". Fraser, British explorer, 1808, descended in a canoe to Musqueam Indian village, in distance beyond Richmond Id. This photo partially illustrates what both saw. On Richmond, or Horseshoe Id, stood Todd's Horseshoe brand salmon cannery (concealed behind bushes), and drew its fresh water by pipe under river from Garripie's Pond on north bank. River water was tidal. The distant clump of trees is on D.L. 317, farm of Samuel McCleery, first settler in Vancouver, 1862, and now Marine Drive Golf links. On right is George Garripie's, now Marpole, D.L. 118, and at foot of Granville St. Cedar, hemlock, spruce, alder, yew, crabapple, willow, elderberry, and cottonwood grew in large and small clumps of varying widths all over Iala and Sea Island; in the peat bogs there was bull pine, blueberry, cranberry, reeds, cat-tails and tall grasses. On Sea Island a large patch of spruce timber, half a mile long, on the south side, and a smaller one on the north side--last remains shown herein on left bank of river--together with a great profusion of wild roses festooning trees to great height, obscured the vision of explorers passing beneath in boat or canoe at water level.

Photo by Dodge, Sydney, N.S., 1911.
City Archives, JSM



Item # EarlyVan_v6_043

[photo annotation:]

NORTH ARM, FRASER RIVER, 1911, from Eburne bridge. Narvaez, Spanish explorer, 1791, probably ascended thus far in small boat, and returned down middle arm, invisible on left, to his anchored schooner "Santa Saturnina." Fraser, British explorer, 1808, descended in a canoe to Musqueam Indian village, in distance beyond Richmond Id. This photo partially illustrates what both saw. On Richmond, or Horseshoe Id. stood Todd's Horseshoe brand salmon cannery (concealed behind bushes), and drew its fresh water by pipe under river from Garripie's Pond on north bank. River water was tidal. The distant clump of trees is on D.L. 317, farm of Samuel McCleery, first settler in Vancouver, 1862, and now Marine Drive Golf links. On right is George Garripie's, now Marpole, D.L. 318, and at foot of Granville St.

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Photo by Dodge, Sydney, N.S. 1911.

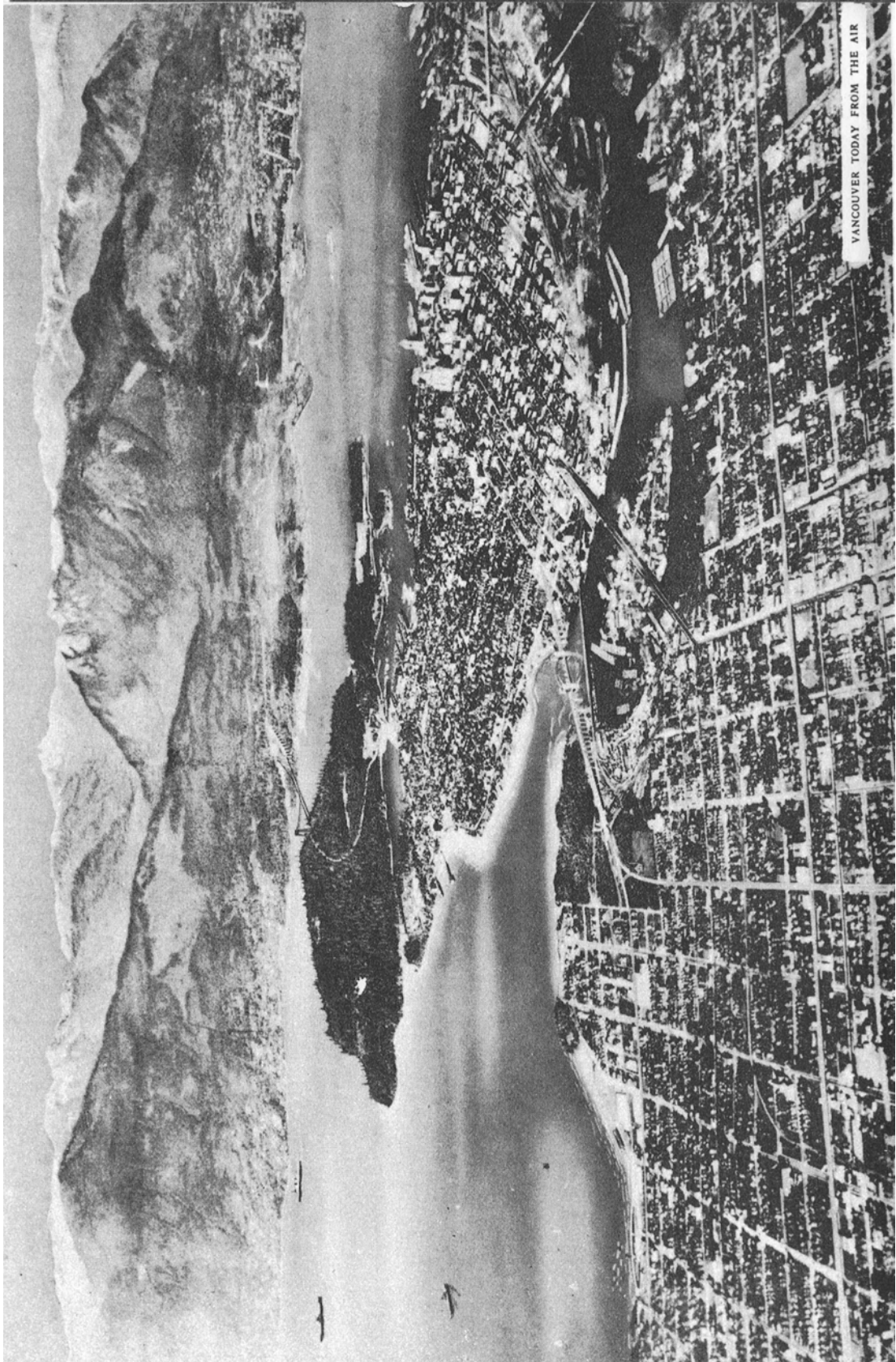
City Archives. JSM.

Pilot Commander
**DON JOSE MARIA
NARVAEZ**

1791



Item # EarlyVan_v6_044



Item # EarlyVan_v6_045

Pilot Commander
DON JOSE MARIA
NARVAEZ

1791

*"He was the first who ever burst
Into that silent sea."*

THE ANCIENT MARINER.



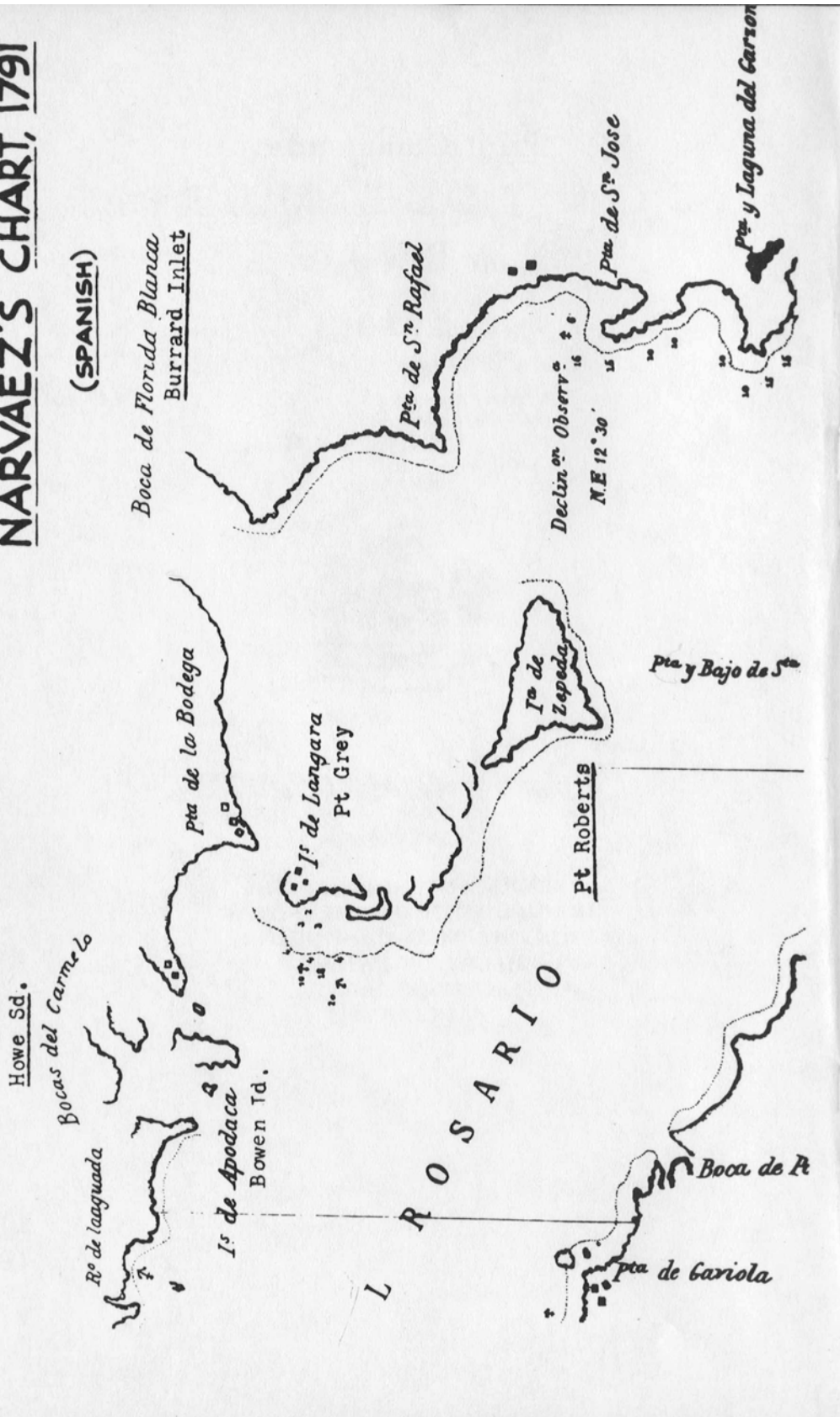
150th Anniversary

1791 - 1941

SESQUICENTENNIAL OF THE
ARRIVAL OF THE FIRST EUROPEAN
ON THE PACIFIC MAINLAND
SHORE OF CANADA
AT ENGLISH BAY,
VANCOUVER

NARVAEZ'S CHART, 1791

(SPANISH)



Item # EarlyVan_v6_47

The Sesquicentennial

(150TH ANNIVERSARY)

OF THE

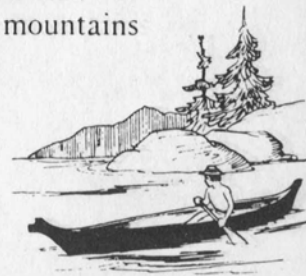
ARRIVAL OF THE FIRST EUROPEAN ON THE PACIFIC
MAINLAND SHORE OF CANADA

THE Indian sages on Burrard Inlet had long warned that, some day, something would happen.

The Squamish Twilight

For aeons our land had lain in motionless repose; a silent thing, an empty space, hidden beneath an interminable green carpet of forest, dark, damp, still, spreading on and beyond. Sko-mish-oath, *i.e.*, all Howe Sound and Burrard Inlet, was the country of the Squamish nation; three to five thousand "canoe Indians"; the greatest natural carpenters in North America, who had, since the dawn of time, lived, loved and laughed, even as we, in huge warm lodges of cedar; built with stone hammers and stone chisels. They divided themselves into chiefs, nobles, commons and slaves; fattened on flesh, fowl, fish and fruit; made garments from skins and cedar bark; held festivals and ceremonies, and sometimes went to war. A kindly God-fearing people, wise in their unlettered way, changeless, unvarying, who acknowledged a Great Architect, observed a moral code and passed down proudly, father to son by word of mouth, the legend of their race. Their world was small, but there were lots of tales of what was behind the mountains

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beyond the setting sun. Without written calendar, they kept time by cycles of seven years; something fateful always happened in the seventh year; once it was the great snow which lasted for three months, another the great flood, another the pestilence, and—this was the seventh year. Suddenly—the sages were right—all ended; for Skomish-oath is was doom; for western Canada the break of morn.

The Alarm

One brilliant day, whilst Squamish mothers were drying fish for winter before Eyalmu Village—we call it Jericho Beach now—and Indian babes were trickling sand through tiny fingers, loud calls broke the summer calm; shouts which were to echo around the world; shouts whose import would yet be felt by all nations; a phantom ship came drifting from behind Point Grey into English Bay. It was so large that, to the Squamish watchers, it seemed as if a small island with three dead trees on it (schooner with bare masts) had broken loose from its fastening beneath the sea, and was floating off; it stopped outside Pookcha, the great shoal we call Spanish Banks. Actually, the Spanish schooner *Santa Saturnina* was a tiny vessel, not much larger than a tug, but to the Squamish she was a leviathan; imagination had not conceived anything so huge. The fond mothers snatched the children, gathered together a little food and prepared to seek safety in the depths of the Kitsilano forest until danger was past; those wicked marauding northerners might be up to mischief again. The young braves cried, "Let's go see; you only die once," and launched their canoes; from a near but discreet distance they scanned the biggest canoe they had ever seen—and the queerest. The brown-faced Squamish pondered; there were men on board with ghastly white faces covered with hair; surely, it must be the dead coming back.

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A Lonely Forgotten Empire

The few Spaniards on Wakash Island—we call it Vancouver Island—at Nootka, knew that, to the south, there was a wide opening from the ocean in the coast, the Straits of Juan de Fuca; none knew what was within; they were curious. So they sent out a spying expedition of two small ships, Eliza in the *San Carlos* and Narvaez in the *Santa Saturnina*. Eliza became ill and remained at what is now Victoria, and Narvaez, July 1st, 1791 (auspicious date, our Dominion Day), went on by himself and was soon amazed at what he saw; he found himself sailing in a primeval paradise, a miniature Mediterranean set in blue and green. Undaunted by rocks, shoals, storms and other dangers of unknown waters, he steered down Puget Sound towards the present Seattle and Tacoma, sailed in and out and round about in the solemn inland sea studded with beautiful forest-clad islands, covered with towering trees whose branches at high tide were lapped by the waters; the air was fragrant in its purity, and far above and beyond, the snow-capped peaks of Mount Rainier and Mount Baker. There were no cities, but populous Indian villages curved about crescent beaches and sandy coves, and to their inhabitants Narvaez and his ship was as great a curiosity as they were to him. The forest glades concealed multitudes of elk and deer; the watery depths and streams swarmed with fish; this last land was indeed a noble land of beauty, plenty and calm.

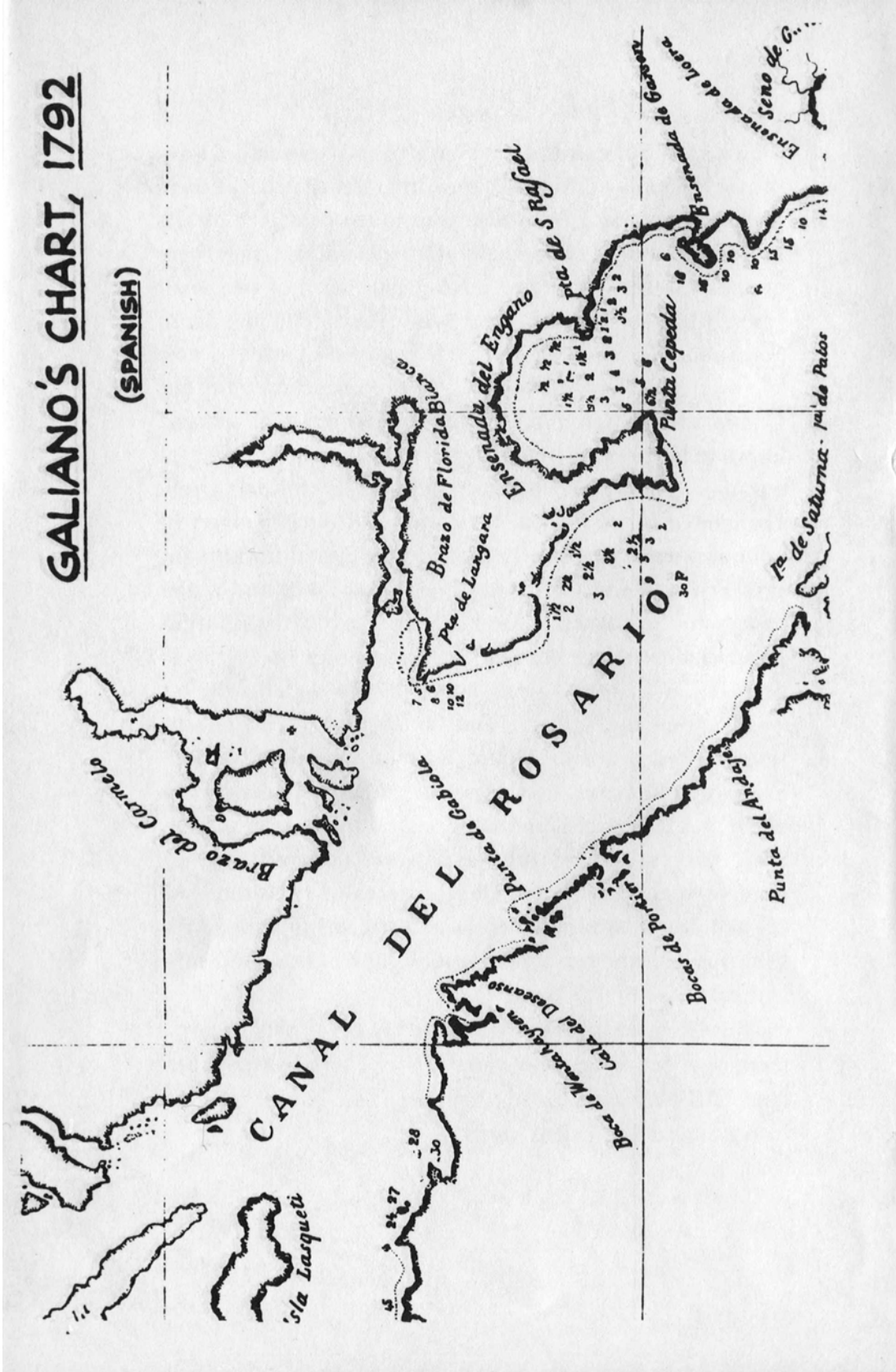
But Narvaez had been told to hurry back; there was no thought of empire. Who wanted land? There was too much land. All Narvaez wanted was a peep; so, having seen, he turned about and sailed north.

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GALIANO'S CHART, 1792

(SPANISH)



Item # EarlyVan_v6_051

The Storm

As the *Santa Saturnina* approached our Canada at Boundary Bay, bad weather prevailed; she appears to have had to "run" for shelter, and, unfortunately, Narvaez's chart of the coast is imperfect; the course he took is broken. Those who have experienced the severity of a southeast gale off the Fraser sandheads can sympathise with the intrepid explorer in his tribulations. A tossing schooner, small and crowded; poor visibility in rain and haze; imperfect compass readings on a flat shoreline devoid of landmark and the Fraser River in summer flood inundating its dykeless delta; where was land, and which was water; all was strange and new, and time did not permit a second look. Narvaez made his chart as best he could. He guessed, wrongly, that the long height of land between New Westminster and Point Grey was encompassed by river or sea and marked it "Isla de Langara," a name, the only one, surviving to this day in a golf course, a telephone exchange, a former post office and a residential area overlooking Jericho. Then the weather moderated and the little *Santa Saturnina*, the first proud ship to enter the Port of Vancouver, dropped anchor off Chit-chil-ayuk, a rock below the cliffs of Point Grey.

"With Their Courtly Spanish Grace"

To the Squamish, the schooner and her few exceeded the wildest dreams of a "big canoe"; a flotilla of dugouts swarmed around her. In garments of cedar bark and skins, or little at all, with hair hanging in long black tresses about their tawny shoulders, they sat in the bottom of their canoes, large and small, in awesome wonder and curiosity, or excitedly paddled to and fro ashore to Eyalmu, now Jericho Airport, to tell their fellow villagers the latest word, or display the strange treasures presented them by the



Spaniards. Neither spoke the other's tongue, but intelligent men can interpret signs, and both were soon welcoming each other as friends.

"Whitemans give my ancestors molasses," says Chief Khahtsahlano (Kitsilano). "They not know molasses good to eat, so rub on legs so's make legs not so stiff after long time paddle in canoe; molasses stick legs to bottom of canoe. Just a mistake; lots peoples make mistakes," and the Chief laughed long and loud. Then, with bowed head, this wise but untutored native mourned: "Indians mans just as anxious hees boy have good education as whitemans hees boy go to university, but hees got no pencil."

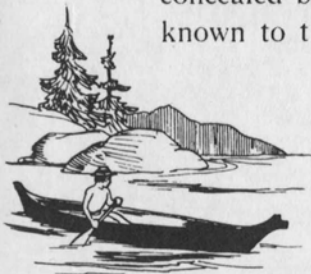
The Squamish brought wood and water, deer and elk meat and native vegetables to keep away that dread privation, scurvy; the Spaniards gave bits of iron and barrel hoops to make knives. Trade, commerce and port statistics began that summer day; in 1791 one ship, the schooner *Santa Saturnina*, entered inwards; in 1941, 24,000 vessels followed where she led.

"This Is the Place to Live"

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Narvaez paced his tiny deck; admired the tranquil land-locked English Bay; marvelled at the gentle slopes of Point Grey, Kitsilano, West End and West Vancouver circling above like an amphitheatre, and, beyond, the glistening crests of snow-capped mountains; one hundred and forty-eight years later, the King and Queen looked down from those self-same heights and exclaimed, "We have never seen anything like it; this is the place to live." In the distance from Point Grey, and all unsuspecting as many a pioneer did later, Narvaez did not, nor could not, see that concealed behind that bold headland, our Prospect Point, known to the Indians as "Chaythoos," *i.e.*, "high bank,"

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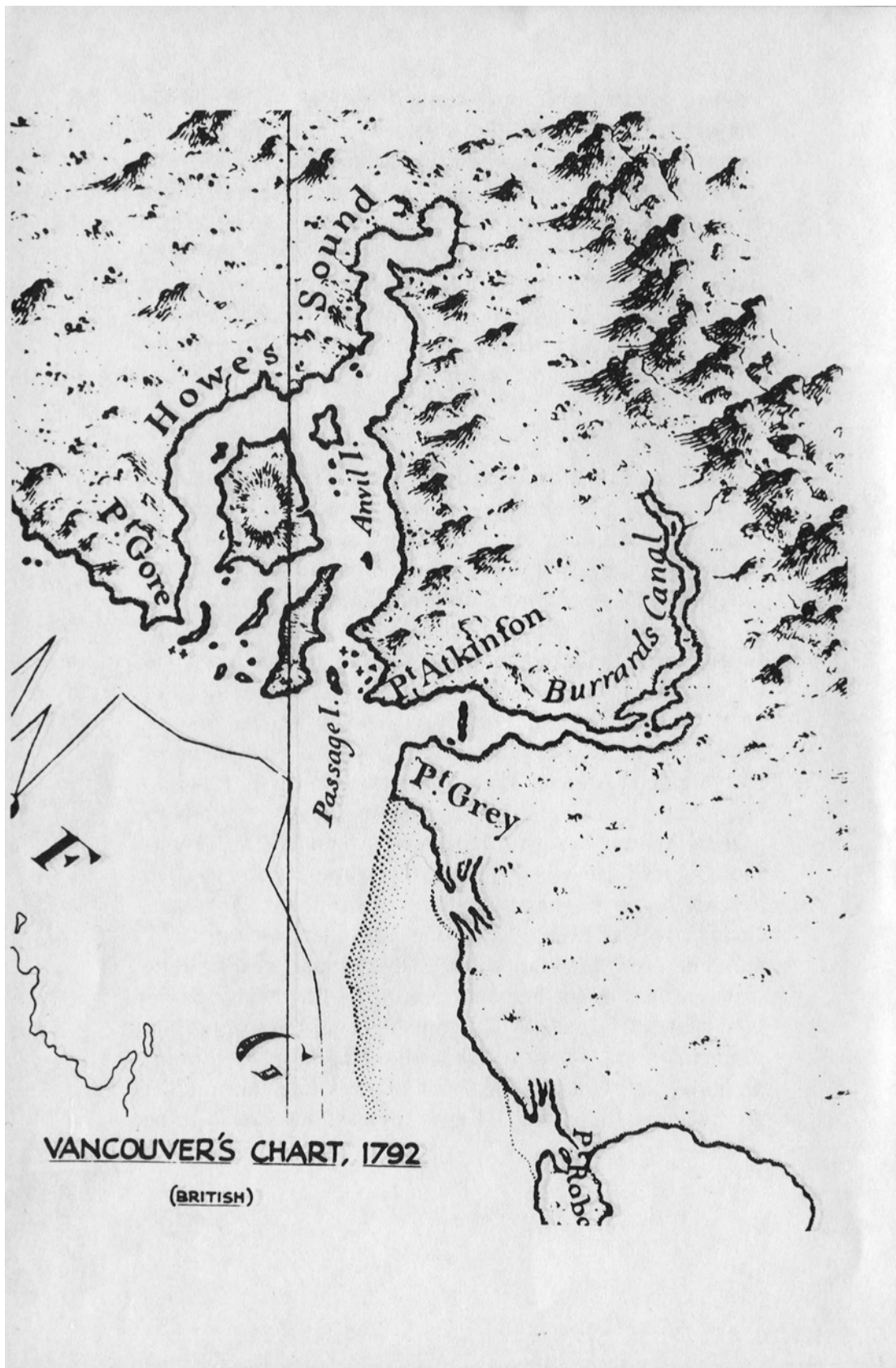
lay two serrated walls of towering trees melting together in the sight and flanking either side of the First Narrows; the splendid entrance to a wonderful harbor twenty miles deep. Narvaez, wrongly, guessed that West Vancouver was joined by a valley to Ferguson Point, Stanley Park, so he named the famous sightseeing eminence "Punta de la Bodega." Then, to mark the first recorded dwellings in Vancouver, at Homulchesun (Capilano), at Eyalmu (Jericho) and at Stuckale (Cypress Creek, or Great Northern Cannery), he put little black squares on his chart.

Men Sleep in the Air

Narvaez sailed away and was gone. The Indian sages had warned, Narvaez may have dreamed, but even the sages could not have foretold that, some day, the lum-lam (houses) would reach to the skies, nor could Narvaez have imagined that he was leaving behind a world port waiting to be wooed; that, ere long, men would cross the great continent, three thousand miles wide from western ocean to eastern sea, in a single jump, in minutes rather than in years, and astride, figuratively, a modern witch's broomstick, sleeping in the air in their flight. In 1492 Columbus had sighted America's eastern strand; three hundred long years passed, 1492-1791, before the first European gazed upon our beautiful harbor on America's far western shore. Slowly, ever so slowly, the white stream wended westward. The Battle of the Plains of Abraham, 1759, gave Canada to the British; the War of Independence, 1776, took the New England colonies away, long years before Narvaez became the first European to see the Pacific mainland shore of Canada at Vancouver; of all the five million residents of the Atlantic seaboard, of the hosts of Europe, or hordes of Asia, not one pair of eyes had, until 1791, glimpsed our Lions' Gate. Far to the west men crowded the

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Item # EarlyVan_v6_055

shores of hoary old Asia; far to the east, the gray castles of Europe stood ivy covered; in between lay a great expanse of empty land, silent, vacant down the ages, reserved by the restraining hand of the Almighty for a new and better civilization; the "friendly continent," a happy land where peoples of all colors, creeds and customs might live together in harmony and peace.

Immortal Narvaez

Narvaez's contribution—one of the last—to the knowledge of the world's habitable surface insures the immortality of his name; yet, for a century and a half, and among the three thousand place names of Greater Vancouver, no street, park, bay, point, school, nothing whatever bore the name of the first white man to see, perhaps stand upon, the site of our home, to enjoy its salubrious climate, breathe its cool air, drink its sweet water. Alike in Vancouver as also in all Canada, the good navigator was so forgotten that few have heard his name and fewer still can pronounce it. (Nar-va-eth.) "Langara," one word alone, marked his visit. At last, in this sesquicentennial year, the City Council, at the suggestion of the City Archivist, named in his honor a new short street, "Narvaez Drive," in Quilchena, overlooking English Bay, upon whose waters he was the first to sail.

Our First Reception Committee

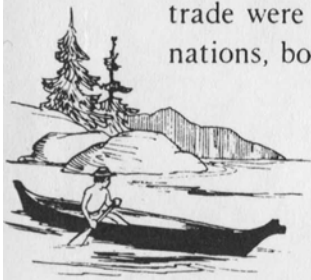
Narvaez's visit was a happy augury. The amiable Squamish accorded the first visitors within our gates a most cordial welcome; the courtly Spanish reciprocated heartily; the first public reception in Vancouver was a gracious ceremony; a priceless remembrance which, to this day, those of Vancouver endeavor to emulate. A year later, 1792,



Capt. Vancouver, in H.M.S. *Discovery*, benefited from the happy associations of his predecessor, and gallantly pays generous tribute to the decorous conduct and dignified welcome accorded by the amicable Indians as he passed by. Capt. Vancouver entered the First Narrows in two ship's boats, the first to peep into Vancouver harbor, a forgotten haven in an old and densely populated world. Vancouver made a better chart than Narvaez's, sailed north, returned and found the Spanish navigators, Galiano and Valdes, anchored off Point Grey. They, too, made a chart; all three charts are shown herein as illustrations, but Narvaez's was the first.

Dawn Turns to Daylight

Silence fell again on English Bay and old Indians told young Indians strange tales of strange ships they had seen in their youth. Unknown to our aborigines and far beyond the rising sun, vast changes were taking place; the glorious Victorian age was beginning; men began to talk long distances over a wire and steam-power was replacing sails. A vanguard of white men, rushing for Cariboo gold, pushed the stoic Indian aside; then a sawmill was built on Burrard Inlet and pioneer "Gastown" squeezed about a muddy beach, crescent shaped twixt forest and shore. Confederation made Canada whole, and the railway, thin as a spider's web, crept over the wide plains and high Rockies and joined sea to sea, and soon the "All Red Route" of steamships to the Orient and Australia linked up the loose ends of the greatest structure for political good the world has ever known, the British Empire. World travel and world trade were re-oriented and the footsteps of millions of all nations, born and unborn, were redirected for all time.



"The Builders"

The creation of Vancouver was no local incident, but an event in the chronicle of mankind which must forever interest all peoples. Who were "The Builders"? Not supermen, but young British and Canadian men and women—there were no grey hairs in early Vancouver—of vision, courage, energy, with the power of justice and the patience of strength; they built not a fort, but a garden on the shore; no sword was drawn, no bugle sounded, no blood is on our escutcheon. In the short span of less than a single life there arose, like a magic thing, out of the wilderness of forest and swamp, a metropolis, a world port—Vancouver, spreading ten miles wide by seven deep, of monumental buildings and luxurious offices, of beautiful homes and green lawns, with one hundred and fifty churches, one hundred parks, seventy-five public and one hundred private schools, the beautiful home of a favored and benevolent people. The great city is the monument, the mighty illustration, of the achievements of men of peace.

The "Fortunates"

The Indian sages had long warned. Then Narvaez came first. Was there no planning, no Great Architect's master touch? Did all this wondrous change just "happen"?

Wave not a flag in the street, nor utter boastful shout, but, in a quiet closet and on bended knee, remember Him through Whom all things first were made; Who knows when a sparrow falls, and, in gentle joy, give thanks to Him who has directed it.

J. S. MATTHEWS,
City Archivist.

City Archives,
City Hall,
Vancouver, Canada,
1st July, 1941.

